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School Wellness Action Research: from an Arts-Based Transformative Activist Stance

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School Wellness Action Research: from an Arts-Based Transformative Activist Stance

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

This study explored educational change that privileges teachers to be co-authors and drivers of school wellness action activated through an arts-based focus on hopeful futures. The SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic added school lockdowns to the context resulting in modifications to the study, primarily the exclusion of student voice and face-to-face participation. Eight participants engaged in discussion and field-testing of virtual arts-lab activities aimed at enhancing school wellness rooted in their realities as educators. Two phases of an arts-based participatory approach to action research generated creative data. Data collection included educator and researcher reflections, arts-lab observations, and my descriptions of participant-created artwork. The results provided the basis for an arts-lab toolkit for educators and an animated video story for the broader community.

This participatory arts-based approach to action research was grounded in an arts-lab created from a transformative activist stance (Stetsenko, 2017). It offered opportunities for participants to affirm their control and participation in action critical for change. Second, the arts-lab tool offers participants a means to actively engage in characterizing and exploring their personal values as opportunities for school wellness improvement. Educators endorsed a four-part arts-lab where art-pieces created at every session portray ideas and provide a centrepiece for deepened conversation. Third, arts processes provide opportunities to enable agentic creativity for artists while offering contributions to the school community-in-the-making that encourage connections between the art, the artists, and the audience. The collective development of an arts-lab encourages participants to contribute artifacts to the broader community's conversation as artists and activists. Keywords: school, wellness, arts-based, action research, arts-lab, change-lab, social innovation lab, participatory, Transformative Activist Stance.

Preface

The fieldwork reported in Chapters 4 and 5 was approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board Ethics ID REB19-1643 (approved March 06, 2020) and REB19-1643_MOD1 (approved on April 23, 2020), respectively. All images of artwork in Chapters 4 and 5 are reproduced with the permission of the participants. The multimodal toolkit in Appendix C entitled, “From Toolkit to Think Tank” belongs to the voice of Greene Friere collective— a group of artists-as-educators I admire, who participated in the process of contributing their art, stories, and experiences to school wellness activism in the wake of the collective adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic. Readers can locate the authors in the hearts of radical educators everywhere, who work to create the schools students need and refuse to settle for the schools they have. To learn more about the activities, or download the resources, readers can visit <http://bit.ly/ARTSLABTHINKTANK> or to watch the video visit <http://hdl.handle.net/1880/112967>.

Acknowledgments

My sincerest gratitude and admiration to my mother, for her graceful examples of lifelong learning and tireless activism, her unreserved sympathy towards this research project, and her unconditional compassionate love in terms of my growth and learning throughout my life.

Secondly, the participation and voices of the arts-lab research participants were admirable in their efficacy, invaluable to this study, and heroic in their commitment. I greatly admire the people in this group and their continued support for their ongoing practice of transformative school improvement that privileges arts, wellness, and youth.

Thirdly, thank you to my grad school community. To my supervisor, Dr. Michele Jacobsen—it has been a gift to walk this journey alongside you. Your dedicated support for learner-centred research and your belief in the power of practitioner knowledge were empowering. And to my supervisory committee, Dr. Sharon Friesen, Dr. Miwa Takeuchi, and Dr. Jim Brandon, your encouragement and challenges helped me develop my research, both authentically and rigorously. And to my peers, both the leadership and learning science student cohorts, thank you for the discourse, support, and inspiration.

Thank you to all the radical pracademics who fight against institutional injustice and for equality and freedom every day in classrooms, schools, and the world. May you feel goodwill and connection in the better future your life's work honours. To Dawn Shields and students, teachers-learners all, I salute you.

Lastly, thank you to Donna-Lee Wybert for your professional editing services, ongoing positive words, and thoughtful questions, which helped me clearly articulate these ideas. In solidarity, Karena.

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Epigraph

One lesson the arts teach is that there can be more than one answer to a question and more than one solution to a problem; variability of outcome is okay.

—Elliot Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of the Mind*

The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world.

—Maxine Greene, *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*

To what extent activist agency and transformative mind can be realized – as the capacity to transform reality and to co-create history and ourselves – is a dilemma that is moot if we understand theorizing not as descriptions of what is, but as an activist project of daring to pursue what could and must be.

—Anna Stetsenko, *The Transformative Mind: Expanding Vygotsky’s Approach to Development and Education*

The “past is like a stream in which all of us in our distinctiveness and diversity participate every time we try to understand” (Greene, 1997, p. 9) but also that the future is changed and created every time we envision it and act on this vision, thus powering it into existence.

—Anna Stetsenko, *The Transformative Mind: Expanding Vygotsky’s Approach to Development and Education*

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

This introduction to my doctoral dissertation describes my background experience with the issue, and the research problem and questions, and includes my worldview as the principal researcher. This overview is followed by a rationale for the methodological approaches and a detailed description of the research plan. I describe and justify the use of a transformative activist stance (Stetsenko, 2017) which centrally integrates agency and activism into development, to employ an arts-based participatory approach to action research method to support school wellness improvement. I explain the methods for collecting and analyzing data and explain the measures I have taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Finally, I acknowledge the study's limitations and delimitations. This chapter ends with a brief summary.

Background

In 2018–2019, my school community was challenged to recreate itself as the school community it wanted to be. The actions taken offered an opportunity to develop strong relationships and celebrate the school's collective pride and culture. As context, in 2017–2018, educators, parents, and students responded to incidents of bullying both online and in-person, as well as fights, drugs, tobacco, alcohol, suicidal ideations, cutting, extreme anxiety, unprotected sex, swearing, weapons, fires, vandalism, and littering. In my experiences as a student, as a teacher, as a learning leader, and as an Assistant Principal—the school system has not been particularly enabling or liberating for learners; in this case, many of the named incidents, unfortunately, resulted in student suspensions or extended hospital stays.

For me, learning through the arts has been transformative. Motivated by the events I describe above, over the summer of 2018, I used my experience and my school's challenges as an opportunity to design an arts-embedded health homeroom program featuring student-driven

change projects. In the fall, I asked teachers to use this program as a starting point to build a school-wide approach to health and homerooms. The immediate objective of this intervention was to decrease the incidence of risk-taking and self-harming behaviour in the school. In the first year, the school observed a significant decrease in the incidence of students' self-harming behaviour. These positive changes led the school community to question possible explanations for this result, and many of the school's teachers and parents attributed much of it to the homeroom intervention and the schoolwide focus on wellness.

As a result, I became interested in researching how to influence this type of school change and spread it further by examining the dimensions within the intervention, including the importance of student voices, the capacity of the arts for change, and my firm belief that teachers have the power to make a difference. This junior high school's story motivated me to examine the arts intervention further. In my doctoral research, I wanted to explore the use of artistic contributions as imaginative tools to promote educators' school wellness action as a means to inform the collective creation of an arts-lab model to foster reflective, meaningful interconnection between the participants, the art, and school cultural improvement. The term arts-lab perceives a parallel between the collective creation process I planned to enact and the social innovation, design and change lab platforms that demonstrate potential to address school challenges. My research built upon social innovation change lab structures (Engeström & Sannino, 2010; Hassan, 2014; Sawyer, 2008; Westley et al., 2015) by focusing on them through an arts-based lens and creating an arts-lab that could extend my understanding of collaborative activity: in this case, action to improve school wellness.

Research Problem and Questions

Provincial health statistics show that mental health issues impact one in five Albertans, and that an estimated one in ten will require addiction treatment during their lives (Alberta Health, 2017). Alberta Health Services has prioritized comprehensive school health initiatives as key actions to help combat these statistics (Alberta Health Services, 2017). Improving school wellness in the context of increasing tensions for students and teachers is complex; however, taking actions to address school wellness can have multifactorial benefits, and thus is well worth the effort.

Society more broadly is experiencing a changed awareness of wellness, which includes a heightened understanding of individuals' risk factors for health issues. As well, internal institutional contradictions and opportunities are emerging. Students are engaging in new healthy and unhealthy behaviours, and communities are questioning what was once acceptable school culture. All types of wellness conflicts are evident. In 2019, a horrifying elementary student suicide occurred in my district in relationship to bullying (Kaufman, 2019). Ongoing conflicts across districts include reports of school bullying (Shah et al., 2016), suicidal ideations (Peter et al., 2008) and self-harming behaviours (Duggan et al., 2012). At the same time, educators are developing a better understanding of the generational fall-out from residential schooling (Wilk et al., 2017); an increased awareness about the need for trauma-informed practice (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016); a more comprehensive sensitivity to high stakes standardized test anxiety (von der Embse et al., 2018); and growing awareness about protecting the rights of non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender and two spirited students (Berry, 2018). This list is not exhaustive and the combination of the whirlwind of new understandings in the school that sits within the continually changing societal context poses unique and serious challenges to the

individuals inside each school community. On any given day one issue of significance is stressed, another might be minimized, and all stay relevant to the school context and day-to-day decision making of the school community members.

Further, Canadian health departments are documenting an increased trend in rates of youth accessing mental health medical care; from 2006–2007 to 2013–2014, admission to the Emergency Department increased by 45% for Canadians five to 24-year-olds with a mental disorder and inpatient hospitalizations increased by 37%, while Emergency Department visits for other conditions remained relatively stable (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2015). In 2019, the Western School District (WSD)¹ reported that their staff engagement survey repeatedly raised teacher wellness as a concern of staff (Chief Superintendent, 2019). Additionally, a group of grade 11 student leaders voiced that student wellness was a key concern to students (Chief Superintendent, 2019). The above issues raise concerns about school-induced stresses, the need to create awareness of mental health issues and the available supports, and also serve to underline how school wellness is an important focus for social change.

The Purpose of the Study

The arts-embedded homeroom intervention in my school contributed to an increase in student participation and leadership in school activities, leading school educators and parents to speculate that it also contributed to a decrease in the incidents of risk-taking and self-harming behaviour. The objective of my doctoral study was to implement and learn from a similar arts-based intervention in a school context and share that learning with other educational communities. My former school offers one example of the type of student health and wellness concerns that many school communities are looking to address. The overarching intent of this

¹ This is a pseudonym. The pseudonym or its acronym will be used throughout this dissertation.

study was to explore how the arts can inspire collective action focused on school wellness, as well as to identify the ways in which arts as an activity may inspire mindful agency in students and educators. The ultimate objective was to explore the relationship between arts activities and school improvement frameworks that guide positive outcomes in this work—specifically by understanding the ways arts-based activities inform critical analysis of school wellness and engage agents of social change in collective activities that confront problematic school morale and unhealthy student behaviour with a new vision of school wellness.

Research Question

It is important to better understand how art-based approaches will support school changes. A structured approach that uses arts processes to impact wellness improvement will help to identify and evaluate arts-based activities that address this need. More specifically, the following research question and three sub-questions are ones I originally set out to answer:

In what ways can a participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab, enhance school-wide comprehensive wellness initiatives?

Sub-Questions. The three questions below are tied to the goals this research aims to reveal.

1. What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore—according to participants?
2. What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school-wide comprehensive health—according to the participants in the arts-lab?
3. What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants' current school wellness work?

To continue with the project through the pandemic lockdown, I updated the three sub-questions to include only educator participants. My original intent had included students, teachers, educators, school leadership, parents, artists and healthcare professionals in differing roles of facilitators, participants, and art show audience members. Limiting this participant group was a necessary but difficult decision as my original intent was to privilege students' voice in arts-based wellness action, and to draw from field experts in design and communicate to the community as a whole. However, students and other members were not available for the study during the initial lockdown, but educators were available. My updated research questions are as follows:

Main research question: In what ways can a participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab, enhance *educators'* school wellness practices?

Updated Sub-Questions:

1. What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore—according to *educator* participants?
2. What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school wellness—according to the participants in the arts-lab?
3. What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants' current school wellness work —according to *educators* who were participants?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

My leadership journey has been considerably influenced by one recurring question: “How does quality learning-centred arts education engage students' passions to define their personal significance, and then make a contribution to positively changing the educational

landscape individually and collectively?” This continued quest to collaborate with others to achieve our collective goals and creating the conditions that empower people to realize their purpose, including transformative, progressive change, is explored in this research project. By entering a school using arts-based activities to examine the issues and develop a shared vision, I hoped to apply the strengths of collective arts-making to facilitate activism by enabling students and teachers to put shared creativity and individual empowerment at the centre of a vision of future school wellness. I believe that each voice plays an important role in driving the school community forward to collaborate in achieving common goals, and that the arts can amplify each voice.

An action research project that leverages student development enabled through collaborative strategic visioning is a continuation of my purpose as an educator. While I had to modify my study to focus on educators and no students because of the pandemic, I continue to be hopeful that my vision of students, teachers, educational leaders, health professionals, and artists mobilized to amplify their gifts to knowingly meet the needs of a changing world will contribute to teacher motivation and student success.

Health is a human right (World Health Organization, 2017). Accordingly, comprehensive school wellness improvement contributes to human rights protection. Indeed, schools with healthy environments and conditions are a prerequisite to teachers’ and students’ well-being (Rudd & Walsh, 1993). The discovery of opportunities and challenges that are revealed through the aesthetic activity of students and educators could have practical application in school wellness initiatives, which are a current priority for Calgary public school communities (Usih, 2019). An arts-lab aspires to place students and educators in the centre of this action research

(AR), and I anticipated that this approach would also result in a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in fostering school wellness improvements.

Researcher Perspective and Assumptions

In my youth, overcoming some struggles resulted in my deep sensitivity to gender, class, and race issues. My own experiences served to develop my critical awareness and understanding of drama as powerfully transformative. My background led me to use drama as a tool for radical activism and popular education as a young woman; this commitment to arts-based activism continues to define my practice as an educator. I began my formal career as a teacher in 2001; I am currently an assistant principal with a local public school. In my role of facilitating professional learning with teachers and engaging students in leadership initiatives, I draw heavily on my background in using drama and media arts for popular education.

There are more than a handful of assumptions about education, arts, wellness, research, and change that frame this study. First and most important, my doctoral research and work as an educational leader is activism for the community and equally important, activism for individual empowerment. The transformative onto–epistemology, a term coined by Anna Stetsenko (2017), is both the worldview and the approach for investigating the worldview that shapes this study; however, it is more commonly termed a transformative activist stance (TAS). A TAS approach is a learning theory and research approach based on the notion that individual agency and social activism are centrally integrated by emphasizing the human capacity to transform the status quo (Stetsenko 2005; 2014). The TAS lens relies on the participants’ authoring and activism, and the belief that

we all, each and every one of us, matter and have the right to co-authoring the world in all of its aspects and dimensions, through our agentive, authentic, and authorial

contributions as well as the importance and impact that a participant's own experiences, culture, and background may have on the research. (Stetsenko, 2014, p. 45)

In this sense, I acknowledge my non-neutral activist stance in making meaning in the study, but throughout the research I aimed to maintain a primary interest in how I work with participants to create understanding and author knowledge contributions to the collective practice of making social change. Stetsenko (2014) demonstrates the issue raised by Lincoln et al. (2011) that combining paradigms together comfortably is an emerging tendency in qualitative research. As a neophyte researcher, I am fortunate to be entering the field of research when issues of the subjective-objective are under discussion.

The key focus of TAS is on how “research contributes to creating, together with participants and based in learning that expands our common agency and horizons, the very future and its truth that can come through our own deeds—our activist being, doing, and knowing” (Stetsenko, 2014, p. 197). Similar to Stetsenko (2014), my stance towards knowledge radically reforms it into an “instrument of activism and transformative change” (p. 197). TAS has strengthened my quest for social justice by encouraging me to acknowledge the human potential in challenging the dominant ideologies of competition, repression, control and inequality, and engage as an activist on a quest for a sought after future within my educational leader and academic researcher roles². For me, in this research, data collection is indeed knowledge

² By claiming revolutionary agendas of social justice and activist strivings within a normative context, I mean underwriting my imaginings with progressive goals to resolve systemic and structural inequalities with radical changes. I reflect on my designs through a moral conviction that privileges solidarity, agentive creativity, freedom, equality, and justice. The apparent truth in TAS is that by not positioning these strivings as central, I risk diminishing my agentive creative power by leaving starkly outdated practices unchallenged, perpetuating injustice and stifling organizational growth.

creation, collaborative artmaking is effectively AR, and school wellness improvement will hopefully become transformative activism.

A second underlying educational assumption for this research is that the work is non-neutral and it aims to be liberating and deepen a critical consciousness, similar to the critical and reflexive pedagogy described by Freire (1970/2000). I assume that participatory, democratic, and generative learning processes that value all participants are necessary for transformative change. Accordingly, I assume that honouring researcher and educator voices is paramount to working towards change in education. My ultimate objective is to create a better world within a school community and in my initial research design it was essential that students (Ozer, 2016) and educators explored their experiences with school wellness and work together to imagine futures. With the pandemic, I had to modify my design to include educators and no students.

A third assumption of this study is that artistic reflection and artistic creation are central to the research. This assumption relates to using an arts-based approach to action research methodology. Eisner (2002b) and Greene (1995a, 1995b) argue that arts education is foundational to students thriving in their lives and their learning because arts education serves to respect and work with students' gifts. This study attempted to harness the strengths of arts³ education with teachers to improve school wellness.

The research design was qualitative and used the arts-based devices integrated into the techniques of a social innovation change lab. I, as the researcher, have reflected on the proposed redesigns of the school experience in response to educators' engagements and contributions, while acknowledging the ongoing goal of continually improving and encouraging healthy schools as a collective community effort.

³ I mean creative arts which I describe clearly in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: A Review of the Literature

This literature review focuses on how taking a participatory approach to arts-based educational action research in and through an arts-lab built from a TAS can support school wellness improvements. I will discuss relevant readings in the service of the project, which has been introduced with the research problem. Professional literature about arts-based research (ABR) models (Knowles & Cole, 2008) offers hope for a profound impact from doing arts-based action research (ABAR) in and through a TAS.

The TAS (Stetsenko, 2017) extends a values-laden interpretation of Vygotsky's collaborative ideas of human development (Vygotsky, 1978) and draws from Bakhtin's (1993) notion of "postuplenie" (p. 3), or "becoming through performed action" (p. 9). It also pulls in Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2000), integrated with recent feminist, ecological, and critical approaches. Grounded in these theories, a TAS suggests that "being, knowing, and doing" (Stetsenko, 2018, p. 41) are inherent in the human condition. TAS supports this condition through two expansions: a) the key condition to each person becoming is that they enter a world that is a constantly evolving field of social practices enacted by individuals who collectively and uniquely perform answerable actions; and b) each person makes an agentive difference by co-authoring these practices and the self, by striving to transcend these conditions in view of their own unique agenda (Stetsenko, 2018). The imaginative position of the "forward-looking activist" (Stetsenko, 2018, p. 48) who takes an activist stance is critical to learning and development, as this teaching-learning is the literal process of "making up one's mind" (Stetsenko, 2018, p. 48, emphasis in the original).

Student Learning and School Improvement

This literature review is organized into four key parts. It begins by looking at the issue of students and policy, initially exploring measurements of student success; then, it considers school policy and research on school change. Next, it addresses understanding adolescent stakeholders. It follows this by holding up the arts for analysis, initially with an overview of the use of art for wellness action, defining art as a particular learning activity. The next section of the review summarizes wellness elements and determinants. Finally, in the last section, entitled The Transformative Activist Stance (TAS) and an Arts-Lab, I address the central role of action in change initiatives, and discuss the implications of ABR and building an arts-lab from a TAS. The review closes by highlighting the purpose of focusing on the arts in relation to student agency and collective change, pointing to the strengths that the arts offer for transformative learning.

Students and Policy

This section demonstrates that common understandings of school and students' success fundamentally challenge a TAS perspective as the driver of a wellness initiative. These contextual insights into the project are followed by an exploration of how adolescent stakeholders may relate to educational research of this nature. In the required modification of the study, students were prevented from participating. This does not make this literature irrelevant to this study. Educators are keenly committed to the learning and wellness needs of students and routinely engage students in informal action research through their classrooms supporting educators to make powerful student privileged learning choices supports students to make powerful choices as well.

School Policy. Stetsenko (2018) provides insights into how the dominant educational policy circumvents learners' agency and stalls their development as agents of history and society,

and their own lives. She points to the current neoliberal climate that directs school reform to target cognitive skill through routines and rules, and the mechanical processing of information in an ostensibly neutral manner, thus stalling human progress both individually and collectively. From a TAS, testing promotes rote memorization and the misconception that individuals have innate wired capabilities; further, testing drives a limited understanding of educational reform that works against publicly proclaimed goals of education and in place of “teachers’ preparation while also alleviating systemic poverty and inequality as the background conditions for underachievement” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 48). My own experiences in school improvement initiatives affirm the validity of this claim.

School divisions, administrators, and teachers are involved in ongoing plans to improve student achievement, but debate exists about whether student academic success positively correlates to life satisfaction (Bücker et al., 2018; Suldo et al., 2006). For me, the aims of an AR project to affect wellness are clearly influenced by a school’s improvement plans, especially since many of the plans are assessed by academic measures. Critical participatory AR would direct the researcher to ask critical questions about how the assessments drive the quest for wellness and expose inherent contradictions—perhaps by “changing the way information is gathered, amassed and represented” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 186) but at the same time ensuring those choices were “subjected to ethical scrutiny and negotiated with participants and others” (p. 187). The complexity of the opposing views within the study needs to be considered; however, if I conclude that these views are beyond reconciliation, positions of agreement will be emphasized and disagreement deemphasized to continue working towards the moving endpoint. This is because the TAS holds that it is possible to contribute to a more democratic future. However, the theory is only as effective as its practice.

At the WSD, each school is responsible for creating a school development plan that engages the Board's three-year plan (Western School District, 2018). As per the achievement indicators of this plan, each school's development plan must measure success against provincial achievement test results, diploma exam results, and report card data improvements. This directive seems in opposition to the WSD's long-standing three-year-plan objective of personalizing learning for students (Western School District, 2018), since it would be difficult to measure a personalized pathway using summative assessment as a primary measurement tool. Teaching to the test is a central barrier for my study, as I hope to engage students and teachers in a collective arts-based wellness improvement project, which is not supported by summative assessment.

A significant difference exists between the targeted state and the current state of public education in Alberta. In 2018, the WSD's three-year plan responded to this divide, with its personalized learning goals, which references student agency, high school success, and student mental health. However, in my view as the researcher, and in the design of this project, the three-year plan reveals a gap in understanding the factors that support students' success in life given its focus on the use of standardized testing, diploma examination results, report card data, and high school completion rates as the critical student success indicators. Furthermore, neither wellness nor art are included in provincial achievement testing or diploma examinations; additionally, the words "art" or "creativity" do not appear anywhere in the WSD three-year education plan (Western School District, 2018). In the 3539-word text, "student well-being" occurs only once in a statement on staff instructional practices that "further support student well-being as it relates to learning" (p. 2). Within schools, this disconnect between student success and testing is made manifest by the many conversations between teachers and students about the productive validity

of arts and wellness initiatives even though school achievement indicators give no importance to either. When policy- and decision-makers use these tests to mark the effectiveness of an academic program or to gauge students' readiness for post-secondary education, they send a clear message to students and teachers that what is on the test is essential and what is not is merely "extra."

Educational initiatives that prioritize school wellness need to negotiate the competing educational reform agenda and consider the competitive educational practices that sustain it. Margaret Dagenais's (2011) overview of the history of Canadian standardized testing reveals that test adoption was done in response to student readiness for a changing economy; however, she also refers to evidence showing concern regarding potential harms. She connects the Canadian tests to research suggesting that testing perpetuate stereotypes. She also reports that a standardized metric creates the risk of misappropriation and misunderstanding, and that testing shrinks the scope of instructional practice. Canadian provinces differ in how they respond to the testing; for example, Alberta, which Dagenais describes as embracing "aggressive" international and national testing competitions, continues to support an educational reform agenda based on choice and competition as a beneficial basis for education policy and funding (p. 325). In contrast, she notes that Saskatchewan focuses on differentiated and inclusive learning for students and is less likely to participate in international assessments.

In Canada, the Fraser Institute, which openly supports for-profit schools (Clemmens & MacLeod, 2018), publishes school standardized testing results. These results may guide politicians to institute reform, through simple messaging about academic performance that promotes rhetoric about school choice and creates "superheroes and villains" out of teachers (Kempf, 2016, p. 170). Such discourses create space for "corporate influence on educational

standardization; from policymakers with connections to testing companies to lobbyists working directly for educational companies, to direct campaign contributions” (Kempf, 2015, p. 66). However, they do not provide entry for students, nor reconcile the complex obstacles of test anxiety and culturally biased questions. And, they do not sensitively address individualized learning needs (Kempf, 2016). Put another way, these tools contribute little to personalized learning objectives and inhibit the ability of teachers to learn from each other. Bredekamp and Shepard (1989) long ago provided recommendations to delay standardized testing; they argued for the use of sampling instead of testing every student, and for scheduling tests in the fall rather than the spring so that teachers would not teach to the test.

It was not until 2018 that Alberta schools saw Grade 3 standardized testing discontinued; however, I believe that until all standardized testing is removed, teachers will still feel responsible for preparing students for these inevitable exams. In my experience, teachers in grades one through twelve all work to prepare students for success in the following year. They also work together to scope and sequence school-wide programming to prepare for educational outcomes, and engage students in practice testing to support success in upcoming required achievement exams. If a group of students struggle on a standardized test, I have even known teachers to blame the preparation the students received in the previous years.

Salhberg (2011) interprets the Global Education Reform Movements (GERM) as responsible for similar shortcomings, particularly by the mismeasuring of school and student success. Considerable extant research (Blackmore, 2011; Carnoy et al., 2003; Croft et al., 2015; Dougherty, & Clark, 2017; Steinberg, & Morris, 2001; Yeager et al., 2017) examines school improvement, accountability, and the use of high stakes testing to make important policy decisions for students. This work presents us with a broad perspective and reveals some

legitimate reasons that high stakes testing affects teacher and student belief systems and school wellness in negative ways. All of these drivers have had significant impacts on teachers and students, with economic readiness becoming the dominant force for educational change. This aspect is measured primarily through achievement data such as diploma exams in Alberta, thereby “narrowing the space that teachers have traditionally had to create optimal learning environments for their children” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 179). Many educators question why these conditions persist, since they do not seem to support student potential (Dagenais, 2011; Kemp, 2015; Sahlberg, 2011). Building on these insights, I see testing as a significant obstacle when planning to develop school wellness, especially in regards to developing the learner potential and activating change through collective artmaking.

The tensions between school wellness imperatives, developing personalized learning pathways, and results-driven school improvement foci are a practical problem that must be addressed by all stakeholders before any change initiatives are successfully implemented in a given school. From a TAS, these tensions are both acknowledged and significant, but this imposed limitation does not mean that I believe that this school wellness improvement—by way of a short-term school arts-lab—accepts these policies. Or that I believe that the study will impact grandiose systemic policy changes in one swoop. Rather, I believe that addressing the problem at a grassroots level accepts the challenge and I hope to contribute an indispensable part of the solution by “underwriting educational research with activist agendas of creating equitable futures” (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2014, p. 579).

Understanding Adolescent Stakeholders. Education research from a TAS is premised on the idea that the researcher shares their endpoint with the participant stakeholders and the stakeholders—in this case, primarily adolescents—who must exercise their agency and develop

their own activist agendas for social transformation (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2014). In my experience, adolescents are typically marginalized from school change agendas. The frequent reality is much closer to a pipeline—from leadership to educators to students—rather than a platform with students and teachers working the front lines to construct the system’s future together. Students are often the “recipients of the change” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012, p. 10) and expected to adapt to changes at the school. For example, when assessment reporting moved from one software to another software, students were notified by way of newsletter; when the library assistant’s hours were reduced, students were directed to posted tutorials about how to use self-checkouts; and when cafeteria food regulations changed, students were informed through a website news item.

Adolescent learners possess unique challenges and strengths that will influence the design of any school wellness change initiative that they help to develop. Adolescents need explicit and sensitive facilitation, which means including them in decision-making (Garcia et al., 2011; Rayle & Myers, 2004; Tarver-Behring & Spagna, 2004). In social situations, adolescents are sensitive to issues of status and judgment (Yeager et al., 2017) as they are at a crucial point in defining their self-identity (Milevsky, 2015). Neuroscientific research reports that between the ages of 15 to 25 people are “collaborative, creative, observant, curious, willing to experiment, willing to challenge the status quo, risk-takers, action-oriented, and visionary” (Dougherty & Clark 2017, p. 1). Such insights can help in the design of an arts-lab format as they provide the impetus to welcome student agency and creative collective action. Further, they facilitate adolescent students as primary agents of change in collaboration with their teachers, administrators, artists, and healthcare professionals. Finally, they affirm my determination to

draw from a TAS and to develop my arts-lab plan in light of student goals and visions for school wellness.

Summary. Throughout this section, the unique characteristics of adolescent stakeholders and the key influences of these participants are considered, with respect to a comprehensive school wellness change initiative. This research reveals two primary drawbacks arising from results-based, high-stakes testing for those who aim to act in favour of adolescent school wellness: (1) These testing processes create added stress and anxiety for students at a critical time in adolescent development and (2) standardized academic achievement tests that dismiss subjects such as arts and wellness from the content devalue arts, wellness, and student choice in school improvement. This review of the literature has demonstrated that these foundational perspectives challenge an arts-based school wellness research initiative. If an educator was to challenge these institutional practices by creating platforms where student voices were central drivers of school re-imagining they could support students to be agentive players in school improvement initiatives. The next section illustrates that creative innovations apply to the learning of adolescent students.

The Potential of the Arts for Education Research

This section identifies a range of understandings about what it means to engage in art and how such engagement could influence social change. Specifically, art is an action that changes beliefs and researchers can facilitate this tool to ignite the significance of students' contributions to co-authoring the future. A specific definition of art is identified, followed by a synthesis of my experience with arts as transformative for learning and developing critical consciousness.

Defining Art as a Learning Activity. For centuries, thought leaders have developed aesthetic theories and looked to art and aesthetics to help understand the human experience and

the mind (Ross, 1982, p. xii). Art is a logical place for educational theorists to focus their attention, as the processes involved in making art and working to improve the art product are recursive. Discourse in this field has examined the evolution of language and thought (Vygotsky, 1962/2012) and observed art's value in enhancing learning, especially when learners critique an art object (Eisner, 2002a) or imagine collaboratively (Sawyer, 2010). Neuroaesthetics (Zeki, 1999) advances educational researchers' understandings of how humans process art. Scholarship in this field connects artistic thinking and neuroscience by examining the effect that embodied cognition, perception, emotion, semantics, attention, and decision-making have on the brain when engaged in the function of artmaking, art appreciation, and art criticism (Zeki, 2012). Researchers have even proposed that because artists study the processing and perceptual systems of the mind, with the intent to affect it, they are, in fact, neurologists (Zeki, 2012).

However, to consider how art may offer advantages in a learning or educational research context, it is necessary to also define art as a verb. Limiting understanding of art to only its function as a noun—or as a pretentious ending, a final form, an object—obfuscates its larger potential as both process and experience. Indeed, focus on the high achievements of art in its final form contributes to an elitist myth of the artist as a genius, thus overshadowing the reality that the creative act is in all who choose to use it (Stetsenko, 2018). The central idea here is that art is something powerful that people do, an idea that is supported by numerous educational theorists (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002b; Greene, 1995a; Vygotsky, 1925/1971).

For Dewey (1934), emotional experience is central to the meaning of art. He illustrated the concept with his aesthetic theory in *Art as Experience*, where art experience is an exchange between its environment and the self. Dewey posited that “science states meanings; art expresses them” (p. 84); he recognized aesthetic experience and empathy as “a means of promoting a

civilization's development" (p. 326). For educational change scholars like Dewey, the development of knowledgeable and connected students can only strengthen the world. Important issues emerge in Dewey's analysis of defining art too narrowly. Dewey (1934) identified two common mistakes made when one thinks about art as only expression. The first is that it merely expresses the artist's emotions; the second is to think of its expression separately from the artist's communicative intent, the "expressive objective" (p. 69). Dewey supports the material view that art denotes a process of doing or making. He points to dictionary definitions of this activity that concern "ability in execution" (p. 47). Additionally, he suggests that "sensitivity to a medium as a medium is at the heart of artistic perception" (Dewey, 1934, p. 199). Finally, Dewey holds that artistic media and descriptive forms have no limitations and can be anything at all. In allowing a medium to be anything at all and highlighting the connection between the artist and the environment, Dewey (1934) reveals the gains that arts offer the artist and opens the door to who is an artist.

Vygotsky had a passionate interest in poetry, literature, and theatre in his childhood and youth (Pass, 2004) which informed his academic pathway. Linking these interests with his traumatic experiences of war, famine, death, and disease, he developed the idea that art provides emotional "catharsis" (Connery, 2010, p. 23), which leads to the transformation of the individual and the collective. This idea provided a foundation for Vygotsky's thought on the origin of art, the experience of catharsis through the creative process, and the transformational value of art (Vygotsky, 2004). He used this frame to focus on the uniquely human processes of creativity and imagination in his work with children and adolescents. His descriptions and characteristics of play can be seen to parallel some constituents of artmaking, especially those of improvisation and the collective creative process of play building. Vygotsky's (2004) notion of how a child,

through play, creates an imaginary situation with rules that are known in advance but are developed and made explicit in the play, applies also to the improvisational challenges and joys of making art. Vygotsky identified art as one of his cultural artifacts, as did Eisner (2002b), who did not limit the definition to historical material but also to the construction of new “knowledge creation” (p. 211).

It is important to include play and creativity as constituents of artistic learning. In play with another person, even an adult, children imagine situations that are beyond their age and ability. In this social activity, it is as though “he is a head taller than himself” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 102). The play and the person create a zone of proximal development (ZPD) for the child, where the playing itself is a “major source of development” (p. 102). Vygotsky proposed that consciousness emerges from human activity, mediated by artifacts and signs (Vygotsky, 1978). He focused on the social importance of language, saying that people learn in social groups first and later internalize the knowledge individually. Many educational theorists, working from their own unique perspective, have worked with Vygotsky’s ideas about creativity, learning, and imagination.

Stetsenko (2017) offers an expanded notion of ZPD, which includes a wide spectrum of human activities in which the mind cocreates “zones of what is possible as a flexible orientation to the future” (p. 176). The TAS offers creativity as a form of resistance and dissent, and Stetsenko’s description of the highly complex and creative act of knowing, being, and doing that cocreates the world in unique everyday social experience parallels improvisation in play (Stetsenko, 2018, 2019). For her, it is important to include creativity as a formative constituent of human development because to do so moves towards empowering non-elitist, anti-racist discourse and practice. She argues that in addition to explicitly integrating Freire’s critical

pedagogy (1970/2000), educational researchers using the TAS must privilege creativity and play in the struggle to move beyond the unsustainable status quo. Her belief that imagination is the key to metaphorically overthrowing dragons (Stetsenko, 2018) resonates with the insights from Maxine Greene's (2001) description of aesthetic education.

For Greene (1991b), the arts are an educator's tool for unlocking imagination in students. Greene agrees that researchers are unlikely to develop one fixed definition of art or aesthetic theory. She presents art as a guide to making meaning of the world; she also offers insights into art education's ability to enable a community to confront the challenges of their lives. Greene calls on art educators to make the "margins visible" (Greene, 1991b, p. 38) and to incite agency, power, and significance. Her interpretation differs from Dewey's, (1934) as she identifies power as essential to aesthetic learning and documents noticing deeply as a tool for teachers. Consider Greene's (2001) definition of aesthetic education:

[It is] an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. (p. 6)

In this definition, it is apparent that the learning result depends on the learner—but the teacher is the student's enabler by facilitating the student's revelations and validating multiple meanings. Greene's (1995b) philosophy of aesthetic education and active engagement is expressed in her discussion of the social imagination, which she describes as the capacity to "invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient societies, on the streets where we live, in our schools" (p. 5). She also comments on aesthetic encounters, which she connects to "discovering cultural diversity, to making community, to becoming wide-awake to the world" (p. 6).

For Eisner (2002b), art is significant because it fundamentally provides the viewer with an understanding about the creator's experience with the world. Eisner also considered it an oversight that knowledge-building is historically not recognized in the arts, or that this aspect is secondary to its ornamental nature. He demonstrates this with the comparison that "works of art enable us to know something about feeling that cannot be revealed in scientific statements" (Eisner, 2008, p. 8). A working definition of art, then, must encompass the act and method of learning in and through the arts.

Eisner (2002a) points to the influence that artmaking has when the students take on the role of the art critic. In this context, they organize and direct new ways of thinking. As critics, students practise verbally discussing the work, drawing on analogy, metaphor, innuendo, characterization, interpretation, and intention to explain what they see. By looking deeply, students notice context; with time and subtle attention, they begin to see how the components in an artwork constitute a whole through the interplay of diverse attributes (Eisner, 2002a). Eisner (2004) calls this noticing ability "connoisseurship" and readily extends this application to include instructional practice aimed at educational improvement. Similarly, artists often go back to the same work over and over again, each time bringing to it a new lens with which to strengthen it.

Gablik (1992), a lesser-known advocate for the arts, offers a contemporary viewpoint of aesthetics that supports an evolving understanding and definition of art as an action. Her suggestion is that it is essential for artists to undertake a progressive and ecological paradigm shift to "connective aesthetics," and for arts educators to similarly encourage this shift. She argues that the arts must move towards an interconnection of others, self, and society. Further, she invites a feminist perspective that rejects the myths of an autonomous canon and the neutrality of art.

In sum, my definition of art is this: the process of artistic creation that promotes transformative social imagination and fosters a reflective, meaningful interconnection between the artists, the art, and society. This position follows ideas from Dewey (1934), Vygotsky (2004), and Stetsenko (2017) that provide insight into learner development. Greene (1995b), Eisner (2004), and Gablik (1992) contribute direction to this definition by providing notions of the arts experience within the world, such as the social imagination, connoisseurship, and connective aesthetics.

Overview of the Use of Art for Wellness Action. It is possible that the practice of artmaking is enough to improve wellness in schools. Art therapy has long been used by therapists and patients as a mood-lifting method to affect well-being. New research suggests that even without the therapeutic lens attached to art interventions, progress in the mental wellbeing of individuals involved in the arts is substantial, with evident and long-lasting change (Crone et al., 2018). However, this “art for arts’ sake” perspective would undermine the Bakhtin objective of “art for life’s sake” (Haynes, 2013, p. 23), where art and life answer each other, which aligns with the values of arts activism in educational research. In Tom Barone’s (2006) review of socially engaged arts-based educational research, he makes the case that in a time of rhetoric terms such as accountability, freedom of choice, and educational standards, “the time is right to intensify our efforts at intervening in history through our scholarship” (p. 217). For Barone, socially engaged arts-based researchers must “artfully coax [people] into collaborative interrogations of stale, tired, taken for granted facets of the educational scene” (p. 226). He recommends researchers go beyond the audience of the “intelligentsia” (p. 219) to “subvert the master narrative” (p. 221) by communicating directly to the popular culture. Finally, he warns people like me, who propose projects that use art purposefully as a tool for change, to engage in

what he terms conspiratorial conversations so as to remain epistemologically humble. The TAS refers to the same notion when insisting that the stance of both participants and researchers must be transparent, not attempt to be neutral, and strive to be mutually challenging (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2014).

Not every piece of art contributes to social change. A strong argument has been made that frivolousness and elitism in art detract from its role in social change (Ruskin, 2006). Even so, as I developed a critical consciousness and was inspired to use my skills in drama as a tool for radical activism in informal learning environments, I endeavoured to create art that was not inferior or secondary to its political message. My work with a theatre company focused on street theatre, popular theatre, agit-prop, and culture jamming. In post-secondary education to become a drama teacher, I developed my skills as a reflexive educator, which encompassed awareness skills that are critical to mutual liberation (Greene, 1991a; Norris & Sawyer, 2012); my thinking became less dualistic and I began to value art as a verb, which is different than approaching art as a noun.

It was a privilege to work under Diane Conrad and Joe Norris in my undergraduate work, two educators who taught me how to use focused critical reflection and praxis in my teaching practice. They introduced me to Boal's (1992/2002) participatory audience technique that uses forum theatre to "joker"—that is, to generate new meanings through improvisation. Numerous connections that strengthen this educational research emerged in the intellectual act of "jokering," which means to make a play and use it to mirror and reflect, and then create a new play with the audience's suggestions. For example, by questioning assumptions, participants are forced to re-examine what they know, and as Ackerman says, "learning then becomes deliberate and mindful" (cited in McDougall et al., 2011, p. 14). Thus, this dramatic transformative change

tool can support this project in a meaningful way, to effect much-needed improvement in school and student wellness.

These experiences, formal and informal, ground my belief that the process and the product of art are social and potentially transformative. It is evident that even as a person is making something, they are changing it. Eisner (2002b) states, “A work in progress begins to look more like a conversation than a lecture” (p. 78). Further, the decision-making that artists engage in during the process of artmaking is often surprising and requires a “willingness to take risks” (Eisner, 2002b, p. 79). Engagement in the arts can create knowledge. Students’ learning experiences can be collaborative while giving them agency over many aspects of their work. They thus develop efficacy through experience. The ideas in the following paragraphs support this personal understanding.

A fundamental assumption guiding my doctoral research journey is rooted in Freire’s (1970/2000) critical pedagogy—that a participatory, democratic, and generative approach to learning is necessary for transformative change and is an approach that values both the student and the teacher. Educators can help facilitate this change by engaging in praxis that guides students towards critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/2000). For this investigation, students are recognized as drivers in this initiative for school change. Honouring students’ voices effectively and transparently is essential to openly defining what the research is doing and exploring why the participants are doing it. This is a means to privilege the people who are working, the “who” of the research. This project intends to build on the research and theory on using learning through the arts as transformative for adolescents, educators, and the researcher, which will guide this wellness project.

Summary. The ideas presented in this section are significant in many ways. Both Vygotsky (2004) and Dewey (1934) identify emotional engagement and response as essential to the active learning process. These understandings strengthen the perspective that art is useful for developing wellness in adolescents. In other respects, this section presents the arts as beneficial for the growth of critical consciousness and the development of connected students. My expanded viewpoint simultaneously appreciates these insights and also sees artistic creation as encompassing a process of transformative social imagination and reflective interconnection between the artists, the art, and society. This information asks researchers to treat art as being much more than just producing ornaments to be admired; instead, it confirms the potential of arts for agency, collective action, and social change.

Wellness

This section presents the foundational perspective on defining wellness and its elements, and then reviews the dominant research on wellness and schools. The final segment identifies major foci relevant to school wellness goals. I close this section by revealing an important definition of wellness as it pertains to this project. Wellness research has found correlations between human flourishing and social justice. Prilleltensky (2011) argues that the conditions of justice are a requirement for humans to thrive. His data support the idea that there are distributive, procedural, relational, informational, retributive, and cultural types of justice that influence organizational and community wellness. He studied mediations as well. "The mechanisms that mediate between suboptimal conditions of justice and coping include resilience, adaptation, compensation, and downward comparisons. Critical experiences, critical consciousness, critical action, and righteous comparisons mediate between vulnerable conditions of injustice and confrontation with the system" (p. 2). My conclusion, then, is that this research

urges educators and students to place justice centrally within wellness; accepting our roles as agents of change in this regard could alter inequality at all levels of human experience, from the personal to the collective.

His research about organizational and community conditions support school wellness action as a mission aligned with the TAS agenda. Central to the TAS agenda is the thought that “human development is a collaborative and creative ‘work-in-progress’ by people agentively and collaboratively realizing their shared worlds in pursuit of their goals aligned with a sought-after future, each from a unique standpoint, agenda, and commitment” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 325). As such, Prilleltensky’s research substantiates that the TAS supports a wellness agenda. Elsewhere, Prilleltensky & Nelson (2002) developed a humanistic social justice framework to support interventions that promote personal, relational, and collective well-being. They positioned and selected core values imperative to attending to each domain of wellbeing as follows.

They positioned three core values imperative to attending to personal well-being:

1. Self-determination. The aim is to build opportunities in self and others to pursue life-goals without getting overly frustrated. This domain tackles mastery, control, self-efficacy, voice, choice, skills, growth and autonomy.
2. Caring and compassion. The objective is to express concern for oneself and others and their physical and emotional well-being. This domain undertakes mastery, love, attention, empathy, attachment, acceptance, positive regard.
3. Health. The aim is protection of physical and emotional health of self and others. Emotional and physical well-being are the needs addressed in this realm.

They placed two basic values that are essential for relational well-being:

1. Respect for diversity. This value is about promoting respect and appreciation for diverse social identities and people's abilities to define themselves. The needs met in this area are identity, dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, acceptance well-being.
2. Participation and collaboration. The promotion of fair processes whereby children and adults have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives is defines this value. The needs discussed in this realm are participation, involvement and mutual responsibility.

They uphold two values that foster collective well-being:

1. Support for community structures. The target of the value is the advancement of community structures that aid in the pursuance of personal and communal well-being goals. In this field, the sense of community, cohesion, and formal support is addressed.
2. Social justice and accountability. The mission with this value it the development of fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations and resources for the oppressed. Economic security, shelter, clothing, nutrition, access to vital health and social services are the needs undertaken in this domain (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002).

The view that collective action in favour of school wellness is an act for social justice hinges on the understanding that what people can do is affected by the wellness of a school community. Interventions that improve the wellness of people advance humanistic social justice (Gostin & Powers, 2006), a core insight identifying that wellness is critical to personal worth and social attention. Indeed, wellness shapes the kind of life that students can lead. In this sense, then, social justice involves pursuing the goal of wellness and human flourishing. Comprehensive school wellness action is thus a participatory activist pursuit that engages student learning and informs student well-being.

Elements. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers well-being to be imperative, as articulated in their constitution, initially published in 1946: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 2019). More recently, they have added this definition to their glossary of new terms:

Wellness is the optimal state of health of individuals and groups. There are two focal concerns: the realization of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and economically, and the fulfilment of one’s role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, workplace and other settings. (Smith et al., 2006, p. 5)

This definition of wellness includes two actions—the act of realization, and the fulfilment of role expectations. By specifying these qualities, the WHO contributes to an understanding of the concept that wellness is dynamic and changeable and is not just the absence of physical or mental illness.

The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports published a review of the relevant scientific literature, with a primary intention to examine areas of agreement and disagreement and to propose a credible and uniform wellness definition. The review defines wellness as a “multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being” (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001, p. 3). The review identifies six critical characteristics of wellness:

1. Wellness is multidimensional; the exact number of subdivisions differs among experts, but the seven most commonly used are: physical, social, intellectual, emotional (mental), spiritual, vocational and environmental.

2. Wellness describes a positive health state.
3. Wellness is a component of health.
4. Physical, social, intellectual, emotional (mental), and spiritual are wellness subdimensions possessed by an individual.
5. Wellbeing and quality of life describe our life's sense of happiness.
6. Positive health and wellness are integrated and interact (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001, pp. 3–4.)

These six characteristics indicate a pursuit of growth and highlight the development of optimal wellness through a multidimensional approach. The above summary indicates subdimensions to wellness definitions that commonly include: physical, social, intellectual, emotional (mental), spiritual, vocational and environmental however numerous additional subdivisions have been discussed in the literature such as economic, cultural, and climate (Miller & Foster, 2010). Miller & Foster (2010) conducted a synthesis of the literature and their conclusions regarding the subdivisions listed above are summarized below:

1. Physical wellness focuses on body type, genetic factors, and harm-avoidance behaviours; healthy exercise, diet, seeking medical care and having a realistic view of physical limits are essential to maintaining physical wellness.
2. Social wellness includes relationships between others, community, nature and work; the more robust a social network the better a person's health. The comfort and level of communication skills one experiences in multiple circumstances is strongly related to social wellness
3. Intellectual wellness requires an optimum level of stimulating intellectual activity such as critical reasoning, talent development, and higher order thinking both for personal advance and societal progress. Intellectual stimulation is tied to emotional well-being.

4. Emotional wellness involves a strong sense of identity, optimism toward life and the future, high self-esteem, a rational self-view, emotional awareness, being able to cope with stress and constructively communicate with others as well as the sense that emotional maturity develops over time.
5. Spiritual wellness centers on the ongoing process of seeking meaning, through personal values and beliefs toward life's purpose, the shared community, nature, and on considering one's place in the universe.
6. Vocational or occupational wellness is the degree to which one can express values and achieve personal satisfaction and enrichment from paid and non-paid work. One's attitude toward work, the ability to balance multiple roles; and use one's expertise to contribute to the community are essential indicators to occupational wellness.
7. Environmental wellness is a wide dimension that takes into account the quality of an individual's relationship with the environment on a local, community and global level, including the home, the workplace, the community, and nature (Miller & Foster, 2010.)

This established body of literature suggests the need for a comprehensive school-wide approach to wellness. Although a number of studies have focused on daily physical activity (Buchanan Farmer, 2016; McCary, 2007; Peters, 2008) and healthy diet (Jomaa, 2010; Trammell et al., 2013) little emphasis is placed on social, intellectual, environmental, and emotional wellness in their school-wide approaches. Interestingly, growing research, partially developed after positive findings in adult populations, indicates that mindfulness practices in schools influences positive mental wellbeing (Ager et al., 2014; Albrecht & Veall, 2014; Metz et al., 2013). However, while some of these studies report positive findings regarding mindfulness and emotional, social, spiritual, and environment wellness in students, other studies find little effect

(Huppert & Johnson, 2010). Although these studies do not show a connection between agency, arts, action, and school wellness, they do substantiate that more research would certainly add to the understanding on how to support optimal conditions for the social, intellectual, environmental, and emotional factors in wellness.

Wellness Determinants. For schools, the challenge is to influence determinants of student wellness. Unfortunately, rigorous studies are difficult to conduct. However, research reviews have shown that comprehensive school health models do promote health (Stewart-Brown, 2006) and improve educational achievement in elementary aged students (Murray et al., 2007). Programs with traditional interventions are effective with children until they reach adolescence, but at this crucial time—when they are most needed—they show reduced effectiveness (Yeager, Dahl, & Dweck, 2017). The research makes sense of this disconnect by considering the limitation of short-lived interventions and by noticing student opposition to top-down approaches to health initiatives.

The Western School District approaches health and wellness through a comprehensive school health lens that encompasses four components: healthy eating, active living, supportive social environments, and positive mental health (Western School District, 2018). The WSD division leaders ask each school to identify goals for creating healthy school communities and offers the following support for this work (Chief Superintendent, 2015, p. 1):

- Implementing healthy school policies: We have created several system-wide administrative regulations relating to nutrition and student safety and well-being
- Developing strong partnerships and services with our communities: Our students' and school's health and wellness needs are supported by many organizations and generous donors.

- Creating supportive social and physical environments: Schools use a variety of approaches and strategies to create safe and caring school environments that best suit their school communities. They are also supported by a variety of system resources.
- Teaching students about health and wellness: Wellness is included in the Alberta Program of Study, which identify what students are expected to learn and do in all subjects and grades from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

This framework is consistent with the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (2008) model of comprehensive school health, which uses the same four components of action. This nationally recognized model of Comprehensive School Health provides the following criteria:

- Recognizes that healthy students learn better and achieve more
- Understands that schools can directly influence students' health and behaviours
- Encourages healthy lifestyle choices and promotes students' health and wellbeing
- Incorporates health into all aspects of school and learning
- Links health and education issues and systems
- Needs the participation and support of families and the community at large (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2008.)

These categories are relevant to the four components of action that the past WSD Chief Superintendent (2015) outlines for the system strategy. To implement healthy policy, school systems must recognize the connection between health and learning and accept that they influence students' health. Additionally, school systems that develop strong partnerships with the community will increase family support, community participation, and link the education system to the health care system—thus, recognizing the strength in community learning. Finally,

teaching students about health and wellness depends on a safe and caring environment, one that includes a comprehensive understanding of health and wellbeing in all aspects of learning to support students in making healthy choices (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2008).

Building this capacity and expressing these components can be approached in various ways, including addressing biological determinants like exercise and nutrition with policy (World Health Organization, 2008). External partnerships can also influence social and environmental stressors (Epstein, 2018). Further, researchers are also beginning to understand how to use neurological capabilities to develop positive emotional wellness and mindsets through meditation (Lutz et al., 2008) and prosocial influences (Davidson & McEwen, 2012). Maximizing the intersections between art and emotion may emerge within this multifactorial context to elicit wellness action at school.

Davidson's (2016) research reveals that four areas of mental training can significantly improve an individual's wellbeing: rebounding from negative emotion (resiliency), positive outlook, attention, and generosity (Davidson, 2016; Helliwell et al., 2018). According to Davidson (2016), "Each of these four is rooted in neural circuits, and each of these neural circuits exhibits plasticity, so we know that if we exercise these circuits, they will strengthen" (para. 3). In synthesizing these various perspectives, I arrive at the following definition of school wellness: a growth-oriented collective effort to foster student and educator well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment.

Summary. To ensure school wellness protects the educational rights of students, it must be culturally responsive and non-discriminatory. Social activism includes a commitment to wellness at the level of individuals and systems. Numerous educational theorists recognize the

aesthetic experience as a means to connect to emotional (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995a; Vygotsky, 1925/1971) and environmental learning (Gablik, 1992; Stetsenko, 2017); thus, exploring the potential of arts to strengthen resiliency could be a valuable line of research in comprehensive wellness in junior high schools. This section identified the specific determinants and elements of comprehensive wellness and confirmed the pursuit of well-being as holistic and environmental. The information presented identified aligns with the actions of leaders in my local educational communities are working towards, as well as what they recognize as worthy goals. This information has allowed me to identify a definition of wellness that strengthens this project and reinforces the need for further research into school wellness through the arts.

The Transformative Activist Stance (TAS) and an Arts-Lab

This section follows my research trajectory through TAS, from inception to my intended application. Throughout the review, arts-based understandings are considered in light of their capacity to contribute to the development of a methodology for this research project, which leads to a discussion of an arts-lab.

The Central Role of Action in Change Initiatives. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “action” as “something that is done” (Action, 2010, para. 1), which fits with my use of this word. Still, further description is necessary to embrace the pivotal role that this concept performs in the planned study. To situate the project within the broader scholarship I will begin with Freire’s (1970/2000) contention that “there is no transformation without action” (p. 86). Freire saw humans as agents of praxis, action, and reflection; oppressed people can develop conscientization by aiming action and reflection at the structures that oppress them and need to be transformed, that a teacher’s role was to help a student learn to learn thus, facilitating deepened awareness of their individual pathways to freedom. Stetsenko (2017) expanded on

Freire's notion of praxis to introduce conscious transformative action that changes the world also transforms the person and their community. Dewey (1934) more precisely referenced "impulsion" (p. 58) as different than an impulse to act because "the how" of the action is unknown. This very "how" helps distinguish between an expressive spontaneous act and the act of meaningful expression—by choosing and mediating an appropriate material to the expression. Dewey also distinguished between art and craftsmanship, by the presence of emotion. In other words, an action is vague and potentially meaningless if divorced from its purpose. For an arts study, the implication of this is that the process of creating art is substantive action, made stronger still by a clear and explicit focus on transformative change.

TAS draws on several existing theories to overcome numerous divides and highlight the term activism, "in contrast to the more neutral notions such as experience, engagement, dwelling, or participation" (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 34) as a crucial challenge to researchers. This theory builds on transformative research, aligning with the notion that students and teachers must help establish the reality of the problem and the community circumstances in which the problem lives (Mertens, 2008). It operates as critical participatory AR, defined as a "social process of collaborative learning for the sake of individual and collective self-formation, realised by groups of people who join together in changing the [actual, not abstract] practices through which they interact in a shared social world" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 20). Activism is therefore one important distinction.

Importantly, while a TAS acknowledges that participation matters to development, it emphasizes "contributing to transformative communal practices from one or the other side, or position and stance, on their dilemmas and contradictions" (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 34). From a TAS, human deeds do not take place in a fixed world that people react and adapt to; rather, people

simultaneously bring forth the world and themselves in mutual becoming (Stetsenko, 2019). Theoretically, I embrace the aspirations of this distinction as an important part of my own world view. I also recognize that on a practical level, the implications of driving systemic change as a dissertation project is hard to enact. Nevertheless, I take the position at the intersection between critical participatory AR and a transformative activist stance and I draw from this combined approach.

Stetsenko's (2017) theory urges educators to take an activist position by taking up a pedagogy of daring that co-authors the world, by "contributing to collaborative practices and knowledge creation in collectively realizing the world and ourselves" (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 353). She advocates for emancipatory research and teaching-learning that emphasizes embodied ways of knowing and activist education. In this effort, she guides researchers and educators through an expanded Vygotskian approach, from the confident position of her first-hand academic experience working with Leontiev and Davydov at the cultural-historical school established by Vygotsky. She rejects the notion that the development of a cultural mediation model within the Cultural Historical Activity Theory framework is the most important element of the work of Vygotsky and notes this perspective leads to bystanders. She points out that Vygotsky's focus on activity elaborated in much detail "the centrality of transformative collaborative practices in human development" (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 167), with the vital individual action being the transformative agency of seeking one's own becoming and simultaneously "making a difference in collaborative practices by contributing to their unfolding dynamics" (p. 270). Stetsenko also notes that in its first step, the Vygotskian project identified that the mind is enveloped in the way people are positioned in the world, including developmentally; and, in its second step, Vygotsky revealed how the mind developed to facilitate

people to take action by creating a mindful distance, thus acting with self-determination and freedom. The TAS expands that the distance is created by one's stance and goal to "move beyond the given" (p. 293).

The TAS focuses on the tools of agency and activism by pointing to the imagination, play, and the radical tradition of arts-activism. However, Bidell (2017) has criticized Stetsenko's description of the TAS as lacking practical exemplars. The strengths of an arts-based action research (ABAR) project is thus apparent—it offers an embodied means to focus student and teacher energy on their world. ABAR can provide both the link between thought and action and a clear method for collaborative activism. Thus, I suggest that because art embodies action and can, therefore, play a central role in educational change initiatives, it could support research from a TAS.

Greene (1995b) was concerned with schools engaging their students in active learning by involving them in imaginative quests to facilitate new beginnings. Her comment that "action implies the taking of initiatives; it signifies moving into a future seen from the vantage point of actor or agent" (p. 15) further supports the main position of this project. To make art that is focused on taking action is a significant change-making initiative. For this project, action requires a critical view of the circumstances. Here, the arts act as major components of culture, serving as major artifacts in the human quest towards meaning and relevance (Eisner, 2004; Greene, 2001) and thus are a logical point of intersectionality for leveraging this collaborative project. Specifically, I will refer to action taken together by a group of stakeholders in a school community to achieve the common object of investigating the state of wellness for the school community.

From change lab to arts-lab. Building on Vygotsky's (2004) ideas of social and cultural learning, Engeström and Sannino (2010) developed a practical application of the theory principles they call change laboratories (Engeström et al., 1996; Engeström 2001, 2015; Sannino et al., 2016). The idea of the diverse stakeholder laboratory has been developed in myriad ways in the business world, the arts world, and the world of social development, all domains interested in analyzing challenging situations and innovative ideas. Companies, improvisational arts teams (Sawyer, 2008), and social activists (Hassan, 2014) have been at the forefront of a move towards participatory and art-based approaches to innovation, and have made significant gains in employing collaborative creativity to meet their needs. Hassan (2014) has focused his life's work on facilitating successful social labs, where people cross silos to meet a social challenge. He has found that the underlying condition to the success of the social lab is that team members act of their own volition. The collective learning does more than just enhance community investigations; indeed, myths of the creative person and the isolated genius are dispelled (Sawyer, 2008) in favour of findings that collaboration is essential to (a) breakthrough innovation (Sawyer, 2012) and (b) a more transformative, generative, and strength-based learning method (Kelly, 2016).

The group creativity research of Sawyer (2008) concentrated on jazz musicians and theatre improvisation to uncover the peak conditions for breakthrough innovation in arts-based activity and innovation labs in successful creative businesses. While many studies show that broader functional and collaborative teams, consisting of people from various corporate roles covering all product development phases, result in faster product development times (Sawyer, 2008), the research also shows that certain conditions are needed for collaboration work to generate insights (Broderick et al., 2016; Sawyer 2008). This research specifies how to create

those conditions and arts-based ways of knowing are leveraged in these understandings. Significantly, the delicate balance between improvisation, planning, structure, diverse groups, clear goals, and flexible autonomy are key to arts collectives successfully enabling group flow. The insights gained from this research, combined with Stetsenko's (2017) position that mindful distance is essential for self-determined progressive change, support me in designing an arts-lab for wellness action. In the next section, I look closer at the social innovation change lab methodology.

A change lab is useful to find novel solutions to problems encountered in the early stages of deliberate change efforts (Westley et al., 2015). The process identifies what is happening and what it means, including common concerns and unexpected circumstances. In later stages, participants broker new partnerships, find new ways to understand a situation, build networks of resources, and extend their influence on their community. Change labs consist of a diverse group of decision-makers who cocreate solutions, working in spaces conducive to creativity that include open spaces, food breaks, and time for reflection (Westley et al., 2015). Change labs deliberately aim to transform a situation, take advantage of transitions, build bridges between top-down and bottom-up innovation, and stimulate a range of innovation through various activities (Westley et al., 2015). Significantly, the lab can bring people together during a time of change or crisis. "When problems persist, a disruption occurs, or a crisis demands that stakeholders need to make sense of the situation, there is an opportunity for innovative change" (Westley et al., 2015, p. 18).

Social labs, innovation labs, change laboratories, and change labs all can create a space for social experimentation, where participants can act and react, and recursively explore the many possible successful outcomes. Typically, a change lab is initiated following interviews

with potential participants during which the goals of the lab are designed (Torjman, 2012). A document called the “challenge brief” summarizes these concerns for all involved. Arts activities and other actions are integrated throughout the workshops; for example, videography and documentary film, “is used to capture, observe and describe situations thus revealing relationships that could be missed in individual interviews” (Torjman, 2012, p. 9). Researchers have explored games, mapping exercises, computer simulations, visualizations, poster sessions, and other creative activities for their potential to contribute to a change lab (Torjman, 2012); certainly, they can be designed into the process if they further the objectives of the lab participants. Scenarios are often designed with role-playing activities, in the hopes that they will expose “experiences, concerns and constraints” (Westley et al., 2015, p. 58) experienced by different stakeholders. As the workshops move into a more expansive phase, after an iteration has engaged a new idea, radical thinkers and artists can also be brought in to stimulate further thought and discussion through presentations, and question and answer sessions.

Although change labs use the arts extensively to facilitate the process (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Scharmer, 2007), for the most part, they do not explicitly engage in critical analysis. They also do not recognize what the arts bring to the process of knowing, since they avoid the role of the arts in understanding both how things are and in imagining how they could be in the future—which collectively generating interest, excitement, connection, or lateral thinking. Manuals to support change lab facilitation process (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Scharmer, 2007) do not mention attending to the artistry in the process, nor does the work recognize the importance of the participants’ reflections on the art activities. A search on November 6th, 2019 of Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, and the EBSCO databases using the terms “social innovations lab” or “social

innovations laboratory” or “social innovation laboratory” or “change lab,” and “arts-based” revealed no relevant research. The closest result was in JSTOR, which led to a study that used a change laboratory to examine professional learning to promoting creativity in schools (Daniels et al., 2007).

The change lab, therefore, offers a favourable opportunity to further a collective understanding of using arts in transformative activist research. The research design outlined in this proposal includes using the arts to facilitate student agency in an effort to reshape the school to meet their wellness needs. Collaborative learning within an arts-based change lab, which privileges the collective, artistic endeavours and transformative activist research, will be enacted, which the aim to thoughtfully urge students and educators to lead efforts that invoke the arts as a tool for wellness action.

Agency, arts, and collective action are the forces that lead this school wellness advancement. Thus, with these goals in mind, the arts-based change lab, or arts-lab, is a tool that can structure the research process. In the arts-lab design of this project, targeting a transformative change that engages excluded or marginalized people (like students and educators) as active participants and contributors is a good fit. This is so because dynamically engaging them in implementing the activities and using art to critically analyze the structure of the school in relation to wellness will ideally transform their collective understanding of the purpose of education.

Summary. A TAS, as described above, supports the contention that arts are a valuable tool for stakeholders engaged in mediating change, such as adolescents who are interested in improving wellness in schools. Extant research also identifies opportunities for the development of an arts-lab. The segment above on the central role of action illustrates the need to include

adolescent theories of action in the development of the research program. I invoke this theory in my project by including their voices in developing and defining collective action pathways.

Discussion

This engagement with the literature aligns with my aim of using art for wellness action in school change by exploring the educational theory that privileges arts, mindful agency, and collective participation as key drivers for wellness action. Freire (1970/2000) and Boal (1992/2002) inspired this participatory approach to arts-based action research. These educators are famous for their influence on the work of literacy, community empowerment, and using arts for change. Vygotsky's (1962/2012) social development theory and Stetsenko's (2014) TAS perspective further ground this work in learning sciences scholarship. Finally, Eisner (2002b) and Barone (2006) call for a disciplined activist approach to ABR and analysis. The literature gives us a view of how a school community can improve itself and what elements comprehensive school-wide health includes. Additionally, the literature reviewed here identifies salient factors affecting transformative learning and includes current understandings about adolescent learning, ABR, and what that means for the design of an arts-lab.

Despite everything the world had to offer (friendship, love, sleep, food, playing games, watching things) and although the opportunities for happiness are limitless... life is also full of sudden, unexpected, fast-flaming disasters of every size and shade of importance.

—Orhan Pamuk, *Along the Bosphorus* from *Istanbul*

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I describe the research design for my study. First, I reference the departure from the original research design, methodology and methods, for which I received ethical approval from the university and school jurisdiction in March 2020. One of the most significant and personal driving forces for the original study was the notion that this study would inform my ability to support students' roles as leaders of school improvement in practice. The main modification in the study given SARS-CoV-2 was the inability to include student participants; while I accepted the rationale for this change in direction, I acknowledge that it was a huge disappointment. Optimistically, my original study design is not wasted, and a future investigation into privileging students as leaders of school change via an arts-lab can still draw upon the thinking and research design that was sidelined here. To that end, I have included the entire original design (See Appendix F) and all the accompanying documents that supported the initial ethics approval. It is my hope that researchers can use the information to support targeted interventions reasonably aligned with the study's original goal. The next section details the rationale for the methodological approaches. Then, after an account of the modifications, I describe the research design, methodology and methods I developed and enacted in response to the pandemic and resulting health crisis. Thus, chapter three has two main sections: the first part to outline the modifications from the original study design intent, and a second section to outline the study as I enacted it.

Explanation of Study Modifications

The severe educational consequences of SARS-CoV-2 (World Health Organization, 2020) affected the design of the arts-based participatory approach to action research engaged in this educational study. Over the three months of back and forth revisions, between my initial

proposal submission and its final accepted version from the research ethics board, circumstances shifted drastically. In response to the limitations imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic, I redeveloped the research outlined in the original proposal. Based on the lockdown restrictions of the medical emergency, my modifications would still allow for findings of how arts activities might inspire mindful agency for educators, while also being significant for school wellness. I anticipated the Western School District's reasonable assertion that they would be unable to approve my proposed research with students at the time. When they made this known I requested they consider instead my engaging virtually with educator participants to discuss field-testing arts-lab activities with a wellness intention, rather than hosting an arts-lab for students and teachers. Based on the iterative conversation, we were able to negotiate approved activities that I believed would still contribute to my theoretical research aims while remaining feasible and acceptable within our new pandemic reality. I shared these efforts and modifications with the ethics review board, and they accepted the new proposal. I was pleased that both the reviewer boards recognized the importance of the project. This chapter outlines the study as I enacted it.

The Rationale for the Methodology

I had planned to take a TAS approach to action research (AR) and merge it with an arts-based (AB) design. The approach was chosen to instantiate the collectividual dynamic (Stetsenko, 2017) by engaging individual stances as developed through an arts-lab process. This methodology can inform the collective activism developed through this arts-lab intervention. AR is typically a collaborative, systematic, cyclical process that improves education by incorporating change (Mertler, 2017); AR may be informed by critical theory, as a relevant approach for developing collaborative transformative change interventions (Kemmis et al., 2014). Exercising the AR framework by using an arts-lab method to engage participatory arts activity can allow me

to use the vehicle of artmaking to pull forward the voices of the participants and myself into social activism.

The rationale for action research (AR). AR has been practiced for decades and is a proven transformative approach (Levin & Greenwood, 2011). AR seeks to understand how participants make meaning to interpret a phenomenon and seeks to engage participants in solving a practical problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). AR as a social change—committed research process transforms inquiry into collaborative action (Levin & Greenwood, 2011). Action research is focused on organizational actions a community has taken, wishes to take, or is taking to address a problematic situation in practice, or to further enhance an improvement. AR typically follows a plan, act, or reflective procedure, and reorients focus by analyzing the data along the way (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Organizational activism that is co-constructed with stakeholders, and measured by participant engagement (Levin & Greenwood, 2011), positions AR as an excellent fit for my research. AR is grounded in local knowledge, which means that a primary investigator who is both a qualified researcher and a part of the community strengthens the inquiry.

The AR methodology adheres to Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) living theory view, to ensure that I judge my practice against my values of justice, freedom, and the agentive creativity in the collectividual—in an effort to continually improve my ways of being, knowing, and doing. The TAS is consistent with the AR living theory and extends this aim further by clarifying that activist education is a process that does more than expose oppression and reflect conflict. This is because the development of a TAS is part of continuous activism in the making: humans create a new world by acting in it. Following a Vygotskian tradition, the TAS highlights that, “the mind is always made in co-acting, together with other people, in shared collaborative activities that are

part and parcel of wider social practices and collaborative projects” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 319).

The TAS and AR are consistent with critical theory and with my personal values of justice, inclusion, and equality as they bring researchers and participants together in solidarity as equals to collaboratively facilitate the development of personal and social goals.

McNiff (2013) reminds educational researchers that AR work is generative as it has the power to generate new knowledge, insight, or understanding. McDonagh (2007) also illustrates the generative transformational potential with her documentation of students who directed her AR study through their journalling. Researchers participating in AR know that it “will inevitably involve others in a variety of ways: as participants in the research, as validators of its findings, as new researchers who will carry the research forward, and so on” (McNiff, 1999/2012, p. 49).

Through a series of iterative arts-lab research activities, my goal is to inform this personal and collective reflexive inquiry by drawing on participant and researcher experiences and knowledge to inform future actions and thoughts (Hendricks, 2016) for myself and my participant school(s).

AR allows researchers to honour the voices of their study participants; indeed, this methodology more generally asks students and educators to share control of the direction of the research, both as facilitators of change and as transformative inquirers themselves. As people become involved in the process and experience other participants accepting their ideas, they may take more risks and advocate for the changes they want to see. AR enables a researcher to address many different problems while maintaining a focus on the main issue; the process credits the participants and researchers with effectively engaging in joint-learning initiatives.

Underscoring the value of this methodology, Levin and Greenwood (2011) argue that research that is not applied is inadequate and falls short in rigour. They contend that the social sciences require reform, and that practices should be tied to theories that are socially committed and

engaged. This perspective aligns with Stetsenko's pedagogy of daring, which insists that while the end point is continually moving, the "truth of the struggle [is] contingent on the quests for social justice and equality" (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 359).

The rationale for arts-based research (ABR). A pervasive view about the strengths of ABR arise from the notion that transformative change occurs when people are involved in the arts—which, in turn, emerges from the historical power of the arts to propel social change and influence learning (Boal 1992/2002; Greene 1995b; Stetsenko, 2017). Eisner (2002b) asserts that the imaginative space in which arts activities unfold is flexible and diverse; it is indeed an effective tool in the areas of social change, data creation, and analysis, and creating opportunities for diverse viewpoints to be voiced (Eisner, 2008).

Finley (2003) saw performances as creating an open, dialogic space for inquiry and expression. This performance method extends this capacity for knowledge creation by using events to present and interpret arts, as well as creating a context in which community-building can happen. Using the new knowledge generated by arts-based processes can increase educators' capacity to meet the needs of students by validating different ways of knowing. In education, arts is thus a tool with a powerful potential: as Eisner (2007/2010) argues, "the aesthetic represents the highest forms of intellectual achievement, and it is the aesthetic that provides the natural high and contributes the energy we need to want to pursue an activity again and again" (p. 8).

ABR as a methodology is an umbrella term that includes many ways of using arts-practice in research (Leavy, 2015). ABR creates unique interactions that produce content in inventive ways—by linking the topic, through the literature, with the practice, through the researchers (Norris, 2016). It requires that researchers "notice deeply" the assembly of the art project, which can be called "the very heart of action research, for it can lead to transformations

resulting from new connections that have been made and experimental actions conducted” (Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007, p. 436). Art production itself entails interpretation, while also being a form of experimentation (Quinlan, 2010). Using an AR approach to inquiry allows researchers to look back and describe how the participants and the researcher got to where they end up, a concept quite difficult for many artists. Uniting a diverse collective of interested people, researchers, educators, artists, and students to collaborate on this research together has the potential to be very powerful.

The rationale for merging action research (AR) and arts-based research (ABR) for an arts-based participatory approach to action research. Knowledge gained in the fields of art and design education recognizes that contemporary art is situational, contextual, and of a communal nature. Following this, a new method of ABAR has been collaboratively created and developed by a small group of artists, educators, and researchers (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). ABAR thus engages participatory arts-based methods to develop the AR method. Arts-based activities can facilitate and promote agency, problem-solving, reflection, and play, which extends the ZPD and supports transformative learning (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 2004), making for a powerful linkage to AR. If researchers engage in a reflexive artistic process with a community, perhaps they can redefine the aesthetic experience from the students’ and educators’ perspectives.

Moreover, when students and teachers are involved in arts-based learning they both become more active agents, which stimulates and empowers them (Greene 1995a; Lowenfeld, 1957). AR is noted as a progressive and empowering process of engaging reflection for change (Mertler, 2017), while ABR offers an alternative practice for deeply engaging in this cyclical reflexive activity (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). A/r/tography (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005)

and ABAR (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018) focus on diverse aspects of the creative cycle and researchers' skill development, as well as the role of communities in practice. However, both practices privilege a values-based expression of sound, images, and performance (Leavy, 2015). Leavy (2017) recognizes that it is in "aesthetic understanding, evocation, and provocation" (p. 10), that arts-based study sees value. Aesthetic understanding improves perspectives and enriches awareness. The art-making also provides a method of creating the artist within, evokes internal thinking and contributes to personal growth. Art infuses its' subject with meanings and as such becomes a tool to provoke learning in others.

With firm roots in both AR and ABR, Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) have outlined a structured method of working in the field of ABAR. They found that purpose and mediums are not always clear at the beginning, as it is common for the process to be both intuitive and confusing. In their ABAR model, each cycle begins with planning, setting goals, and exploring socio-cultural situations in the community or place. The next step—taking action and making art—can be described as an intervention. The research material is documented as observations and artifacts. Each cycle ends with a reflection, analysis, and expression (such as an exhibition) of the research data. In characteristic AR fashion, the research questions are further specified and defined after each research cycle. Nonetheless, ABR researchers often end up in chaos during the research process and need space and freedom to find their methods (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

This cycle of action is comparable to various AR models. My design followed a process similar to this, such as Riel's (2019) illustrated model of collaborative AR that ends each cycle of "study and plan, take action, collect and analyze evidence, reflect" (Riel, 2019, para. 5) by sharing findings. By sharing my intentions and my findings with different audiences, my process

would follow two cycles shared with different audiences two times. An important aspect of a value-laden non-neutral approach to research is several iterations of explicit sharing (Stetsenko, 2017).

Description of Study Modifications

In this section, I describe the process and pivot to a modified methodology because of SARS-CoV-2. I begin by reflecting on my actions with a timeline of events and responses, including an outline of the modifications sent to the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) and the Western School District, Research and Strategy Department (WSDRSD). Then, I describe the work with educators, the data collection, and my approach to data analysis.

Reflection on My Response

I received approvals from the University of Calgary (U of C) CFREB on Friday, March 6, 2020, at 4 pm. At that time, I learned that SARS-CoV-2 had spread outside of Asia into Europe; however, in Canada, the WHO advised that the risk of SARS-CoV-2 was low: borders were open, international travelers were not quarantined, and calls to do so were met with accusations of spreading misinformation (Staples, 2020). On Tuesday, March 10, 2020, I sent my research proposal to the WSDRSD. At 12:31 am on Friday, March 13, Dr. Dru Marshall, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) of the U of C, sent an email to all students announcing the temporary suspension of classes. This was followed by an email from U of C President Dr. Ed McCauley announcing that classes would resume Monday through remote delivery. On March 13, at 4 pm, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Deena Hinshaw, addressed the province with the announcement that there were six new cases of SARS-CoV-2 in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 29 in Alberta. All cases were travel-related. All patients were in stable condition, and only one was in the hospital.

Recommendations were made to restrict gatherings to a maximum of 250 people, establish frequent handwashing, and avoid international travel; anyone who returned from international travel from March 12 onwards was asked to self-isolate and monitor symptoms for 14 days, although some exemptions were made to this rule. Dr. Hinshaw advised against school closures, citing the WHO recommendation, and instead offered a “safe schools” checklist (CPAC, 2020). On March 15, notice was given that all Alberta schools would be closed to students effective Monday, March 16 (Chief Superintendent, 2020). March 17, I received an email from the WSDRSD indicating that my application would be reviewed within twelve weeks, taking us to Wednesday, June 9. If changes were required, I would expect an extension of that time frame. As an Assistant Principal, I had some experience with the best-laid plans being sidelined by an unexpected crisis. I had a sense that this crisis was rapidly changing the context of my study, which was very disheartening and disappointing and would likely mean more work; however, I had no time to wallow and I knew I better get on with making changes.

I met my advisor, Dr. Jacobsen, via Zoom on March 18 and followed that with an email to the WSDRSD in which I outlined two ideas to shift the project from face-to-face to an online environment. I offered the U of C’s access to Zoom as a tool. I requested a collaborative approach to revisions given the changed context of Alberta school learning environments. I felt confident that educators would be more interested in working on wellness than ever, given the global crisis revolving around wellness. I did not feel confident that the WSDRSD would be able to support the original proposal, especially the aspect the included student engagement and face-to-face activity before the end of the school year. I added the choice of inviting interested educators to field-test the ideas as a back-up to the original proposal.

On April 9, I received an email from the WSDRSD that confirmed my fears. They suggested that the idea of omitting students from the proposal and working exclusively with interested teachers would be more feasible at this time. They suggested a revised proposal, with numerous conditions, as follows: they would not approve Zoom as a meeting tool; digital data could not be saved in the school division's OneDrive environment; the showcase of the art posed some safety questions they could not see how to solve; use of the physical school space for photography would require a school rental agreement; uses of school equipment, like cameras or computers, would require an additional request; and students and schools were unavailable at the present time to participate in the project.

Planning the new direction for my doctoral research was challenging. I felt that I would not be able to do the arts-lab improvisation project justice without teachers, students, healthcare professionals, and artists all working creatively together. Much of my thinking and reading had convinced me of the importance of using art to shift power relationships, and to elevate student voices from their typically marginalized position in school change initiatives. I was especially interested in seeing how the collective strength of diverse teams and arts-based imagining could influence organizational changes. While a worldwide health and wellness crisis provoked the new direction, I considered what changes I would need to make to ensure the research was valuable, useful, and meaningful for educators to engage in—especially given that students, artists, and healthcare experts were no longer going to be part of the experience.

A core aspect of transformative research is that its participatory action must fully engage the marginalized voices (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). I wondered how the arts-based work could stay safely away from becoming a make-work project for teachers and, in fact, contribute to school wellness issues facing the student and teacher communities right now. Further, could it

still be completed in the time frame that I had? Financially extending this research to another semester was not feasible, and, of course, there was certainly no guarantee that a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine would be ready by then anyway. I was fearful that taking the collective arts-action, the physical arts-lab, and the arts-show out of the research plan would limit my study and findings.

I reviewed my research purpose with this changed course and rewrote my research proposal for the WSDRSD. It did not resemble the improvisationally based collective arts-lab for wellness change that brought groups of people together to engage in close physical arts for change, which I had anticipated leading. As I scrambled to modify my research and protect my participants, I struggled to keep things in perspective. After some reflection, I decided that this was the time that I had and that this research remained all the more important, given the current health crisis. For *educator* participants who were engaging in online environments, it would create opportunities to explore arts-based educational activities for wellness change. Connecting them virtually so that they could explore this shared goal could benefit them, could benefit their students, and could improve their well-being right now—, which I believed was a worthy goal.

On April 23, I received approvals for these modifications, with the caveat from the Western School District that I would not do any research in June; the CFREB approval hinged on my hosting online sessions using Microsoft Teams. These stipulations presented minor obstacles: one is that the Microsoft Teams platform did not have an effective grid view platform at that time, limiting some possibilities for the arts-based activities. Another was that research would have to begin field-testing immediately. Many educators plan their units and lessons weeks, and even months, in advance. This meant that they may not be able to incorporate any of our learning into their work in the short time-frame available. Regardless, my revised study now involved the following activities:

- A request for the participation of educators through their school principal
- A virtual orientation session to review and discuss the proposed arts-lab process for future school settings
- An invitation to educators to field-test arts activities that focused on school wellness, including the creation of art as determined by the educators
- A virtual session I would host to discuss field-tested activities and art creations as they apply to a wellness-focused arts-lab goal
- A Toolkit that captures the thinking from the session and field-tests, and my interpretation and analysis, that could be used to support educators in their wellness work at schools

I continued working to adapt my research so that it still addressed the main research question. However, I removed numerous participant groups I had originally intended to engage. Specifically students, health care professionals, artists groups, audience members would no longer be participants; instead, I included educators who were artists, educators who were advocates for student voice, and educators who were school change leaders (See Appendix F). I updated the three sub-questions so that they (a) continued to support my primary aim to explore how the arts can inspire collective action focused on school wellness, (b) identified how arts as an activity may inspire mindful agency in educators, and (c) reflected the changed activities. I continued working on answering the main research question and the updated three sub-questions, as follows:

Main research question: In what ways can a participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab, enhance educators' school wellness practices?

Updated Sub-Questions:

1. What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore—according to *educator* participants?
2. What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school wellness—according to the participants in the arts-lab?
3. What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants' current school wellness work —according to *educators* who were participants?

With the support of the educational research communities, both within the university and the Western School District, I was encouraged to seek essential insights by working closely with teachers. With the rapid pivot during a health crisis, and the need to redesign my research quickly, I maintained confidence that my study could inform meaningful designs for learning with students, and also contribute to a body of knowledge that could influence practice.

Although I did not receive ethical approval until April 22, I engaged in a qualitative approach to knowledge building by creating the plan iteratively. My approach was influenced by the changed collective practices of the broader community, conversations with educators, and reciprocal submissions between myself and the ethics review boards between April 8 and April 24, when I hosted the first virtual arts-lab session with educators. The support and gratitude that I received from participant educators confirmed my feeling that this study, albeit different my first imaginings, was needed by my community. COVID-19 created an obstacle to connect with my community, but it also highlighted a shared commitment to focus on arts-based school wellness action and a need for a shared connection amongst educators working towards that end.

Description of the Work with Educators

The new study design still included transdisciplinary influences and employed multiple methodological tools. I iteratively responded and adjusted to participant voices through reflective activities. The one critical change was that I no longer drew from youth-led participatory action-research. However, critical participatory AR (Kemmis et al., 2014), and the TAS (Stetsenko, 2017) perspectives significantly reinforced this ABAR design. I tested critical arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2011) as a research tool by using arts-based activities with educators, which helped me to examine points of strength and solidarity in participant perspectives on well-being.

I took an integrated arts approach to the AR design, drawing from the classic creative model of preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Wallas, 1926/2014). This process follows Freire's theory of praxis that orients action and reflection towards the system we hope to change (Freire, 1970/2000). I believe that the participant engagement in working with arts and wellness, despite the government directive to focus only on literacy and numeracy, aligns with my primary aim to support the mindful agency of teachers in influencing wellness. Thus, the work can influence a growth-oriented collective effort to foster student and educator well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment.

I planned the research study to move through two non-linear iterative processes (Figure 3.1); however, a more factual description of the process includes much more back and forth. During the process, I repeatedly returned to my theories, questions, and participants to inform my observations, confirm my interpretations, and reorient my next steps in as transparent a manner as possible (Figure 3.2) as captured in my reflective journal. The actual study lasted three months, not the originally proposed six, and some of the gaps in data were, in part, due to the shortened timeline. This tightened timeline was partly due to four months of ethics revisions

for the original project, and partly due to the June cut-off for the new project requested by the Western School District. My impression is that this compressed timeline likely impeded the potential strength of the study. Thus, at some future point the study, as originally planned, would still be a meaningful project to pursue. In a crisis however, the leadership opportunity is to deal with the conditions that participants must now engage in—which are optimal for empowerment, but also vulnerable to the instability linked to the crisis (Koehn, 2017). Here specifically, I was cognizant of this key factor: I facilitated the activity outside of regular school hours, at a time when staff members were under enormous pressure; by choosing to attend for numerous non-linear conceptual stages of creativity, understanding, and art-building, the participants demonstrated a powerful commitment to the aims of this activism.

Figure 3. 1

Planning Model—2 Iterative Phases of the Research Process

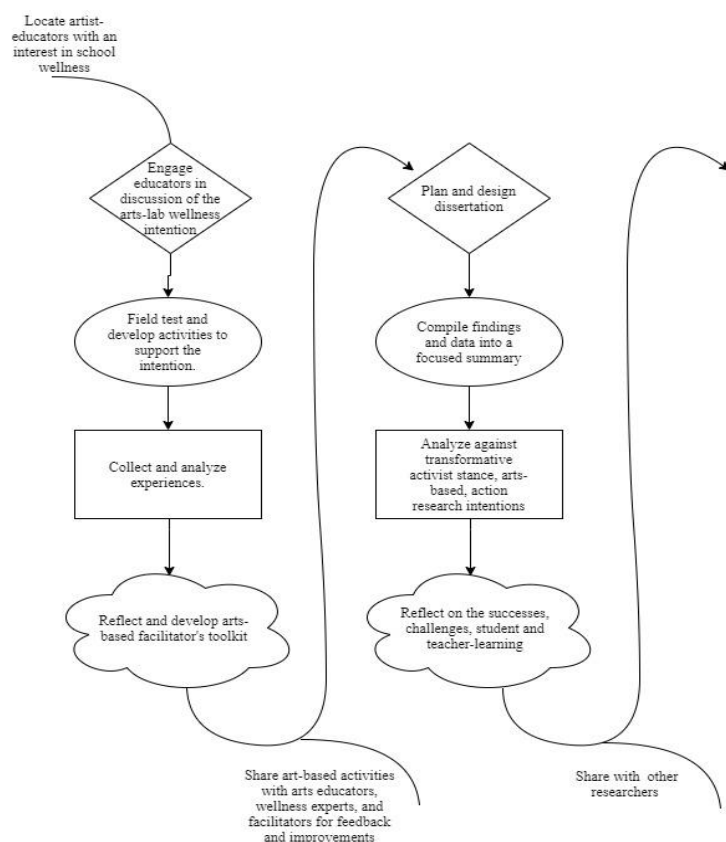
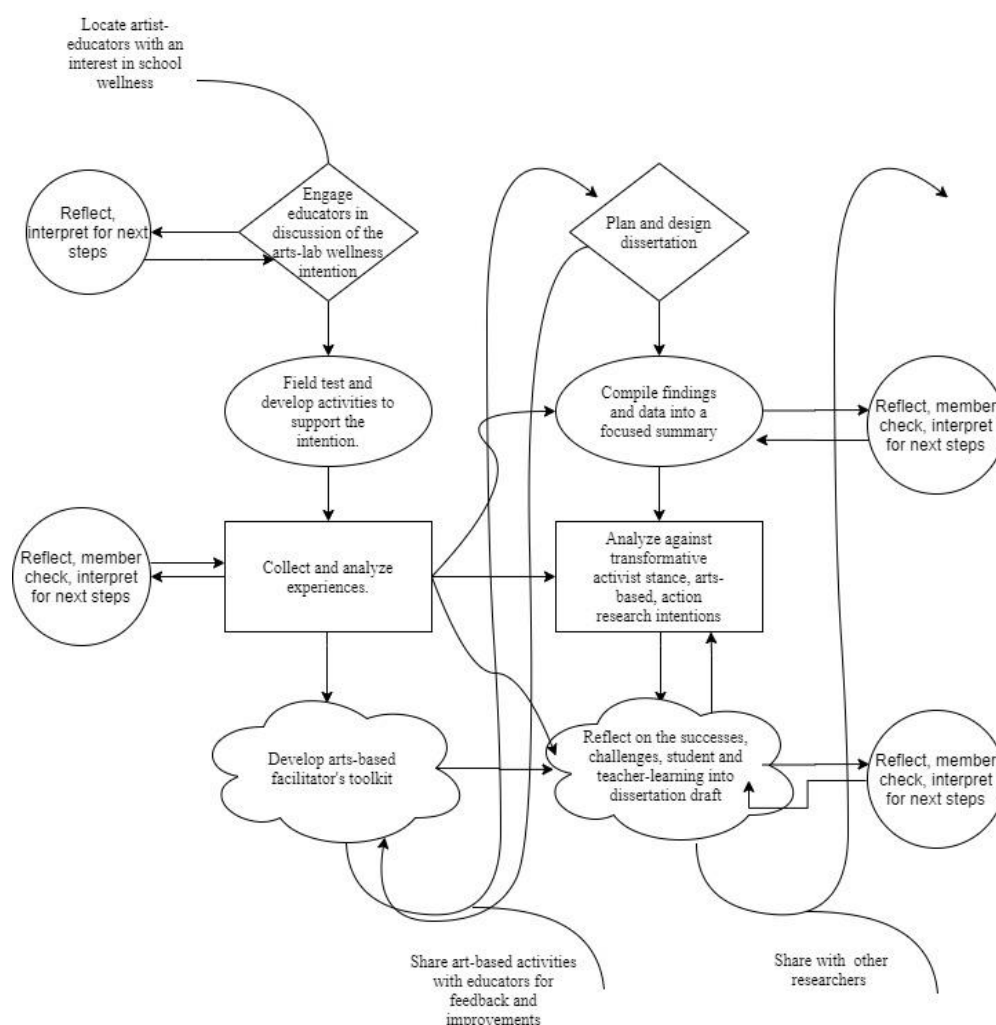


Figure 3.2*Factual Model—2 Iterative Phases of the Research Process***The Emerging Design of the Research Phases**

I informally approached three arts-based educational change leaders to discuss how to weave my research into the frameworks they were currently developing, in a manner that supported their instructional needs during the remote emergency learning necessitated by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. I collaborated with these artist-educators to co-construct a shift in direction so as to position an activist stance committed to the arts-lab effort, given the institutions and communities changed social needs (Stetsenko, 2017). They provided the unique insight that

artist-educators have recently been redeployed with the Alberta Education directive to focus teaching literacy and numeracy, a concerning directive for arts-education activists. They noted that while they were currently feeling overtaxed regarding their increased workload, they could have more time available in June. They thought that a purposeful intervention with interested educators could generate a ripple effect in our collective practices. Moreover, educational understandings on how to advocate for arts-based education were essential within this new back-to-the-basics landscape, which is focused only on literacy and numeracy (Government of Alberta, 2020). These artist-educators believed that the intention behind my original research project could be adapted to serve public education in a time of need; they also predicted that I would be able to revive a student-centred arts-lab in the near future.

They suggested using this research as a professional learning opportunity for artist-educators to integrate arts and wellness into their literacy and numeracy curriculum in their new virtual environments. These conversations highlight the unique advantage of embracing the TAS in doing action research. I honoured my striving—drew on my position within the community and recognized the strength in adapting research individually and collectively to meet the needs of changing times and circumstances. Further, research from an insider's position orients research towards transforming practice (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Cultivating commitment to student well-being is a value-based change initiative and can be mediated by school leadership focused on school cultural improvement (Stoll, 2003). The arts-based education leaders with whom I spoke were grappling with a disequilibrium that transformative educational leaders often feel when acting in dominant social structures as activists (Weiner, 2003). Especially at times of crisis, positive identity, participation, and education are key aspects of collective well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) and

strengthening the collective voice of arts-educators can support a more equitable future for public education.

Following my discussions with the three leaders in June, I began recruiting participants and gathering information to prepare the online virtual arts session and a test activity. Important capacities for imaginative thinking that I considered included “connecting” and “questioning” (Holzer, 2007). I worked to design a virtual session that engendered input and creativity in an effort to create a chain reaction of aligned intentions (Hassan, 2014), while clearly connecting to the school and educator visions of school wellness: I also openly stated and invited contributions to the research goals.

Setting and Participant Recruitment

This ABAR took place with educators located in Calgary and engaged eight participants from four schools: two middle schools, one junior and one senior high school. Two of the participants were not currently connected to a school as they were on leave from the Western School District. I decided to identify 10 schools, with room for the first 12 participants to respond—which I believed would be a manageable number of participants in the virtual environment. Knowing I would not be including Alberta Health Services educators or industry standard artists, I choose schools whose staff had a track record of arts and wellness activism. I made a list of people who had published school resources for cross-system use or had presented art and wellness-based professional learning workshops that I had attended. I then sent my emails to principals at those schools with invitations to participate.

Sadly, I found there were a few people on my list who I could not track down, and thus was unable to identify which school or role they were currently in. Of those 10 principals I had set my sights on, only five replied with requests for further information. This process also missed

at least one educator participant I had hoped would join, in part because I did not hear back from that school's principal. I sent further information that outlined my background and the study objectives to four schools that requested further information. Three schools agreed to be part of the study. Those principals and I exchanged information about shared priorities, and how and when their staff could participate in the project. Two educators who were not currently connected to a specific school also agreed to take part.

From those five schools, I heard from nine potential participants. One participant dropped out due to being overwhelmed with the emergency remote learning situation. Three of the participants only attended one of the two sessions, again due to intense workload stemming from the change. I can confidently describe the nine potential and eight actual participants as community thought leaders, one in arts-education for gifted learners, four practicing artists-as-educators, three in school organizational change leadership, and all specialists in their own right in the critical aim of guiding effective student learning.

Equally important to understand, along with who was included in the study, is who was missing. I did not engage an educator or facilitator from Alberta Health and Wellness, or a media and performance arts educator to act as a facilitator. Also missing were system leaders, other adult and student allies (like parents) to participate as an interactive audience, or a qualified counsellor to attend the arts-lab sessions as a supportive ally. Most importantly, my modified study had no participants who were student leadership groups with a focus on arts and wellness.

Description of the Action Cycle

Kemmis et al. (2014) suggest that at its best, critical participatory action research is a social and collaborative learning process for “individual and collective self-formation” conducted by communities who change “the practices through which they interact in a shared

social world” (p. 20). I aligned with this thinking and engaged transformative activist practices within the design of the virtual arts-lab approach to open the virtual space to community direction. The first part of the research process consisted of my initial planning and discussions with educational thought leaders and school principals. I also conducted a series of mock sessions with my mother, a retired teacher-librarian, who has deep sympathy for my research and gave me feedback about what worked virtually and what I needed to improve. After the mock sessions, I hosted an orientation, two group virtual arts-lab sessions, and 10 important one-to-one discussions. These pre-planning, intermediate, and final one-to-one discussions supported ongoing adjustments in the study.

In the first group virtual arts-lab session, the input from educators about their stance included a sketch-based introduction and an initial poetry-writing activity that gave voice to their wellness exploration activity. I also provided an overview of the toolkit, describing how I had developed it and intend it to be used. I asked these participants to (a) consider significant arts-based wellness change stories to share, (b) field-test arts activities during the sessions that could enhance wellness learning, (c) contribute ideas to the toolkit, and (d) explain how they were integrating arts-based knowledge into their wellness work. These four actions comprised the expectations for the upcoming sessions and any ongoing participant contributions for the duration of the study. As participants carried forward the session one discussions, by engaging with arts-based wellness strategies in their practices, they also connected with me for intermediate one-to-one discussions to further support this action.

The second virtual arts-lab sessions explored the participants’ reflection on their practices. They also engaged with me in a field-test of a creative movement activity oriented to a common short belief statement. Data collection consisted of my notes and observations captured

after the one-to-one meetings, a transcribed recording of the educators' group discussion about the arts-lab, screenshots of participant art created during the wellness exploration activities, and descriptions of effective arts-lab activities from the perspectives of the participants. Table 3.1 shows the sequence of events within the shortened timeline.

Table 3. 1

Sequence of Events with Participants

Date in 2020	Participant Activity	Topic
April 8, 10, 15, 22	Pre-session one-to-one discussions.	Informal pre-planning conversations and mock session.
April 24	Group session	Orientation, expectations, and virtual-arts-lab testing
May 1, 4, 7	Intermediate one-to-one discussions	Support Sessions and mock session
May 8	Group session	Arts-lab sharing and testing
May 12, 19, 21	Intermediate one-to-one discussions	Support Sessions
June 15, 22	Intermediate paired discussions	Photo Voice sharing and reflecting
July 17	Follow up communications.	Share content I intend to use, request confirmations/additional insights

Research design

To test the theory that an arts-labs could be a useful tool for wellness activism, I conducted virtual sessions between late April and early June. Three educators virtually attended three different pre-planning discussion sessions. Six educators attended the initial group session. Two educators attended intermediate sessions before the final group session, and three educators attended final intermediate sessions after the final group session. The final group session had seven educators attend. A summary list follows:

- pre-planning discussion sessions, two hours each (solo x3)

- first group session, two hours (initial – 6 attendees)
- intermediate sessions, two hours each (solo x4)
- second group session, two hours (final – 7 attendees)
- final intermediate sessions, two hours each (solo x3)

In July, I sent copies of the transcribed discussions and artifacts used in Chapter Four and the Toolkit to the participants for verification. A full reflection on the two phases of the research study and its findings can be found in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

Data Collection and Considerations

Since I planned to facilitate the process, observe the participant engagement, and contribute my voice, I spent time in advance determining how to be both a participant and an observer. I wanted to direct the study through journalling and reflecting on my process to deepen my understanding of TAS, so I used a protocol to meet this aim (See Appendix B). I took great care to describe how data would be collected and made plans to analyze the data simultaneously (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used a data collection chart (Table 3.2) to ensure I paid careful attention to the data, keeping the research questions in the foreground.

Table 3. 2

Framework for Collecting Data

Artifact	Strategy	Research Question	Considerations
Researcher's notes from pre-planning sessions	Capture insights in research journal from personal planning and one-to-one sessions to orient and direct research	RQ1, SQ3	Align goals
Published documents describing the participants' context	Draw and summarize information about school locations from public information	RQ1, SQ1	Align wellness goals

Audio-recording of educators' talk during virtual arts-lab session	Transcribe two-hour virtual session to gain input into and deepen understanding of the arts-lab concept	RQ1, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3	Identify collective creativity norms and processes, change-lab and wellness output points Uncover participants' arts and wellness interests Describe current initiatives Engage in skill and knowledge development
Screenshots of artwork created by participants	Capture emergent ideas through screenshots of generated artifacts poetry and symbols	RQ1, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3	Uncover points of agreement, in light of each participant's unique stance
Researcher's notes and observations of participants and research process during the first active session	Researcher observations of the participants, regarding the process, their engagement, and creative contributions	RQ1, SQ2	Test the arts-lab effectiveness in the community context
Researcher's notes from one-to-one virtual sessions	Capture insights in research journal from one-to-one sessions to orient and direct research	RQ1, SQ3	Align goals
Audio-recording of educator's talk during second virtual arts-lab session	Transcribe two-hour virtual session to gain input into and deepen understanding of the arts-lab concept	RQ1, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3	Test the arts-lab effectiveness in the community context Describe types of participant engagement and creative contributions Gain input into next steps
Researcher's notes and observations of participants and research process during the second active session	Researcher's observations of the participants, regarding the process, their engagement and creative contributions	RQ1, SQ2	Test the arts-lab effectiveness in the community context
Participants' follow-up communications reflecting on the process, providing additional toolkit insights, and sharing additional reflections	Gain clarification, expand and offer new insights on key ideas, and check for accuracy on transcribed information	RQ1, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3	Test the arts-lab effectiveness in the community context

In phase one, data collection included the following:

- reflections on the pre-planning sessions

- extracted and summarized information about school goals from published documents
- researcher reflections on the TAS design
- observations from the word-for-word transcriptions I made from the audio-recording of the initial two-hour group session
- emergent ideas and art captured through screenshots
- reflections and observations of intermediate sessions
- observations from the word-for-word transcriptions I made from the audio-recording of the final group session
- field-tested participant photo series activity, collective poetry, sketched symbol, drawings and learning artifacts from participants

Document Sources

Before initiating the research study, I also collected information from readily available web-based media. In particular, I located publications from organizations and schools about current priorities for school wellness and educational values. Common understandings prevail about how to evaluate an artifact or information found on a website (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which shaped my approach to these sources. Aspects I considered when searching each school's web presence for relevant information included the following: how and when the document was produced, if it changed over time, how it was used, and who used it. These questions led me to the 2019–2020 school development plans, school profile websites, and the About Us pages on the school websites. This acquainted me with the school settings, wellness priorities, and arts-education philosophies.

During phase one of the project, I was able to engage in a collective discussion with the participants after we had tested activities together, which informed the research process and

outcomes. Collaborative Participant photo series activity artifacts explored school inquiries that showed promise in revealing what was working and what was needed in the participants' school communities.

In phase two of the research, I collected and analyzed the data, generating a focused summary that developed my dissertation, the toolkit of practical lessons for arts-and wellness educational activists, and a video lesson for learners that reflected on learning and resiliency. Additional data sources were the participants' emailed verifications of my transcriptions and initial data analysis.

Taking both a practical and academic review of the research strengthened my reflections on the success of the TAS intentions and ABAR, while also mobilizing the learning for school communities. This perspective supported my aim to contribute to an understanding of how educators can make agentic creative decisions for school wellness through arts-based action.

In addition to carefully planning this data collection framework, I planned numerous opportunities to check for consent. In the initial email communication, I collected written consent, and at the start of each virtual session, all participants were reminded of the process to affirm or withdraw consent. I describe the data collection methods in more detail in the sections below.

Researcher Observations

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to flesh out the research process, which relies heavily on researcher observations and reflections. My reflections helped bridge the theories of a TAS with the practical realities of the research, including the notions of critically considering social power operations when encountering challenges with a personal, forward-looking agenda (Kemmis et al., 2014; Stesenko, 2017). I based the journalling protocol I used on transformative

stance questions and also pulled from critical participatory action research reflective categories (See Appendix B). Journaling supported a disciplined reflective pause after one-to-one conversations, as well as critical reflections after group sessions. These notes described the educators' perceptions of the arts-lab research design, my reflections on the effectiveness of the virtual sessions, and the ongoing reorienting of the research direction. Non-identifying photos of artwork, chat communications, and emails were also captured as data, to add details to my descriptions of participant perspectives, which enhanced my reflective thinking (Barone & Eisner, 1997). The reflective journal also played a role in pausing research decisions, so that I could observe ethical choices in the action and planning (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Participant Perspectives

Through audio-recordings and screenshots, group conversations, feedback, and responses to open-ended questions were collected as data during the virtual arts-lab. Then, the digital audio-recordings were transcribed and analyzed for key themes, which were shared with each participant for confirmation and elaboration. Three indices outlined in Chapter Two that align with the research question helped to structure this analysis: seven wellness categories (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001; Miller & Foster, 2010), three broad well-being domains (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002) and four categories of organizational growth (Hassan, 2014). I also consider the type of arts-activities described, the imaginative learning capacity that overlapped the activity (Michelli et al., 2011) and the prominent aesthetic value revealed (Leavy, 2017). Finally, I considered the potential for future school improvement as described by participants. The open-ended questions helped yield descriptive answers, and the verbatim transcriptions of the audio-recording ensured a reliable database for analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This method supported inductive coding and categorizing of each participant's statements, context, motivations, experiences, and

opinions. This approach (Leavy, 2017) made it easier to proceed through the action research cycles and to identify examples of how the initiative was influencing participants' educational practices (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Participant Schools

By the time the study began, the Western School District had updated their three-year plan to include—for the first time ever—the word “well-being” to key student achievement goals. Considering the global pandemic, this effort was timely. The district’s updated plan now includes to “create conditions for success for each student in a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment” (Western School District, 2019, p. 2). Another update identified the goal to support the well-being of employees, in part by fostering a positive workplace environment strategy by “build[ing] trust and collaborative relationships with students, staff, families and communities through respectful and responsive dialogue” (Western School District, 2019, p. 2). This project is in alignment with these two goals of well-being. Further to this district plan, each school has been directed to identify a significant wellness goal and measurement procedure in their school development plan. In the sections that follow, I provide a profile of each of the participating schools.

School Site A. This site is situated in a suburban community and has students from grades five through nine. The school has approximately 640 students and the following personnel: one principal, one assistant principal, eight learning leaders, 22 additional teaching staff, and 16 support staff. It is an arts-centred learning school. Most students bus in to school each day from the surrounding communities. To support reaching the learning achievement goal of well-being, the school development plan is to increase students’ awareness of language regulation and dysregulation, as well as their ability to identify and use strategies related to

regulation. Their strategies to accomplish this goal include direct teaching and teacher modelling. The target for measuring success is an increase in student references to the key vocabulary on an open-ended student survey response question. Arts education is mentioned on the school's website as valuing learning in and through the arts as a means of understanding the world.

School Site B. This school is in a suburban community and encompasses grades seven through nine. There are approximately 720 students at the school, which has one principal, two assistant principals, eight learning leaders, 31 additional teaching staff, and 10 support staff. Most of the students live within the community and walk or bus to school. The school development plan to achieve the goal of well-being is to increase students' ability to effectively problem-solve. Their strategies to accomplish this learning achievement goal include successful problem-solving in a variety of school environments and that students can use this strategy even when they are stressed.

The targets for measuring success are an increase in agreement with the safe and caring schools measure on the annual accountability survey, an increase in agreement with the positive measure that is part of the emotional health summary on the annual student survey, and evidence of positive results of student problem-solving in their PowerSchool online record. The school's website and profile mention arts education: it describes the school as having a core program of studies, fine and performing arts courses, a full range of complementary courses, strong community engagement, excellent extracurricular programs, innovative teaching and learning with technology, and interagency support.

School Site C. This school is located in a suburban community, holding grades 10 to 12. Approximately 1070 students attend this school, which has one principal, three assistant principals, 14 learning leaders, 31 additional teaching staff, and 23 support staff. It includes an

arts-centred learning program. Many of the students walk, take public transportation, or drive from the neighbouring communities. The school development plan states that their aim is to help students reach the learning achievement goal of well-being by assisting them in feeling connected to the school community and ensuring access to support for their academic and social-emotional well-being. This will be facilitated by staff purposefully cultivating meaningful relationships with the students. The school strategies to accomplish this goal include implementing a more comprehensive student-learning team process to identify and support students who are finding school challenges overwhelming or who may be overlooked by administration and guidance personnel. As well, they plan to implement a daily school-wide tutorial block so students have better access to teachers, and teachers can provide direct instruction beyond the formal classroom environment and get to know their students as individuals and learners.

The target for measuring success is an analysis of the student responses to the annual survey question that “staff know them as a person,” that they “understand their learning” and can “explain their progress,” and that they have strategies to help themselves when they “feel stressed.” The school’s website and profile refer to arts-centred learning as one of their programs and describe the school as aiming to increase student success. High school completion and student leadership, student voice, and student recognition are key areas of focus.

School Site D. This site is in an urban community, with students in kindergarten to grade nine. About 250 students attend this school, which has one principal, one assistant principal, two learning leaders, and ten additional teaching staff; both the assistant principal and the principal maintain teaching roles within the school. Most students live within the walk zone. The school development plan states that an increased awareness of personal empowerment and ownership of

learning is its key approach to promote student well-being. Their strategies to accomplish this learning achievement goal include students speaking or writing a “four footprints” guide when bothered by others. It also encourages them, by engaging in triannual reflection, to recognize what they can do, what they cannot do yet, and what they will do to reach their goals.

The target for measuring success is an increase in the percentage of students receiving “evident” and “exemplary” on personal development and character strand areas of report cards. The school’s website and profile mention arts education when it describes the school as having music and physical education specialists and extensive complementary course programs. It also highlights a strong sense of community from kindergarten through grade nine, cross-grade activities, high standards of achievement, and integration of technology into learning.

Participant Profiles

I asked principals to identify educators with an arts background or an interest in school wellness improvement and to forward the invitation to them. Nine educators emailed me their interest and after an additional email correspondence, sent me the signed consent forms. Their backgrounds included strengths in arts, interests in wellness, and leadership for school change. Six of the educators attended the first virtual arts session as research participants, eight attended the second session, and one participant withdrew. Participants agreed to be designated a number and while I concede that a pseudonyms would help readers to personalize the participants, I rationalize my choice because it would help me avoid redefining the participants through characterising names, unintentionally assigning cultural context and offending anyone. This is the choice of a novice researcher; in my future research I might explore a more complex choice by having participants assign their own pseudonyms.

Participant One. This individual is an arts-centred science and math learning leader. She has been working as an educator for the Western School District for 20 years. She is currently working on a Master of Educational Leadership at a local university. When asked what motivated her to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab, she answered by identifying four shared objectives, linked to opportunities, as follows: 1) to connect her university leadership studies to her arts-based background; 2) to explore using arts for organizational change through collaborative work; 3) to extend her abilities in articulating the importance of building an arts-education community; and 4) to access and increase student voices.

Participant Two. This person has a music degree with an English minor, teaches arts-centered English, and has been with the Western School District for ten years. She is an unofficial learning leader, meaning she does not have the official learning leader title of the arts-centred program. She explained her motivation to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab, by identifying two professional aspirations that aligned with the research intention. The first is that the high school's numbers had experienced a drop because a new high school had opened in the area; thus, one of her goals was to reactivate and build the arts-learning community within the school. She also identified building wellness in students and trying to create a safe, accepting environment for them to thrive in as her second goal. This is because she sometimes feels disconnections between the different programs within the school on behalf of her students.

Participant Three. The individual has been teaching with the Western School District for 10 years and was currently on leave from her role teaching high school drama. Her educational background is in drama, and while her experience teaching mainly includes teaching this subject, she has also taught humanities at an arts-centred school. Her answer for what motivated her to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab was her love for the proposed project, as

well as for the idea of building an arts-based community and strengthening connections among like-minded people.

Participant Four. This person is a full-time fine arts teacher and learning leader with the “options portfolio”. She has been teaching with the Western School District for five years. Her educational background includes a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts degree (BFA) with a major in printmaking and a BEd degree. When asked about her motivation to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab, she answered with her excitement about the topic and interest in getting more guidance to help lead her school to use art in a more broad and open sense. She qualified this by adding that her school has not historically emphasized arts as much as physical education, and she saw an opportunity within the wellness goals to work with arts to help her school achieve the wellness goal.

Participant Five. The person has been teaching for over 25 years, both at the Western School District and at a large Eastern School Division. She holds an MEd degree, during which she explored poetry as a way of understanding. She teaches arts-centred humanities and also holds the role of arts-centred learning leader, through which she supports artists to contribute aesthetic and pedagogical understandings to teachers and students. She shared three reasons for why she was motivated to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab: she loves the idea of building a community around arts education and making connections with other educators who believe passionately in art as a powerful way to learn and who might be able to move the work forward; she hoped the experience might provide more ways to articulate what this work is and why it is so crucial; finally, she felt that wellness could be an excellent pathway to explore the potential of arts within an education context.

Participant Six. This educator has been with the Western School District for 25 years. She is currently on leave from her role as an assistant principal to complete a PhD in Education. Her BEd degree has a specialization in Special Education, and she holds an MEd in Math. She expressed a few reasons for what motivated her to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab. Specifically, she said that it aligned with her commitment to public education. Further, when educators take up work that involves the arts, wellness, and community and is oriented towards the greater good, she feels a sense of responsibility to be part of it as well as hopeful about the possibilities that it brings about.

Participant Seven. This person has been working as an educator for the Western School District for 10 years. She currently teaches humanities to students in grades six and seven, as well as an arts-based option course. Her background is in elementary education with a focus on gifted learners. Her answer regarding her motivation to contribute to a school-wellness arts-lab was that arts enables students to “crack open” authentic learning, rather than prescribed learning; it supports meeting the needs of her students—as whole people—rather than simply funneling the curriculum to them.

Participant Eight. This individual has been an educator with the Western School District for more than 16 years, and currently works as an assistant principal. His graduate studies research background includes well-being, and he considers wellness his area of focus. His response to the query about what motivated him to contribute to developing a school-wellness arts-lab focused on how he did not have a strong background in the arts, but that he has developed a strong appreciation for its power. Additionally, he engages with the literature on well-being, finding that it supports the work that he and Participant Four are working on at their school.

Data Analysis

During this AR, I was able to hear educators' impressions of youth perspectives—through collaborative art creation happening as field-tests in classrooms and in thoughtful reflections of their past experiences. For the purpose of analysis, I transcribed both of the group virtual discussions verbatim using audio recordings and broke each statement into different themes on a spreadsheet that I then categorized guided by different frameworks. For the analysis of the value participants described in the arts, I focused on drawing out themes central to cultivating imaginative learning (Michelli et al., 2011), the types of artistic experience practiced including the artistic field (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006) and if practiced by individual or group. I also distinguished and labelled the principal aesthetic value of the experience as “aesthetic understanding, evocation, and provocation” (Leavy, 2017, p. 10). To identify participants perspectives on important school wellness issues to influence, I drew and examined the statements that identified primary wellness categories (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001; Miller & Foster, 2010), well-being domains and values (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) and organizational growth categories (Hassan, 2014).

My analysis was done as an abstract reflection: I looked at the participant-created art and discussion and drew out common elements of school wellness (President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2001) and well-being commitments (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) to find points of solidarity and opportunities for change from the contemporary change lab processes (Hassan, 2014). Based on my knowledge of the participants, my personal experience and drawing on the literature I reviewed the data let it speak and help me see key insights. This process of interpretation distilled clear and meaningful themes and observations.

Additionally, the educator participants endorsed the use of method meets art (Leavy, 2015) by telling stories of their personal experiences and testing the arts-lab wellness activism in their classrooms. This suggests that the interactive aspect of this work—the video reflection or the sharing and discussing of the work with an audience of school community members and allies—could conceivably encourage student voices. Educators and students who engaged in this part of an arts-lab created knowledge outside the scope of this study. The revised protocol focused on educators, not student leaders, as the key participants. As such, it describes how educators support the goals of influencing student and teacher well-being through art. This research yields rich descriptions of the essential artistic practices and capacities for imaginative thinking (Holzer, 2007) that educators reveal as useful to know about as they pursue arts practices that will undergrid student-led change experiences. It also sheds light on the aesthetic understandings that educators see value in (Leavy, 2017), as highlighted in their descriptions and what types of arts activities participants most commonly interpreted as powerful.

The design explored the tradition of ABAR by disseminating the research in formats accessible for a broad audience (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). An adapted toolkit for educators and a narrated video for a broad audience of learners (younger and older) sets conditions to help to raise awareness of possibilities and open conversations to important educational questions regarding themes of well-being, such as the gratitude and resiliency in learning even when obstacles make this harder. These tools support the ABAR goal of using artifacts to encourage further action (Wang et al., 2017).

This research design has benefited from an ABR analysis (Barone & Eisner, 1997) of the collective arts-based approach that unfolds here through discussions of the art products and processes, which in turn justify the findings. Further, ongoing reflections of my TAS intentions

and the necessary modifications given the pandemic circumstances, confirm this AR design. Since the AR process calls for continuous reflection on the successes and challenges experienced, my self-evaluation of my developing pedagogy confirms the value in the research. The social validation seen in the participants' practices, actions, and reflections, which focus on influencing comprehensive school wellness, also point to the strength of the design (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research concerns four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—raised by Gupa (1981). This research project connects these strategies with the ABR models of analysis and the AR methodology to select the techniques that are useful and practical for these purposes. In the following section, I discuss each aspect of Gupa's trustworthiness criteria against both the AR methodology and research cycle, and ABR evaluative criteria, to ensure rigour.

Whitehead and McNiff (2006) point action researchers towards two domains for confirmation of AR: self-evaluation and social validation. In this study, observations and evaluations took the form of an observation notebook containing reflective observations. I logged written, photographic, and audio-recordings (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018); member-checks, opinions, and ideas of the process for participants; the artistic production; and the essential social evaluation of the art exhibits. This study used ABR to inform the practice of inquiry (Barone & Eisner, 1997) and to explore the work created during the course of the research. In ABR, *illuminating*, *generativity*, and *incisiveness* differ from conventional notions of trustworthiness but are equally important.

Credibility. Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings, the plausibility of the information, and the correctness of the participants'

views. Strategies for ensuring credibility include spending a long time in the field, taking samples of data over time, keeping a reflexive field journal, triangulation, member-checking, peer examination, interviewing technique, and “establishing authority as a researcher and structural coherence” (Anney, 2015, p. 276) in the design. The experience that I have had using the arts-based health homeroom intervention encourages me and lends me credibility with educational practitioners, as does my experience with participatory facilitation and popular theatre. My ABAR was made more credible and scholarly by the discussions I had with my academic committee.

Credibility can be likened to ABR that is referentially adequate—in that it allows the audience to see the issue the researcher intends to develop insights about (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Through this lens, the degree to which the researcher’s claims may or may not be realized can be assessed. To ensure credibility and referential adequacy, I have accurately shared my bias and made use of participant voices to enhance how closely the resulting artwork reflects the initial premise and ongoing intent. To establish triangulation, I have conducted participatory discussions, interviews, and artistic reflections, and shared my research insights and artmaking progress with the participants to ensure the intentions are accurately reflected. All feedback has been used to revise the research design and evaluation in accordance with participant reflections.

ABAR is complex, but by completing an observation journal and a facilitator’s toolkit I can consider the complexities and reflect honestly, as a means to address issues that are difficult to explain. I also discuss the broader social context and the micro-political climate as they will play a role in the credibility of my findings over time (Herr & Anderson, 2005) allowing future users of my findings to consider the context. The participants in the research have had the opportunity to evaluate the toolkit and artwork before the final presentation to ensure I have

included their contributions and represented their voices correctly. The external audience at the final presentation will evaluate the artwork and will be invited to share their thoughts on credibility, thus bringing in diverse views. As well, the final research outcome will be viewed by my academic committee. These measures support the effectiveness of ABAR (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

Dependability. Dependability refers to the stability of the findings over time. My observation journal, helped me document the sequence of decisions and how I reorient the questions and arts activities (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018) at each data collection and reflection point. This includes my reflexivity about negative cases and bias, by integrating my preliminary thoughts and my actual observations with my interpretations and theoretical connections (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). To ensure that I explain the changes in context, I improved my observation diary and the facilitators' toolkit by inviting member-checks with my participants.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the extent that results can be confirmed by other researchers, so this will depend on future developments outside of the scope of this project. As Reason and Bradbury (2008) note, "Good action research is that which develops awareness of choices and is transparent about them both among participants and with a wider audience" (p. 6). I include detailed data collection and analysis descriptions in my chapters where I discuss the results and include reflexive discussion regarding the toolkit development, which I made available for all participants to review, contribute to and add their reflections on—thereby also establishing inter-rater reliability. This makes it easier to track all data collection and interpretation processes, to identify decision-making and action-planning which further support confirmability.

Transferability. Transferability enables the reader to determine whether these research findings might be applicable to a different context; thus, this aspect is enhanced by detailed descriptions of the research context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). To this end, I provide comprehensive descriptions of each of the school contexts. I also provide detailed descriptions of the activities and visual accompaniments of all activities and artmaking processes. I accurately report the responses of participants, highlighting those that were divergent. The success of these described contexts and processes in transferability can be likened to Greenwood and Levin's (2007) concept of transcontextual credibility because the success is in the details. After the described results are shared through production, report, and diary, the burden of proof is less on the original research and lies instead with the people seeking to proceed with similar work in their own contexts. I cannot, of course, truly anticipate or know the future contexts where others may wish to apply this research— but providing as much detail as I can about my own research context will facilitate the application by others. The participant discussions allow me to gather some evidence of transferability, but prolonged participation at multiple sites in new cycles of action would be required for a good sense of transferability.

Dependability, confirmability, and transferability can be equated to the arts-based appraisal criteria of *generativity* and *generalizability* (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Readers can develop their judgments about the applicability of this work to their own situations. Their perceptions of the artworks and questions about the concepts studied will be informed by their artistic critique expertise, which may add complexity to their discernments.

Arts-based criteria for assessment ask for various degrees of judgments from an audience, which may include people other than educational researchers, such as educational practitioners and the general public. ABAR has different guidelines for researching than those usually applied

to conventional educational research: it is in the outcome of the ABAR intervention where the most crucial consideration for the effectiveness of the study lies. Essential evaluation criteria of credibility include the artmaking; the ability of the art produced to generate ideas, emotions, mental images; and the participants' increased sense of empowerment and confidence in their ability to effect change (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

ABAR is ever-changing and a detailed description of the contexts and the processes support the credibility of this AR. I have aimed to document in enough detail that someone could learn from the challenges and successes of this study, to enable them to replicate the process in their own context.

Ethical Considerations

This research project is bound by all ethical guidelines as required by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS 2) (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2014) and the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) (University of Calgary, 2019). This research required an ethics review before research began due to the involvement of human participants. Approval was obtained from the Western School District, as per the school district's requirements, the individual school, the school's principal and the participants.

Special consideration has been given to portions of the work involving photographs and video methods of research, data creation, and data collection. Given that participants interested in engaging in arts activism on their off-school days can be assumed to have positive personal motivations, they easily received the requirement that their art include mutual respect, non-coercion, non-manipulation, as well as support "doing good". Informed consent, confidentiality,

anonymity, and ownership of the creative products in the discussion, dissemination, and display of the art have been taken into account (Pink, 2012).

I am interested in contributing to instructional objectives for this research; therefore, the research has clearly outlined the direct links between the time spent participating in this research and the Alberta Program of Studies (Government of Alberta, 2019b). Although the program of studies the research is most aligned with has been tabled during the pandemic, I have connected with literacy and numeracy objectives that are in place. I made every effort to ensure the following: no participants are harmed or misled; all participants agreed to voluntarily allow their data to be included in the study, and knew they could withdraw permission at any time without penalty; all participants were fully informed as to what participation meant; and their privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (if desired) was maintained (Hendricks, 2016). All participants who shared their data agreed in writing to participate in the study by signing the informed consent form. All informed consent forms were signed before the start of the intervention. There were no negative consequences for not allowing their data to be included in the study and all findings are available to all stakeholders via this dissertation. The disposition of the primary data after the research is concluded will be discussed with all participants.

Limitations

A constant limitation faced by action researchers is the very nature of live research that is intended to effect social change (Coghlan, 2017). AR can be unpredictable, participant-dependent, impeded by political obstacles and external change. In this case, the drastically changed composition of school communities from face-to-face to virtual learning spaces, the participants' varied artistic and school wellness interests, and the inherent contradiction between

narrowed government priorities and arts-based school wellness intentions all challenged this ABAR.

The researcher's skills and personal biases can limit the quality of qualitative research (Anderson, 2010). Both a TAS and ABAR underline this limitation. A TAS emphasizes the need for the researcher to outline their critical analysis in an attempt to effect systemic changes, which challenges the so-called objective, narrowed, standardized, and test-based reform agendas (Stetsenko, 2017). The forces that maintain the status quo are powerful and overcoming them is an objective outside the scope of this study. Yet Stetsenko's (2017) theory remains relevant:

In emphasizing agency embodied in the activist stance, the point is not to ignore the power of social forces, but to acknowledge that—specifically in the transformative worldview where nothing is settled or taken for granted—there is space for our agency too, and a central one at that. (p. 369)

My view is that the complex school wellness crisis is supported by positions of neutrality, and that research from the TAS provides an opportunity to evolve from what is into “what could be and must be” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 372). This position, while grounded in activism, still parallels and supports a critical participatory approach to action research. AR is underpinned by the values and skills that the researcher brings into the practice, and therefore it is essential that it is both “self-consciously collaborative and democratic” (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 1) and rigorous research with a “sharp intellectual focus” (Levin & Greenwood, 2011, p. 30). It is important in AR that the researcher clearly state their biases to participants and help them, in turn, also state their own biases. It is equally important that participants acquire the skills necessary to contribute to ethical research and that the inquiry question is continually and openly refocused and discussed to support its methodological and theoretical goals. These should also be

the goals of the participants. This important learning and values clarification must be built into the practice. The challenges in practicing an arts-based participatory approach to action research from a non-neutral TAS require a commitment to hold my bias to contestation. I used my journal to help me be thoughtful about the disruption of the research processes, and transparent in my reflections on my increased awareness of our shared practice so the disruption would be successful. I conducted regular conversations, debriefing sessions and member checks with my participants. I opened and closed each virtual session with a structured discussion to this end. Further, I sent email summaries and final copies to my participants for their validation. These conversations helped strengthen the process, including new directions, some edits for clarity and style, and agreement on facilitating the toolkit's shared authorship best while maintaining anonymity. My research supervisors also played a crucial role in identifying areas to strengthen my reflective inquiry by interrogating and discussing my data analysis and interpretations.

The addition of art adds another complex layer, as it depends in part on the skills of the participants to create stimulating art that focuses on answering the research questions and exploring the issues. In this case, this is in the form of challenging photographs, drawings, stories, and creative movement. This is both an obstacle and an enticement, as the aesthetic learning process can be challenging and rewarding.

An arts-based participatory approach to AR from TAS builds on the premise that media arts, coupled with reflections—from the researcher -for participants and by participants for the researcher— about instigating change is a powerful combination that is unlike traditional school improvement and evaluation techniques. This creates a challenging tension in the work, especially since technology plays a vital role in this research by how it participates in storytelling, community building, and art creation. The success and rate of participatory

technology integration in school environments has also been challenging for teachers and students; indeed, many are unable to recreate, in school, the achievements they have at home, due to barriers to technology. Correctly assessing participatory media creative knowledge and skill acquisition is thus also complicated by this limitation (Jenkins et al., 2009).

PhotoVoice informed activities have some limitations in that participant researchers may feel some pressure to produce something impactful or that pleases the researcher, rather than exploring the topic from their own experience. Guidelines and training help to address these possibilities and focus the work. Some PhotoVoice projects suggest that the criteria for including photos must be clear (Woodgate et al., 2017) and old photos or photos from the internet should not be included unless there is a compelling argument to do so. With my study's participant photo series activity, which was derived from methods traditionally utilized in PhotoVoice, there was no such argument to do so. Another challenge to working through art lies in the availability of tools, materials, locations and media that participants have experience or strengths in.

Practical limitations present in the reality of pursuing this research work during a time of global pandemic, with the attendant mass shift to online engagements and to emergency distance learning measures to maintain people's health. Participants' busy schedules, the rhythm of the school, and the government's decision not to require formalized assessments during this time are potential disruptions to the continuity of the work. A clear connection to curricular objectives and the aim to contribute participants work to a facilitators' toolkit for future work helped orient people. Especially those who were unavoidably absent from different aspects of the study.

An added limitation was the timeline, originally planned for six-months but shortened to a three-month timeline; this length is quite short for a project of this nature. At a minimum, three years would better serve this project because that is approximately how long a student would be

in a school before transitioning to the next school, so a they could plan, enact, and reflect on a change from their perspective over their time in the school. In my findings I look for evidence of an impact—recognizing that this shortened period impedes the chance for a great deal of change. The timeline also undermines the collective activity of imagining next steps and engaging in ongoing dialogue to build collective strength as a school community operating at the school level. However, one advantage of the short timeline is that it constrained the amount of data generated, as qualitative studies typically create large volumes of data that take significant time to analyze and interpret (Anderson, 2010). The shortened timeline made a detailed diary, with multiple member-checks and ongoing descriptions, more feasible and of higher quality, thereby increasing the internal validity of the study's findings. This supports the external validity as well: as the findings include descriptions, reviewing them will help with the design of additional AR cycles, so that new cycles can be enacted in new ways or in different contexts.

The arts-lab process is very appealing because it offers a systemic view, which means that the researcher can initially prepare activities for the participants who intend to engage in the research process. However, as the process unfolds, unpredictable knowledge, activities, and experiences can surface, which will be influential for developing subsequent activities (Bligh & Flood, 2015). The arts-lab offers the opportunity for transformation through a reiterative and reflective process.

Delimitations

This study's delimitations have significant implications. The setting is entirely online and takes place out of school hours, while the artifacts created are presented in a virtual public. The utility of the research is in how it may be translated to multiple diverse and specific intentions. The virtual platform connects well to the usefulness of the study in the practice of the

participating educators. The time frame and additional workload in a busy time ensure that educators who choose to participate are very capable which will reflect a high level of skill and experience in their contributions.

Finally, using collaborative and expressive arts as a method overcomes the challenge that traditional academic research has—that of being inaccessible for many participants (Leavy, 2015). However, it brings with it the risk of losing a clear research focus. I have encouraged aesthetic exploration; however, through interaction, I have also restricted the scale of the artwork to the core issues of the study, redirecting the focus as necessary.

This iterative reflection validates how using TAS to guide research design with the arts-lab model reinforces an arts-based participatory approach to action research. The data describe a relationship between knowingly engaging TAS, and action and reflection that adopted a critical participatory approach to educators' school wellness action. For example, by incorporating more voices in the design of diverse agendas, there was a ripple effect of multiple courses and broad wellness action is supported across contexts. The overall goal of this ABAR is to test the efficacy of arts in influencing change. I predict that the outcomes and implications are still valuable.

Chapter Four: Arts and Wellness Analysis

In this chapter, I examine the connection between arts and educators' school wellness strivings. To this end, I consider three scales that overlap with the main research question and help to organize this analysis: seven personal wellness categories (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001; Miller & Foster, 2010) three broader well-being domains (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002) and four organizational growth categories (Hassan, 2014). I summarize the collected data, and through participants' art, photography, and reflections, I link the analysis and findings to school wellness activism. I present three main findings in this fourth chapter: (1) participants' active engagement in characterizing school wellness areas enables opportunities to reflect on their personal values as related to school wellness, (2) participants' reflections indicated that they found arts-activities and processes helpful for developing artists and contributing to school communities in the making and (3) engaging in the virtual arts-lab provided opportunities for participants to contribute to areas critical for organizational growth. I outline the arts-lab activities and experiences that the participants indicated were effective during interactions and conversations with me.

Voicing School Wellness Perspectives

My intention has been for their research to contribute to school-wellness initiatives by illuminating collective and individual educators' insights through an arts-lab. I infused the design with ideas of developing equality (and understanding that everyone has different needs to experience a sense of being equal) and justice, through a pattern of praxis that would help to develop conscientization (Freire, 1970/2000; Stetsenko, 2017). I also built this design from theories about creating conditions to support collective creativity that inform organizational change (Hassan, 2014; Sawyer, 2008; Westley et al., 2015). I enacted a practice with teacher

participants that expressly connected school-wellness with social action (Alberta Health Services, 2017; Gostin & Powers, 2006; Prilleltensky, 2014) and privileges learning grounded in the arts (Boal, 1992/2002; Holzer, 2007; Lincoln Center Institute, 2012).

The ideas I proposed and activities I suggested with teachers were aimed at uncovering opportunities for one aspect of school improvement—school wellness—based on a broad definition of this notion that expands typical notions of a healthy school framework (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2010). I drew on an explicit framework that focuses on core principles of human rights in school wellness, as one avenue to help communities and their individual members flourish in life (World Health Organization, 2017). My development of a deliberately arts-based practice for participatory organizational change favoured an examination of participant-created art and related processes. The practice sought to refine the use of art, to discover, develop, and depict participant perspectives of important issues in school wellness. I had hoped to engage participants with non-linear generative and creative processes (Wallas, 1926/2014) in a manner that was both cognitively and socially effective.

My design employed the Lincoln Center Institute's aesthetic-education strategies, which are formalized as the capacities for imaginative thinking, in an effort to develop artistic behaviours that serve to educate individuals for a democratic society (Michelli et al., 2011). I turned to the imaginative capacities because of their considerable potential to engage both individual contributions and collective contributions in imagining and reflecting on meaningful arts experiences and social conditions. In this work, I drew upon Maxine Greene's philosophy (1995b) about what undergirds imaginative capacities—namely, incorporating imagination and one's own vision, which are essential to designing for social freedom. The 10 non-linear formalized capacities are *noticing deeply*, *embodying*, *questioning*, *making connections*,

identifying patterns, exhibiting empathy, living with ambiguity, creating meaning, taking action, and reflecting and assessing (Michelli et al., 2011). My research design employed arts techniques, given their potential to contribute to a shared school-wellness vision; the imaginative thinking capacities supported the open-ended discussions and complemented and enriched these activities.

In the arts-based practice, I considered well-being both in the development of the group processes, in the analysis of the artifacts created, and in the participant discussions about school wellness during the virtual arts-lab. A multidimensional discussion of wellness categories, which included *physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, vocational and environmental* subdimensions (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001; Miller & Foster, 2010), also described in Chapter Two, provided one explicit lens to focus participants' exploration of school wellness during our activities and helped to focus on which categories were most significant to participants' quest for wellness. My approach also aimed to adhere to TAS, which requires attention to the dual and complementary individual and collective strivings and values of the participants (Stetsenko, 2017). With this in mind, I also used Prilleltensky and Nelson's (2002) holistic social justice framework for *personal, relational, and collective well-being* (as described in Chapter Two) as an analytical tool to view personal values and shared literacies of democracy as they were pursued by the participants in activities, artifacts, and discussion.

Prilleltensky worked for many years as a school psychologist and was moved to undertake community well-being research because of the limitations he found in trying to help families and children in isolation. As his research on wellness and happiness was inextricably linked to levels of oppression, Prilleltensky (2012) realized the implication that values-based organizational social activism directly affects the personal well-being of the people within the

organization. This insight seemed significant to my own aims in the arts-based practice and my analysis of the interactions and products of that practice. The framework attends to the core values that underlie well-being, lending clarity to each of Prilleltensky's intentions:

- *personal well-being*: through self-determination, caring/compassion, and health
- *relational well-being*: through respect for diversity and participation/collaboration
- *collective well-being*: through support for community structures, social justice, and accountability

This framework helped me both maintain a close alliance between the shared values that comprise community development and the arts-activities I chose that support this development. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) remind us that goals of liberation and well-being are inseparably linked. Importantly, the framework sees a tripartite relationship between improving personal well-being, relational well-being, and collective well-being. Thus, pursuing these goals in isolation is imbalanced, a perspective that helped me to make meaningful sense of these data, since I study proportions of these categories in my analysis.

Arts-lab Activities

Sketched Symbols of Well-being. I invited participants to create several sketched symbols as part of an introductory virtual arts-lab activity (Figure 4.1). These introductory symbols concentrated on activities the participants reported that they did regularly to support their personal well-being. The participant's symbols were used in a "get to know you" opening activity, where participants guessed the meanings behind each other's symbols. All seven of the sketched symbols focused on improving personal states of emotional well-being.

Various approaches to improving the following states of wellness were depicted by participants in the symbols; I present the fifteen participant comments proportionately and list

them here from lowest proportion to highest: physical wellness through walking (1 out of 15 comments or 7%), spiritual wellness through meditation (2 out of 15 or 14%), environmental wellness through enjoying the mountain sun and completing home renovations (4 out of 15 or 26%), and intellectual wellness through reading, painting and playing music (8 out of 15 or 53%). During the activity, participants were observed and heard to encourage each other, smile, laugh, and comment positively on one another's symbols and the content. Overall, the exchanges were positive, and participants engaged with enthusiasm and seemingly without hesitation. When the activity was over, Participant Five commented that the visual artifacts (the symbols) seemed to galvanize people's interest and energy towards getting to know each other. Participant One noted her enjoyment of the different interpretations and how the activity changed her mindset by increasing her comfort with the different people in the group. The images in Figure 4.1 were screen-captured from the first group virtual arts-lab session. They were edited to exclude participant names; the original images are in the researcher's data archive, dated April 24, 2020.

Figure 4. 1

Participants' Symbols Signifying Well-being



Collective Visioning Poetry-writing. During the virtual arts-lab wellness visioning component, a poetry activity led to participants writing a total of 36 lines. Outside of this field-test in the virtual arts-lab, Participants One, Two, Four, and Five had each indicated that they had

subsequently engaged in this activity with their own communities as well. Participant One shared her observations of content created from her classes' experience of the poetry activity during session two, as well as perceptions of leading the activity with her teacher-team during an intersession meeting. Again, as part of making sense of these data I use proportions and categories in presenting my analysis. During the virtual arts-lab activity, most of the ideas that participants shared were focused upon hopes and motivations to improve school wellness (29 out of 36 or 81%), with a smaller number focusing on personal commitments (7 out of 36 or 19%).

The primary wellness categories, as defined by Corbin and Pangrazi (2001) and Miller and Foster (2010), are also found to be reflected in the poetry. I present them here by proportion and category to organize and make sense of the ideas participants shared; some comments were coded more than once because the comment had relevance to more than one dimension of wellness. This approach to analysis generated a total of 39 codes from 36 comments. I have ranked the codes here from highest to lowest proportion by category: intellectual (8 out of 39 or 21%), spiritual (7 out of 39 or 18%), emotional (6 out of 39 or 16%), vocational (5 out of 39 or 13%), and social (4 out of 39 or 10%), with physical (4 out of 39 or 10%), and environmental (3 out of 39 or 8%) depicted with a lesser frequency. As explained in Chapter Two, Prilleltensky and Nelson's (2002) holistic practices support the three domains of well-being and I found these domains to be another meaningful way to categorize the participants' lines of poetry, from highest to lowest proportion: ideas about collective well-being constituted the highest frequency at 56% (20 out of 36) of all poetry lines created; relational well-being was represented at the lower rate of 25% (9 out of 36); and personal well-being had the least frequency, at 19% (7 out of 36)

Coding the lines of poetry using the collective well-being dimension, the value of support for community structures garnered the highest frequency (11 out of 20 or 55%), second to the values of social justice and accountability (9 out of 20 or 45%); within the relational well-being dimension, the values of participation and collaboration garnered less (5 out of 9 or 56%), with respect for diversity (4 out of 9 or 44%) the lowest. Health garnered the highest personal well-being domain frequency (3 out of 7 or 43%), with self-determination (2 out of 7 or 29%) and caring (2 out of 7 or 29%) the two least depicted domains.

During the vision statement poetry activity, I encouraged participants to focus internally (while soft music played) and review different aspects of each wellness dimension that I had explicitly laid out for them. After listening and reflecting, the participants engaged quietly in independent writing for a sustained session of 10 minutes. Participants were able to respond to the prompts quickly, using the chat feature. Although each of these domains and values of well-being are interconnected (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), for the purpose of this analysis, I attempted to determine the most frequently shared values and aims from the 36 lines of poetry the participants created to help inform the design of my second virtual-arts lab group session. Table 4.1 documents the medium, process, and the words of participants who actively participated in collective art-making spaces. The table demonstrates the participants' collective, imaginative conceptualizations to a broader community, and the arts techniques explored to refine their use and thereby to discover important perspectives and issues regarding school wellness. The table shows examples of poetry lines that connect to each of the three domains and values of well-being, using the categorizes provided by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002).

Interestingly, I found that participants' responses highlighted each of the values and domains as significant areas of school wellness in their reflective poetry. I found that by

characterizing these areas by frequency, the analysis indicated that personal values appear to be strongly connected to school wellness, according to participants. Thus, it appears that personal, relational, and collective well-being are all part of school wellness from the perspective of these educator participants. In column one Table 4.1, I list the three domains of well-being and the values within each domain. In column two, I share examples of poetry lines that connect to those values. Connecting shared values as points of agreement supported the development of conditions for collaboration for future phases of the study.

Table 4. 1

Poetry Voice Activity: Participant Perspectives that Connect Shared Values to Well-being

Domains and Values (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010)	Poetry Examples from “For the Love of School” (collectively written poem, collected April 24, 2020)
<i>Personal Well-being</i> Self-determination Caring/compassion Health	I wish for warm sunlight, and the smell of toast and sage I hope I can return to this calm space in times of chaos and uncertainty. I worry that teaching will not be enjoyable after the changes that will occur after this.
<i>Relational Well-being</i> Respect for diversity Participation/Collaboration	I hope for a future filled with empathy and compassion. I hope to collaborate more, with students and teachers—taking advantage of our ability to be together.
<i>Collective Well-being</i> Support for community structures Social justice and accountability	I worry the world will go back to business as usual. I hope post-quarantine is a return to place, to community, to art, to learning...not a lurch into post-apocalyptic techno-learning.

Note. This activity involved prompted poetry-writing. The process began with an overview of the dimensions of wellness and how to trust the technique. It was aimed at refining the use of the medium so that participants could demonstrate personal perspectives about important motivations, hopes, and commitments that drive their personal agendas of school wellness. Participants worked independently and responded quickly and quietly to prompts intended to help them articulate their thoughts to the broader participant group.

Participant Photo Series Activity. Participants One and Five field-tested the participant photo series activity, which is an activity derived from methods traditionally utilized in PhotoVoice, as a contribution to this research and as part of a potential professional learning

activity they planned to use to open their next school year. The participants began by looking at the proposed arts-lab activity (Appendix R) and then searched for a growth-orientated photo choice to explore their own school wellness contexts. The process called for a photograph to represent each dimension of wellness we had discussed during the first group virtual-arts-lab session. Participants One and Five together produced, in sum, 53 photographs in between the first and second virtual sessions. The participants chose questions with which to title each of their photographs, and indicated that they believed these questions and photographs could open conversations about positive ways forward in September—when students and teachers were to return to the physical school site after months of online and off-site learning. On June 22, 2020, Participants One and Five shared the edited photographs with me, and together the three of us sorted their work into four titled series. All of the photographs focused upon opportunities for inquiries to improve school wellness. The primary wellness categories that I used to code the photographs and then organized by percentage highest to lowest were: intellectual (15 of 53 photographs, or 28%), social (10 of 53 or 18%), emotional (10 of 53 or 18%) and environmental (10 of 53 or 18%), with vocational (4 of 53 or 9%) and spiritual (4 of 53 or 9%) depicted with a lesser frequency.

Interestingly, physical wellness was not represented as a primary category in the 53 photographs produced by Participants One and Five, although it was depicted in various photographs as a subcategory. Numerous subthemes relevant to the organizational improvement and well-being goals emerged from my analysis of the participant photo series activity. Hassan (2014), whose work I discussed in Chapter One, facilitated participatory processes for social activism and as a result of this life's work found four critical areas of organizational growth which offers a useful structure to parse these subthemes, as follows:

- Physical (service and infrastructure): the physical experience beyond the walls
- Social (trust and collaboration): emotional safety, diversity, and inclusion
- Human (capacities and skills): pedagogical development and innovation
- Intellectual (knowledge and learning): professional purpose

By categorizing these subthemes into growth opportunities, participants could more easily design opportunities for strength-focused activities to be used in their second encounter with their participant photo series activity, which they expected to do during the Fall 2020 professional learning opportunity in their schools. The participants and I discussed including a gallery walk in which they ask their colleagues to search for these opportunities for growth within the photographs and in relation to their accompanying questions. By highlighting school wellness while searching the images for these categories of organizational improvement, participants one and five were exploring potential consequences and successes in future action to support their ongoing school wellness work. Each of Hassan's (2014) critical areas deserve a successive coded analysis from the school community gallery walk that Participant One and Participant Five proposed in our discussion as an activity to do that would provide further value to the school. Based on this field-test, and our subsequent conversations and sorting into four titled series, and the sense I made through coding, the potential for this work to have influence within their schools is very encouraging. If I had been able to extend this photo series activity and study into the schools, as discussed based on the contributions of Participant One and Participant Five, it would have been interesting to examine the influence and impact of this activity and include those findings in my results.

The educators and I also discussed the possibility of pinpointing shared values through this gallery walk. Turning again to Prilleltensky and Nelson's (2002) holistic practices that

support the three domains of well-being, and further searching the images for values associated with these domains, proved a worthwhile approach to analysis in supporting this aim. During analysis, I found that the three well-being domains subdivided into values, which indicated that the collective well-being domain constituted the highest frequency value of all of the photographs created by participants, at approximately 50% (27 out of 53): within this domain, the values of social justice garner the highest frequency (8 of 27 or 30%), followed by depictions of accountability (5 of 27 or 20%). A possible explanation for these frequencies may be explained by the fact that participants were motivated to participate because of their commitment to school wellness, learning in and through arts, and school improvement. In distanced and emergency learning due to the pandemic, both of these factors were sidelined in practice, which may have highlighted their importance within public education for those educators who valued this shared or collective purpose.

The domain of personal well-being was depicted less frequently, representing 30% (16 out of 53) of all photographs created, with the values of self-determination also at 30% (16 of 53) represented in each image. Relational well-being was depicted with lower frequency at 20% (10 of 53), with the values of participation and collaboration (10 out of 53) represented in 20% of the photographs. The educators who took part in developing and field-testing participant photo series work as an arts-lab activity demonstrated effectiveness in visual discourse. This photographic art process of representing and viewing perspectives demonstrated shared commitments to social justice—this is meaningful as an essential aspect of influencing progressive change is through acknowledging awareness of the link between social justice and school wellness. Participants One and Five did this through their choice of photos and also through the captions and questions they attached to the series. For example, with the series titled with the questions: “What supports

us as a learning community to privilege voice, choice, agency and creativity progressively?” and “How might we create educational environments to engage learners in speculative imaginings of what their worlds could be?” These questions and photos document and reflect the participants’ values and their intent to use the art to help communities make connections that enhance socially just schools by triggering a discussion about possibilities of improved school wellness.

The two participants shared with me that during the participant photo series activity, they were able to engage easily with a holistic understanding of the dimensions of school wellness through the arts media by undertaking symbolic and reflective portrayals of the emerging *we are not yet* theme⁴. They planned, created, and described their using visual signifiers of well-being and demonstrating the principles of photography, within the two sessions. Although all domains and values of well-being are inter-connected (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010), for the purpose of this analysis, I attempted to determine the most frequent and prominent shared values and aims, based on the artwork that the two participants created.

In Table 4.2, I share examples of the photographs and identify the values and wellness domains they depict. In column one, I provide photographs from the series and the participants’ descriptions of the illustrative data. Column two is the conceptual focus and primary wellness category, again in the participants’ words and as the participants intended. In column three, the analysis diverts away from traditional PhotoVoice. While the photo series is being used to empower participants to enhance a community assessment and reflection of concerns, and could

⁴ During both virtual arts-lab group sessions, participants referenced the words “I am not yet”—famously spoken by Maxine Greene during a public presentation (Pinar, 1998, p. 1). Participant Six expressed gratitude for the we are not yet space she had been invited into, and Participant Five used the words in relation to technological learning and support requests. Other participants reacted to these words when they were spoken which added significance because it was a cultural experience that they were already familiar with and a shared experience within the group, even if individuals associated it with aspects most relevant for themselves.

potentially be used to promote dialogue in a gallery walk inspired discussion it is not being used as a method to induce change by sharing ideas with policy makers (Strack et al, 2004). Instead, I used it to explore and refine my analysis of the values reflected in the school wellness needs assessment. In column three, I share my analysis about which domain of well-being predominates and the values within that domain that support school-wellness improvements, taking into account the participants' descriptions and intent. I discussed this approach to analysis with Participants One and Five, the creators, and based my interpretations on what they said. My analysis must be interpreted with caution—another viewer could make a different connection and determination. Thus, while the PhotoVoice method was encouraged within the participant photo series activity and participants found the experience was encouraging as a technique to engage educators in school wellness, even without a gallery walk within a school environment and lacking the school audience who would share in their analysis, my findings are limited to the notion that that the activity itself is demonstrated to hold promise.

Table 4. 2

Participant Photo Series Activity: Participant Perspectives, Interventions, and Shared Values.

Activity description: This activity used a photo medium. Two participants worked together and made collective decisions that demonstrated their conceptualizations through the images. They gave permission to use their pictures, ideas and descriptive words as illustrative data that explores this question: “How might we re-imagine an educational institution, open to the shifts in innovative learning possibilities, while rooting pedagogy in sound human connections promoting social, intellectual, and emotional wellness?” [Collected June 20, 2020]. They discussed their intent verbally with me, wrote about and identified the accompanying questions and subthemes following the overarching question, I selected the following pieces to share.



Illustrative Data: This explores the question: How might we open the door on the educational landscape to go beyond the ordinary experience within these walls?

Subject: Traditional School Gym Walls

Description: Superimposed mountain view on gym, attention to light and dark.

<u>Conceptual Focus</u>	<u>Wellness Categories</u>	<u>Subthemes</u>	<u>Domains and Values (with prominence in the artifact)</u>
What supports us as a community to organize ourselves and our environment for justice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental [Primary] • Emotional [Secondary] • Physical [Secondary] 	Expanding the physical experience beyond the walls.	<p><i>Personal Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-determination (low) • Caring/compassion (low) • Health (mid) <p><i>Relational Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity (low) • Participation/Collaboration (mid) <p><i>Collective Well-being</i></p> <p>Social justice (low)</p> <p>Accountability (high)</p>



Illustrative Data: That explores the question: How might we empower communities of educators to engage in personal and professional inquiries designed to perpetually question the “whys” of their work, while leading to new understandings and directions?

Subject: Collect string, images, drawings created by the school staff

Description: Photograph of collective artwork, attention to line.

<u>Conceptual Focus</u>	<u>Wellness Categories</u>	<u>Subthemes</u>	<u>Domains and Values (with prominence in the artifact)</u>
Our pedagogical journey is a collection of different stories, connected in where we are and where we might be going.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational [Primary] • Intellectual [Secondary] • Spiritual [Secondary] 	The work we do is not a job—it has purpose within our lives. Pedagogical innovation, purpose.	<p><i>Personal Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-determination (high) • Caring/compassion (low) • Health (mid) <p><i>Relational Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity (low) • Participation/Collaboration (low) <p><i>Collective Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice (low) • Accountability (low)

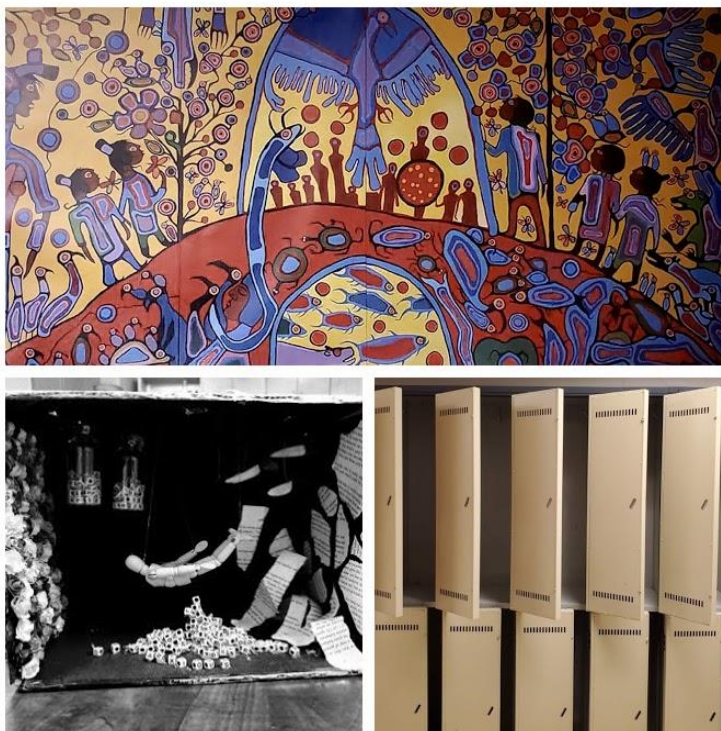


Illustrative Data: That explores the question: How might we create empathic spaces for the diverse voices and stories of our students and their communities to be heard and experienced by each other?

Subject: Student words behind string, a painted piano, a collection of book titles and covers

Description: Black and white images, attention to colour.

<u>Conceptual Focus</u>	<u>Wellness Categories</u>	<u>Subthemes</u>	<u>Domains and Values (with prominence in the artifact)</u>
What supports us as a learning community to privilege voice, choice, agency and creativity progressively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social [Primary] • Environmental [Secondary] • Intellectual [Secondary] 	Diversity and Inclusion.	<p><i>Personal Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-determination (high) • Caring/compassion (mid) • Health (mid) <p><i>Relational Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity (mid) • Participation/Collaboration (high) <p><i>Collective Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice (high) • Accountability (high)



Illustrative Data: That explores the question: How might we create educational environments to engage learners in speculative imaginings of what their worlds could be?

Subject: Open locker doors, art-piece, diorama of person flying through ripped pieces of text.

Description: Mix of colour and black and with images, attention to movement.

<u>Conceptual Focus</u>	<u>Wellness Categories</u>	<u>Subthemes</u>	<u>Domains and Values (with prominence in the artifact)</u>
Emotional response to our collective story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social [Primary] • Intellectual [Secondary] 	Misdirected words can cause others to crash.	<p><i>Personal Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-determination (high) • Caring/compassion (low) • Health (low) <p><i>Relational Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity (low) • Participation/Collaboration (high) <p><i>Collective Well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice (high) • Accountability (high)

Wellness Discussion

This section addresses the main research question through the lens of sub-question one, which concerns identifying the significant areas of school wellness that deserve exploration, according to educator participants. In response to reflective questions including my invitation to

consider their experience and share significant areas of school wellness to explore, participants provided 27 statements that identified significant issues they wished to prioritize in their school-wellness initiatives. These data emerged from the transcription, categorizing and coding process of the first virtual arts-lab session. The majority of participant comments (10 out of 27 or 38%) were found to focus on student wellness; as well, many statements (8 out of 27 or 31%) were found to directly reference the quarantine, pandemic, coronavirus, or COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in combination with an increased need for connection (6 out of 27 or 21%), while only a small number (3 out of 27 or 10%) directly referenced the participant's school development wellness and academic achievement planning goal. One participant indicated she was unsure what her school's wellness goal was.

The dimensions of school wellness overlap, and though I attempted to orient each statement to one primary dimension, that was not always possible. I thus chose to limit the identification to no more than three prominent dimensions per statement. Given that some of these statements referenced more than one significant issue, I organized these statements into 38 separate ideas or references. The primary wellness categories were, from highest to lowest frequency, emotional (9 out of 38 or 23% of statements), intellectual (8 out of 38 or 20%), social (7 out of 38 or 18%), and spiritual (6 out of 38 or 16%), environmental (4 out of 38 or 11%), vocational (3 out of 38 or 9%) and physical (1 out of 38 or 3%). The Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) framework, as described in Chapter Two, helped me to code and sort these holistic practices and make sense of the categories by proportion. Those statements that were identified as supporting the domain of personal well-being constituted the highest frequency (18 out of 38 or 48%), the collective well-being domain was next depicted with a frequency of (14 out of 38 or

37%), and the relational well-being domain was depicted with the least frequency (6 out of 38 or 15%).

Within the domain of personal well-being, the values of self-determination had the highest frequency (6 out of 18 or 33%), caring/compassion (2 out of 18 or 11%), and health (1 out of 18 or 7%) the least frequency. Within the collective well-being domain, the values of social justice/accountability and support for community structures were each depicted at equal frequencies (2 out of 18 or 14% each). Within the relational well-being domain, the values of respect for diversity garnered (2 out of 6) or 33% and participation and collaboration were depicted at (1 out of 6) or 16% frequency.

Numerous subthemes emerged from the discussions, which I again analyzed and coded using the four critical areas of organizational growth (Hassan, 2014). Using the four categories to delineate the subthemes into growth opportunity areas allowed me to more easily capture the opportunities for arts-based school-wellness activities that supported the individual and collective motivations of the group. The subthemes align with the four categories as follows:

- Physical (service and infrastructure): inequity in the school experience and disruptions in arts and wellness
- Social (trust and collaboration): building community, recognizing diversity in experience, and deepening the appreciation for physical presence
- Human (capacities and skills): after quarantine, recovery tools to support at-risk or traumatized students
- Intellectual (knowledge and learning): instruction and program development, such as conversations with like-minded professionals and focusing on ameliorating learning gaps and improving critical problem-solving skills

Creative Movement. Based on my analysis of the groups' discussion during session one, the collective poem and the response to the introduction through sketched symbols of well-being, I decided on an activity for the second session. I considered how participant aims were often focused on collective commitments for school wellness, as well as practices to support the community structure to be just and accountable for students. In this context, personal well-being was least often proposed as a participant aim. Therefore, I considered arts activities that could enhance collective well-being through relational and personal well-being. Upon analysis, the personal well-being sketches had indicated that participants were drawn to physical experiences. The virtual experience provided an obstacle but also opened up an opportunity to experiment with creative ways to deepen the quality of the interactions and shared experience participants and I were having. I drew from a dance activity a classmate and I had previously created and demonstrated through an interactive presentation for a leadership class (L. Mathew, personal communication, July 18, 2019) in the doctoral program. My classmate was an accomplished dancer with a lifetime of training and practice and in this doctoral class, she had shared the story that infused the moves with meaning.

When I was working with her on our shared task in the leadership class, we had aligned our intentions to heal, connect, and appreciate each other by illuminating these intentions through creative movement and attaching choral speech to a short belief statement that our Western School District used so commonly that it seemed to have lost its meaning. Our goals had included improving the disposition of our fellow classmates. My classmate broke down the movement of her dance practice so that we could understand how its physicalized representation indicated gratitude and connected to the words. During our activity, I spoke a line of the statement in between each of her distinct gestures; we then demonstrated this to our peers in the

class, and they mirrored the actions and repeated the words back to us. For this research project, I sought to modify this dance activity to serve other needs. In particular, by exploring an activity like this one within the second virtual-arts lab, I had hoped to pursue the complementary goals of personal well-being while aligning the work with participant values—by drawing on our physical senses, our personal experiences and our individual and shared commitment to the belief statement.

As noted above, the 10 non-linear formalized capacities for imaginative learning from the Lincoln Center include *noticing deeply, embodying, questioning, making connections, identifying patterns, exhibiting empathy, living with ambiguity, creating meaning, taking action, and reflecting and assessing* (Michelli et al., 2011). Many of the arts-educators who were in this study indicated that they were familiar with this line of imaginative learning and instruction. Embodying, according to the Lincoln Center, is defined as “to experience a work of art through your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that experience” (Holzer, 2007, p. 5). The interdisciplinary nature of this study makes it essential to pause to examine the word embodying closely within this context and not to confuse it with the word embodiment. For performance artists and educators practiced in teaching and learning through the arts, the increased awareness of a character through the use of physicalizing gestures can be traced back to the great acting coach Stanislavski (1929–1936/2010; Spolin & Sills, 1963/1999). He taught a strategy of using motion and activity to clarify experiences of characters through an actor’s physical and sensory memory. Correspondingly, I strove to deepen participants’ thinking with shared reflective discussion on the creative movement activity. The creative movement activity manifests the embodying capacity for imaginative learning, the capacity to experience a work of

art—in this case, spoken words, visualization, and nature photography—through the senses, by being engaged both physically and emotionally (Michelli et al., 2011).

The session two activity began with me inviting each participant to choose a special place to visualize in their mind's eye, coupled with a breathing exercise. Participants were invited to follow this visualization by repeating four steps inspired by dance, which represented the meaning of the words in the statement. These movements were timed to sections of the statement which were denoted by a different nature photograph connected to each section and presented via timed animations through the screen sharing tool of the Microsoft Teams platform. This visual tool acted both to help participants time and experience the dance, and identify who would speak which words, and also to clarify how fast to perform the movements. After some practice, the participants performed by speaking assigned sections and moving together, but at the same time separately with each of us in our own homes (given our virtual situation). During the activity, participants appeared to be calm and centered, suggested by their formal, slow manner of speech; their movements also added rhythm to the words they spoke. Overall, I observed the participants' engagement in this activity to be serene and positive. I observed that participants engaged with focus and seemingly without hesitation.

When the dance activity was over, I invited participants to reflect on the experience. My intent with this activity was to enhance the complementary goals of improving personal and collective well-being. The participants reflected that the dance activity verified a deepened emotional connection to the natural environment, to each other, and to the meaning of the Western School District's belief statement. Upon reflection and consideration of the participants' engagement and responses, I considered this activity to be a way of focusing on improving spiritual wellness and accountability to social justice as a community-in-the-making. Of the eight

reflective comments related to this activity, I noted the frequency of primary wellness categories expressed by participants as follows: intellectual (3 out of 8 or 37.5%), social (2 out of 8 or 25%), environmental (2 out of 8 or 25%), and (grouped together) emotional, spiritual, and vocational (1 out of 8 or 12.5%). The physical category was not depicted in reflective comments at all.

Distribution of coded comments across the three domains of well-being (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002) were as follows: personal well-being and relational well-being constituted the highest frequency at (3 out of 8 or 37.5%) each and collective well-being was depicted with the least frequency at (2 out of 8 or 25%). Each of these domains were discussed which is interesting because this was an area I choose to examine because of its connection to broader themes such as the link between well-being to social justice. Within the personal domain, I noted that the values of self-determination, caring/compassion, and health were each depicted once (1 out of 8 or 12.5%). Within the relational domain, I noted that values of respect for diversity were expressed the most (2 out of 8 or 25%) in participant reflections, which suggests that the dance activity was a useful physical activity for its intended objective of strengthening connections between people who are distanced. Participation and collaboration was depicted less frequently (1 out of 8 or 12.5%). Within the collective well-being domain, support for community was depicted once (1 out of 8 or 12.5%) and social justice and accountability was depicted once (1 out of 8 or 12.5%).

Observations About Wellness Commitments

My comparison of these results reveals three key observations relevant to sub-question one, which concerns educator participants' ideas about what the significant areas of school wellness are. The seven personal wellness categories (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001; Miller & Foster, 2010), the three broader well-being domains (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002), and the four

organizational growth categories (Hassan, 2014) are all identified in the educator's statements discussed above. The three significant observations that emerged from this analysis are discussed below.

Observation 1: Arts-lab Participants Expressed Personal Well-Being Commitments

The arts-lab was found to provide opportunities for educators to interrogate collective and individual insights as part of the domain of personal well-being. According to participants, numerous areas related to personal well-being, within school wellness, are significant and worth exploring. By broadening their vision of the future to include shared values, participants supported the arts-lab objective of heightening their consciousness about school wellness. These experiences, interactions and reflections are likely to inform the participants' own personal next phases of their expected learning (which would have begun when they returned to school at the end of August, 2020). Below, I investigate the transformative potential of the themes illustrated in the participants' artwork—self-determination, caring and compassion, and health.

This theme, of self-determination, which could even be better characterized as an objective, addresses the needs of “mastery, control, self-efficacy, voice, choice, skills growth and autonomy” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60). Both the poetry and the participant photo series activities provided participants with opportunities to express themselves and to make choices, thereby to determine the content they believed was important to study. The activities elicited discussion about school-wellness objectives and provided opportunities for participants to “pursue chosen goals without excessive frustration and in consideration of other people’s needs” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 70). My TAS practice goal to develop freedom also aligns with the objective of self-determination.

The human needs for “love, attention, empathy, attachment, acceptance, positive regard” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60) is addressed in the intention of caring and compassion values. The third set of images in Table 4.2 expressed this objective as a need. Specifically, the accompanying question with which Participants One and Five titled their work and planned to use during their back-to school professional learning day was “How might we create empathic spaces for the diverse voices and stories of our students and their communities to be heard and experienced by each other?” (Selected photo/descriptions, illustrative data, collected June 20, 2020). The conceptual focus is expressed in the diverse faces and stories in the book covers the participants photographed. The participants’ 53 photographs provided the opportunity to elicit discussion within the next phase of the arts-lab. The question cited above demonstrates an attitude “of care, empathy, and concern for the physical and emotional well-being of children, adults, families and disadvantaged communities” (p. 70) and reflects the values of equality and solidarity inherent in a TAS.

The health theme addresses the need to protect the “emotional and physical well-being” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60) of self and others. One of lines of poetry (see Table 4.1) reflects this objective: “I worry that teaching will not be enjoyable after the changes that will occur after this” (Collectively written poem, collected April 24, 2020). This statement suggests that a conversation is required about how school-wellness objectives might better promote the emotional and physical “health of individuals and communities” (p. 70), given both the changed safety protocols and government academic directives, with a return to on-site instruction (after quarantine). The transformative activist values of developing agentive creativity and justice certainly appear to resonate with the sentiment expressed in this particular line of poetry.

Observation 2: Arts-lab Participants Expressed Relational Well-Being Commitments

The arts-lab provided opportunities for participants to interrogate collective and individual insights that align within the domain of relational well-being. According to participants, several significant areas of school wellness related to relational well-being can and should be explored. Participants created a vision of the future that included common values of relational well-being, which I contend is evidence of their expanded understanding of school wellness; for instance, it directed me to use the creative movement activity in the second arts-lab group session for participants to connect with a common experience by participating both physical and emotionally, which stimulated participant discussion about shared values and an expanded understanding of opportunities to influence school wellness.

Participants spoke to the benefit of the participation and connection aspects of the creative movement activity, especially its potential to be used to involve students more thoughtfully in the short belief statement used commonly in the Western School District. Participant Four discussed how the activity might involve students in connecting the dots, by recognizing each territory, and making clearer why we would do a common short belief statement rather than potentially “zoning out” during such an activity. Participant Five connected this activity to her family heritage and Participant Six to her gratitude for the land. Participant Seven also discussed how it seemed to offer a meaningful way to involve what she termed the “busy kids”. Participant Eight suggested that the merit in the activity was that it could captivate students’ attention in a positive way, by encouraging them to think about gratitude and connection through a physical routine. Participant Eight added that they believed that the science of flow (i.e., Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi) supported the merit of the activity. The analysis of the participants’ artwork and experiences in the arts process showed transformative potential through

the themes of diversity, participation and collaboration, which are linked to the dimension of well-being.

The objective of respect for diversity addresses the needs of “identity, dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, acceptance” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60). One poetry line highlights the importance of these needs, which affects people working together (see Table 4.1). “I hope for a future filled with empathy and compassion.” (Collectively written poem, collected April 24, 2020). This line of poetry demonstrates an attitude that “promote[s] respect and appreciate[s] diverse social identities” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 70) by pondering the acceptance and support of the others in the group. The development of solidarity and equality among participants also aligns to TAS with this principle of respect for diversity.

The objective of participation and collaboration addresses the needs of “participation, involvement and mutual responsibility” (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2010, p. 60), and appears in the collectively written poem with the line: “I hope to collaborate more, with students and teachers—taking advantage of our ability to be together” (Collectively written poem, collected April 24, 2020). This line can be used to set up discussion within a next phase of the arts-lab work about how the physical presence of others is increasingly important if the physical presence of others affects school-wellness objectives. In particular, this aspect might facilitate opportunities to “promote peaceful, respectful and equitable processes whereby children and adults can have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 70). The development of freedom aligns a TAS with this principle of self-determination.

Observation 3: Arts-lab Participants Expressed Collective Well-Being Commitments

My analysis of the data indicated the arts-lab provided opportunities for participants to interrogate collective and individual insights within the domain of collective well-being.

Participants confirmed this potential, by linking their insights to discussions pertaining to school wellness. Through their artwork, the participants built on their shared values—support for community structures and social justice and accountability—to work towards a shared vision of school wellness in their professional work. This shared vision demonstrates the transformative potential of art-making.

Supporting community structures addresses the needs of “sense of community, cohesion, formal support” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60). Both the poetry and participant photo series activities were structured to offer participants the opportunity to engage with each other, to find points of agreement, and to support collaborative learning. Structured dialogue and art-making processes were found to contribute to wellness objectives that “promote vital community structures that facilitate the pursuit of personal and communal goals” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 70). The TAS idea of developing agentive creativity is consistent with this principle of support for community structures.

“Economic security, shelter, clothing, nutrition, access to vital health and social services” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 60) are discussed as priorities within the needs of social justice and accountability. The fourth set of photographs (see Table 4.2) illustrates the importance of social justice and accountability for two of the study participants. Participants One and Five encouraged their viewers to read into the diagram of the person flying through bits of text. Three aspects support this interpretation: (1) their question “How might we create educational environments to engage learners in speculative imaginings of what their worlds could be?” (2) their conceptual focus “emotional response to our collective story,” and (3) their subtheme “misdirected words can cause others to crash” (Selected photo/descriptions, illustrative data, collected June 20, 2020). The photograph, question, and ideas the participants shared serve to

demonstrate an attitude that considers that schools can provide “fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations and resources in society” and show “accountability to oppressed groups and depowerment of the privileged” (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 70). In TAS, social justice overlaps with the values of social justice and accountability for well-being, and participant’s collective commitments to values of social justice can be seen within their participant photo series artifacts.

Three Observations: Concluding Remarks

The main finding in this section is that my design and enactment of the arts-lab appears to provide participants with opportunities to reflect on their personal values as related to school wellness. My analysis shows that participants’ active engagement, characterization, and uncovering of significant areas of wellness served to enable critical interrogation of gaps between their personal values and their current school realities, and their efforts as educators to identify opportunities for improvement. The arts-lab activities were found to connect to the notion of transformative learning by way of conscientization and praxis; these activities can prompt teachers and learners to become conscious of the conditions which oppress, so they can reflect and act “upon the world to transform it” (Freire, 1970/2000, p.33). Participants’ descriptions of significant school-wellness improvement opportunities and barriers within the collective art-making spaces shaped how these practical strategies to influence transformative learner development unfolded.

When individual participants were oriented to demonstrating their conceptualizations to a broader group, they could often identify previously unspoken values and points of agreement for the learning community. This, in turn, appeared to strengthen the participants’ visions of what school wellness could mean to them. This phase of the study documented how the arts activities

and participants' artistic development served to support their efforts to articulate and interrogate personal and collective values and understandings of school wellness. The outcomes benefited from the participants' expertise at encouraging each other to engage actively and to respond thoughtfully to the ideas that I, as the facilitator, demonstrated. These results appear to support the idea that active participation by teachers in developing a wellness agenda and defining their values through facilitated arts supports served to create the conditions for transformative activism. Future phases of each participant's teaching practices are likely to be enhanced by this experience. This impression and hope is bolstered by five of the participants who indicated that they plan to use this learning in their fall professional development activities at their schools.

Promising Arts Activities

In the segment above I explained how an arts-based approach was found to enable participants' to voice and interrogate their perspectives of wellness—to deepen their understandings and create opportunities to collectively and individually envision change. Documenting participants' reflections on past experiences and in current field-tests elicited educators' perspectives on arts activities and processes for building collective and individual school-wellness. Participants took part in field-testing arts-lab exercises, both during the two virtual arts-lab sessions with me and after the sessions without me. The participants reflected on the field-tests and shared additional insights from their lived experiences in these activities by responding to open-ended questions during the virtual arts-lab and intermediate sessions. Participants reviewed the arts activities in descriptions that wove together the process and the product into highlights of what they viewed as a significant impact. I audio-recorded, transcribed, and drew upon content from these conversations with participants to refine an understanding of effective arts activities.

Aesthetic Education

In this section, I specifically address the main research question through the lens of sub question two: What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school-wellness? According to participants' reflections in the arts-lab, I characterized (coded) 92 statements from the virtual arts-lab by referencing practices central to cultivating imaginative learning. Aesthetic education that aims for a democratic society can help to develop learner imaginations to see possibilities for improvement (Michelli et al., 2011), and thus, I was curious about which capacities would be referenced most frequently by participants. Of the 10 non-linear capacities that Michelli et al. (2011) suggest, I determined that the Lincoln Center's approaches to noticing deeply, embodying, and questioning relate most closely to perception and cultivating imagination. The remaining seven capacities that they identify—making connections, identifying patterns, exhibiting empathy, living with ambiguity, creating meaning, taking action, and reflecting and assessing—relate more closely to creativity and innovation. Prior to analysis, I had mistakenly assumed that I would find references to perception and imagination to be the most prevalent in the participants' statements (that is, to noticing deeply, embodying, and questioning). However, the greatest proportion of participants' comments focused on taking action (27 out of 92 or 29%) and making connections (26 out of 92 or 28%); there were no comments that referred to identifying patterns or living with ambiguity as a central focus. The remaining capacities represented, by order of frequency, were creating meaning (12 out of 92 or 13%), embodying (8 out of 92 or 9%), exhibiting empathy (7 out of 92 or 8%), reflecting and assessing (6 out of 93 or 7%), noticing deeply (4 out of 92 or 4%), and questioning (2 out of 92 or 2%). Upon reflection,

these results seemed appropriate to me, given the distanced context and raised awareness of the need for wellness action.

Theoretically, efficacy is an established concept (see Bandura, 1997); however, in conversations and interactions with this group of participants, we tended to use the word in an informal sense to address awareness and confidence and to categorize what worked for the participants who field-tested the arts-lab activities. As part of our shared vocabulary, the Western School District uses the term “efficacy” in professional learning, assigned readings, and general discussion. The working definition of efficacy that I interpreted my participants meant, based on this common District usage (and also what I mean when using the term) is that of improving our abilities to influence our intended outcome, either for an individual or as a school community although it is not tied to a formal efficacy measurement scale. I found 82 participant statements recorded during the virtual arts session that directly referenced activities or conditions for strengthening perceived efficacy within the broad domain of wellness. As well, 10 one-on-one session meetings were devoted to refining the effectiveness of such activities. During the virtual arts-lab discussions, some participants were reflective about art without connection to an activity, process or condition of wellness (10 out of 82 or 12%), specific activities were referenced most often (45 out of 82 or 55%), as some comments that referenced a process (20 out of 82 or 24%) or condition (7 out of 82 or 9%). Of these (33% of the comments that did not specifically describe the activity they discussed), I heard references to the virtual arts-lab as a whole (15 out of 82 or 18%) or a general reflection about arts-based activities for wellness (12 out of 82 or 15%).

Table 4.3 provides a brief description of the specific arts activities that participants reflected upon, categorized by content, as most of these discussed activities are outside of the

arts research we engaged in together. The categories consider the broad artistic field, the perceived efficacy referenced by the speaker concerning the individual, the collective, or both, in combination with the themes that the participants identified and linked to wellness. TAS reminds me that evolving social practices are uniquely authored by individuals who develop themselves in their forward-looking activist choices (Stetsenko, 2018). Crucial to collective school wellness growth is the development of well-being within each person in the school. A relationship between the effectiveness of the activities regarding wellness and said activities' contribution to holistic efficacy, both collective and individual, would complement the TAS collaborative idea of human development.

It is worth noting that these widely used artistic categories have deeper meanings that can vary across cultures. For this research, artistic realms are pragmatic and not exclusive categorizations (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006). Rather, they are my understanding of the most prominent art-making modality in the activity. As Table 4.3 indicates, of the 20 specific activities described and discussed, few participants primarily referenced their potential to influence individual efficacy (2 out of 20 or 10%). Instead, most activities were discussed with respect to their potential to influence collective efficacy (7 out of 20 or 35%); the most common discussion included the potential for the activity to influence both individual and collective efficacy (11 out of 20 or 55%). The artistic fields discussed, by order of frequency, are performance (7 out of 20 or 35%), new media (6 out of 20 or 30%), visual (3 out of 20 or 15%) design (2 out of 20 or 10%) and literary (2 out of 20 or 10%).

I also divided the activities into the type of artistic experience the art-maker or audience mainly practiced. Specifically, I considered whether the experience was discussed primarily as

an individual artistic inquiry (1 out of 20 or 5%), a group activity (5 out of 20 or 25%), a collective creation (8 out of 20 or 40%), or as a community event (6 out of 20 or 30%). Finally, Leavy (2017) reminds us that arts-based research sees value in “aesthetic understanding, evocation, and provocation” (p. 10). Arts-based research appreciates aesthetic understanding, which means arts that enhance perspectives and enrich knowledge. The arts provide a process to develop the artist within, which I estimate to be a high-quality aesthetic evocation for many people. Art-making evokes internal thought and leads to personal development. Arts that infuse the text with meanings in order to generate a response in an audience is admirable for that achievement alone, and aesthetic provocation is a high achievement, in that the arts effectively become a tool to provoke learning in others.

I have distinguished and labelled prominent aesthetic values that were revealed in the participants’ discussion of the activity. These values work in tandem with each other and it is interesting to see what participants determined as important to highlight. Values that were equally depicted at a high frequency were provocation (8 out of 21 or 38%) and evocation (8 out of 21 or 38%) while understanding represented the lowest frequency (5 out of 21 or 24%).

Table 4. 3

Arts Activities: Identified by Participants as Important to Developing School-Wellness Efficacy

Activity Description	Artistic Field/Type	Efficacy	Wellness Themes	Aesthetic Value
Creative Movement Activity: Short belief statement	Performance (Group Activity)	Both	Connection Culture Emotion Environment Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Understanding and provocations equally highlighted
Arts-Centred Learning Lounge design and creation	Design (Collective Creation)	Collective	Community Belonging Collective Well-being	Provocation

Annie Goldsworthy-style Installation	Visual (Collective Creation)	Both	Belonging, Security Agentive Creativity Voice, Agency Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Provocations
Anti-Littering Commercial	New Media (Collective Creation)	Both	Voice, Agency Social Change Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation
Art Market	Design (Community Event)	Both	Belonging Influencing Financial Change Agentive Creativity Healing Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation
Class Virtual Arts-Lab	New Media (Collective Creation)	Both	Influencing School Change Intellectual Voice, Agency Personal Development Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation
Collective Poem	Literary (Collective Creation)	Both	Emotional Connection/Solidarity Collective Social Change/Significance Reflections Personal Development Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Provocation
Dream Learning-Space Design	New Media (Individual Artistic Inquiry)	Individual	Inclusion Personal Development Personal Well-being	Understanding
Empathy Video Interview Research	New Media (Collective Creation)	Collective	Empathy, Emotion Diversity, Community Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation
Film Study	New Media (Group Activity)	Individual	Intellectual, Interrogating significance and influence in school instructional improvement Collective Well-being	Evocation

			Personal Well-being	
Introduction Wellness Symbol Sketch	Visual (Group Activity)	Both	Community Trust Interrogate Significance Agentive Creativity Respect for Diversity Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Provocations
Pep Rally	Performance (Community Event)	Collective	Inclusion Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Provocation
Participant Photo Series	New Media (Collective Creation)	Collective Well-being	Interrogate Significance Collective Well-being	Provocation
School Play	Performance (Community Event)	Both	Voice, confidence, school support, understanding Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Understanding
School-Wide Arts-Event	Performance (Community Event)	Collective	Inclusion Collective Well-being Relational Well-being	Understanding
Storytelling	Literary (Group Activity)	Collective	Neurological Development Indigenizing Education Collective Well-being Personal Well-being	Understanding
Talent Show	Performance (Community Event)	Both	Arts Activism Community Building Agency, Voice Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation
Virtual Arts-lab	Performance (Collective Creation)	Both	Collaboration Community Purpose, Personal Development Healing Social Change Agentive Creativity Voice Collective Well-being Relational Well-being Personal Well-being	Evocation

By organizing the participant conversations into statements, and then identifying the tasks that each statement referenced, I was able to observe an interesting pattern. Table 4.3 reveals four themes across the arts activities that participants identified as successful in their experiences for the advancement of school wellness: 1) Collective creations, 2) Community arts events, 3) Group arts activities, and 4) Individual arts activities. Below I explore each of these four themes further.

Theme 1: Collective Creations

The collective creation of art was the most common activity characterized as effective by participants. Participants' views of collective creations, from the perspective of enhancing school wellness, sheds light on the potential of arts to influence a school community in the making. Participant comments served to highlight the agentive creativity inherent in art-making processes. Arts can challenge stereotypical ways of seeing and jar people into thinking differently by provoking engagement and deepening connection between the authors, the ideas represented, and the audience (Leavy, 2015). The participants shared multiple instances of significant artistic activities that they had led or experienced that had provoked a response from the intended audience. As well, attempting to influence school wellness through the arts was endorsed by participants' observations about their own encounters with collective arts creations. Participants' views and reflections highlighted the ability of arts to provoke increased awareness of wellness in the participants themselves, in the participants as artists and audiences, which can then contribute to improved conditions for school wellness.

I chose to categorize various artistic fields as "collective" rather than "collaborative" because of the agentive aims and shared authorship of the research artifacts. My own early experiences with collective creations were theatrical; in those contexts, "collective" was used to

refer to an anti-hierarchical technique of devising a play, as a group of actors-creators (Filewod, 2015). This collective creation usually happened with a facilitator. In my more contemporary experiences, I have heard the terms “collective creation” and “artistic collaborations” used interchangeably to refer to group creations that span numerous artistic fields and multiple types of media. The common feature is that the work is composed of contributions from different authors that are merged; thus, attributing separate authorship to separate contributions is counterintuitive. In some cases, authorship is assigned to a named group of artists, such as in the toolkit created for and from this study, which follows this practice. A very specific definition that connects to my intent in using the word collective comes from the Coco Riot Queer and Trans People of Color Community Arts Collective who define the word as such, “autonomous groups organizing around a common issue, meeting regularly, putting on events, organizing actions” (Skillshare, 2016, p. 218). This understanding demonstrated an artistic and shared intent. The concept aligns with but is not clearly transferable to Scardamalia’s (2002) intense notion of *collective cognitive responsibility*. The latter source calls on participants to assume responsibility for public knowledge by linking their expertise and priorities to collective growth in sustained social efforts for both knowledge advancement and cognitive growth (Gutiérrez-Braojos et al., 2019). For Stetsenko, collective contributions are also connected to development, “human development is understood as an “achievement” of togetherness – resulting from its entanglement with the historically evolving and culturally mediated process of self- and world-creation based in collective and collaborative dynamics of social material practices in their ongoing historicity” (p. 87).

In this study, participants described collective creative processes in which people worked together to contribute, as individual creative agents, to the creation of arts-lab activities and field-

tests of the art contained within, such as the video, the poem and participant photo series activities, to which all contributed as pieces towards the toolkit that we created together. The process of collective creation provided participants with the opportunity to experience the potential for change at an individual level, and to consider how contributing to an artifact for the school community may trigger interest and motivation. In so doing, they can imagine how such collective creative processes might contribute to the evolution of a school's collective consciousness. In my action research, this arts-based participatory approach enabled participants who were motivated by the issue of school wellness to work together to create a toolkit to support improving school wellness for themselves and for others who share this common objective.

Participant Six's account of her experience facilitating an Andy Goldsworthy-style⁵ installation is a prime example of this capacity. Her reflection focused on the impact of student artists creating an art experience for the school. For her, these activities started with a conversation from many years ago about comprehensive wellness in the school. She was the teacher of a segregated specialized learning and literacy class for students identified as having learning disabilities. Her perception was that her students were profoundly "othered." For example, to be admitted to the program evidence was required that the student was unsuccessful elsewhere. Unlike the general population of the school, these students arrived on special buses. As well, while the rest of the school was open-concept, a hallway led to their closed-door classroom. The teachers tried to integrate the class into the school-wide activities, but the students did not want to go, and the other classroom teachers were not welcoming. It was a

⁵ Andy Goldsworthy is a British artist who creates temporary landscape art out of found materials (Adams, 2007).

challenging space for teachers and students to be in, and learning was hard. Except for the story below, this teacher participant never found a comfortable space for the learners in that school:

Except for one day, we had been looking at Andy Goldsworthy's art. We talked about what we could do as a class project and what the kids wanted to do. What they came up with was there was a whole line of trees where the buses lined up. The buses were this symbol of their lack of identity and lack of belonging, because everybody else came on big buses and they came on little buses. They came on little buses with kids of all different other kinds of complex need that were going to other programs in the area. The project was to take the snow and make horizontal stripes on all the trees. We went out during the school day and striped all the trees. But then we went out and stood against the school at the end of the day and watched people's reaction to the stripes. It became this touchpoint for my kids forever afterwards. They had a presence, they had a voice, they had an identity, and they caused a reaction that they were in control of in relation to the other kids in the school, sort of staking a claim on their belonging. (These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020).

All this time later, this participant remembered that the rest of the regular kids had stopped, paused, noticed, wondered, and had conversations about the art installation on the way to their buses. She felt that her students were struck by the fact that they made people notice them, but they did not gawk or other them in the way these students were used to. This account illustrates the significance of the collective creation of art to create an artifact that can trigger conversations within a school community. The aesthetic provocation was about more than the

curiosity of the school community who saw the installation: it was the act and change in her students' consciousness about how their art was recognized by the school community, and which positively influenced the feelings from artist to audience, that resonated with this participant.

Similar observations are reflected in the comments of the other virtual arts-lab participants. For example, one of the most common ways that participants described how collective creations influenced the school community-in-the-making was in how the art encouraged conversations within the school community. More than one participant spoke about the importance of positive school conversations with the administration, when they were reflecting on the artwork experiences that they had with the students. Participant One described how her principal had responded very positively to a video of the wellness poem her class had collectively created during her in-class virtual wellness arts-lab. The principal had even asked for permission to share the video with her colleagues at the next area-leadership meeting. Participant one also spoke about how sharing the work with her grade team had led to the development of an interdisciplinary project, with which the grade team planned to open the next school year. She felt positively reinforced that her principal was taking the work forward to others and she was optimistic that the grade team collective engagement would bring the learning community closer. Her class virtual arts-lab, though physically distant, in-fact, brought her learning community together to share in the objective of wellness.

The cross-curricular potential of collective arts was echoed by other participants as well. Participant One and Participant Five talked about an empathy project, whereby students would interview different community volunteers who were willing to share their life experiences on video and then the students would share their findings at a film festival. These two participants saw this as an example of the power of building empathy through art and conversation about art.

Participant Six pointed out the potential effectiveness of a four-part arts-lab, where a piece of art was made together at each session, to represent each part of processes and to serve as a touchstone for future conversations. Conversation and reflections with the greater community emerged as an essential part of the collective creation process, one that ought to be considered when using arts activities and processes to enhance educators' school wellness practices.

I found it interesting to examine how the process of collective creation encourages agentive creativity in the participating artists, which also demonstrates the power of arts to influence school wellness. The installation discussed above tells the story of a collective creation process that changed those participating artists' perceptions of self. It symbolized their stake in belonging in the school. Collective creations could be useful for a school wellness initiative. They have potential to help facilitate a process whereby the strength of the individual contributes to the strength of the group and the stronger community then strengthen the individual, in a loop type manner. Other participants gave comparable experiences. Participant Two reflected upon how designing and decorating an arts-learning lounge cultivated her students' sense of identity and created a shared feeling of community. A few participants shared that after contributing to the collective poem in the arts-lab, they were reassured to know that we were all of a similar mindset and had some of the same hopes and worries.

This sentiment was echoed by Participant One and Five who both expressed gratitude for the different pieces that each person brought, and by Participant Six who expressed thanks for being brought in to the arts-lab to contribute to a "we are not yet" space, referencing Maxine Greene (Pinar, 1998, p. 1). Participants Four, Two, and Three reflected that after participating in the virtual arts-lab, they were planning to include a specific focus on wellness when teaching art in the future. Participant One indicated that she saw potential in the arts-lab as an inexpensive

tool to engage student agency, and Participant Two stated that she could use it to support her students as a tool for healing. These examples demonstrate that the participants have expanded their agentic creativity in how to sponsor school wellness through their own sense of success about participating in collective creation with other educators during this arts-lab.

Theme 2: Community Arts Events

Arts can evoke an emotional response, promote reflection and dialogue, and transform what people think and do (Leavy, 2015). For participants in this study, community events were described as the second most popular form of effective arts activity. They expressed views about community arts events through the lens of enhancing school wellness. Similar to collective creation, the focus was on the potential of arts to influence a school community-in-the-making and highlight the agentic creativity inherent in art-making processes. Participants provided numerous examples of significant artistic activities that evoked an emotional response; they reflected on this and how such events can deepen understandings regarding different school-wellness themes. Both the examples and the reflections support the dual objective of the project and the individual participant to influence school wellness.

Community arts events, in which people work together as individual creative agents to contribute to the collective creation of a cohesive event, was described by participants as providing the opportunity for participants to experience the potential for change on an individual level. Further, they also said that community arts events contributed to the evolving social terrain of the schools. An arts practice reflects spiritual, emotional, and social domains of wellness and specifically influences various well-being subthemes (see Table 4.3; Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002); voice and empathy, which fall in the category of personal well-

being; acceptance and equity, which fits within relational well-being; and community and communal goals, which is under the rubric of collective well-being.

Participant Four observed one particularly strong example of a community arts event, which she shared in her description of her annual “Arts Market.” She told the story under the broad theme of “belonging,” pertaining to both students and the broader community. Her process included facilitating discussions related to applications to participate and design plans, including the purpose, functionality, and pricing the piece. She involved the students in determining reasonable pricing, arranging advertising, setting up vending stations, and even inviting the school and family community to attend the event. Finally, she had parent volunteers handle the money and distribute 80% of the profits directly back to the individual vendors to take home, 10% to the school arts program and 10% to a community charity that the student artists had agreed upon. She drew attention to the excitement from the teachers in seeing their students shine outside of what they had seen in their classrooms. She also noted the number of students who approached the work because of the financial draw. In her words, “They thought maybe they could finally use their talents and their interest in their personal projects that they were working on and be of value to themselves and their families” (Participant Four, May 8, 2020). However, one incredibly powerful part of this belonging story was told about a student who had severe anxiety, selective mutism, and extreme attendance difficulties:

I really encouraged her to apply, and she did. And it was her grade nine year that she did this sale. And she came to school and she was at school for the entire thing. And she was there interacting with her peers. And she made these, like, cool art little plant terrariums. And sold out and was just ecstatic about that, because making money when you’re a junior high kid is amazing. But her mom was just,

like, in tears. And it brought me to tears. That that was something that she was able to totally break out of, this terrified shell she built for herself.

(These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020.)

This story serves to illustrate the power of community arts events to influence school wellness and to increase the connection and strength of the community at the same time having a powerful impact on the individual student's well-being. The aesthetic evocation was more than merely the excitement of the school community seeing the works of arts; it was the act and change in consciousness about what one is capable of doing that evoked an emotional response in the mother and the teacher, and had such resonance for the participants.

Similar observations are reflected in the comments of the other virtual arts-lab participants. One of the most common ways that participants described how community arts events influenced the school community-in-the-making was through their perceptions that the event encouraged new understandings from the school community. Participant Two described how her school's arts-centered learning council had started hosting annual talent shows to increase enrolment in the program and overcome community divisions within the school. In less than a year, she had already seen the group grow from five to 30 members. Participant Four echoed this goal to use arts to overcome division within the school. Participant Three spoke about how the school play offered an inclusive experience for actors with special learning needs, which fueled positive community conversations about the students who they had not seen shine in that way before. Participant Two also spoke about how community arts events served to strengthen community and increase feelings of safety within the school.

When reflecting on the power of arts to influence school wellness, it is important to consider the ways that community events art-making processes support the agentive creativity of the participating artists. Participant Four's example of the Arts Market demonstrated the power of the community event to influence that participating artist's perception of herself, as well as her ability to be determined and to strive for desired outcomes. The changed behavior of this learner associated with the Arts Market demonstrates a changed disposition. As described by the participant in this study, this learner shifted from feeling unsafe at school and not even being able to stay for a full day of regular school programming, to deeming her participation in the extracurricular activity significant enough to overcome that struggle so that she remained in school for the entire day and evening. The encouraging conversations between the learner and her teacher seemed to support this increased confidence, as did the learner's success in creating plant terrariums and the school community's response in purchasing every single one.

Other participants shared similar examples. Participant Two reflected upon a shy young man who had recently transitioned. He did a beautiful job of playing the guitar for the school community, and his mother expressed appreciation and gratitude about his increased confidence at home, again, enriching the community and strengthening himself. Participant Three shared a story about a student with a mild cognitive disability, who gained performance confidence by successfully participating in the school play. He went on to share his Elvis impersonation at the school talent show. These descriptions depict individuals who, through the process of successfully contributing to the community arts event, were able to extend their agentive creativity.

Theme 3: Group Arts Activities

Engaging in arts activities has a perhaps unmatched potential to significantly enrich understandings, raise consciousness, and propel both self- and social-reflection and meaning-making (Leavy, 2015). Art-making that took place as a group activity was identified by participants as a significant interaction that could encourage school wellness and support the school community-in-the-making. Participants described occurrences of specific group arts activities that had deepened understandings of the artists, who came to know themselves and the collective school community better. Participants' reflections recognized efforts that had been made to push school wellness forward through group arts activities. The participants' perceptions illustrated their understanding of the capacity of the arts to generate a greater comprehension that can help to boost school wellness.

Group arts activities, wherein people participate socially in art-activities, were remembered by participants as opportunities for the learners who participated to experience change on an individual level. The learners were also exposed to the potential of arts to instigate change on a collective level. Participants commented on the group arts activities, noting that they appeared to enhance connections, increase learner engagement, and propel reflection. They also discussed practices that influenced emotional and intellectual wellness. The aforementioned categories of well-being (Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002) are relevant here as well: trust is an aspect of personal well-being; connection reflects relational well-being; and community fits within collective well-being.

A particularly lovely illustration of this promise was observed in participant reflections about their experiences field-testing the common short belief statement creative movement activity that we shared during the virtual arts-lab. I described the choreography in the above

section on voicing wellness perspectives; however, it is worth noting that I had some significant intentions as I was developing the process, and I considered how best to prime it before having participants engage in it. Before beginning, I shared my feelings about a lack of authenticity in using the school system's formal statement as an opening at school events to bear witness and accountability to our cultural wrongdoings. I shared my strivings to be more authentic with respect to a collective commitment to a socially just school, including sharing a rewriting of the common short belief statement with this explicit goal. Participants each shared their feelings of discontent and similar strivings. For instance, one participant said, "In one of my classes this year we did a different [common short belief statement] in each of the classes" (Participant Six, May 8, 2020). Before beginning, I facilitated a visualization that connected our breathing to special places that were grounded in participants' lives. Then, we read aloud the common short belief statement, each sentence segment at a time, projected on a slideshow behind photos of Alberta's beautiful natural landscape. These images represented locations of each group of peoples, in addition to facilitating a connection to the participant visualization I facilitated before beginning the embodying movements as a group.

After we finished the performance, the group had a different disposition—a calm—, whereas before the performance there was excitement. A sense of serenity seemed to pervade the group as we reflected on the process together. Participant Six recognized that by embodying the gesture of touching the ground and then the heart, she was reminded to give thanks for what had been offered and to hold it close. She recalled, "A feeling that was shared provincially recently is that we do not say thank you enough in Alberta Indigenous communities." Participant Two recalled her cultural heritage. She said, "We have this tradition where you touch the feet of your elders and to your heart has an act of respect. So that kind of really reminded me in that moment,

connecting to the land and connecting to the history and then connecting yourself.” She also expressed that she could almost feel the sand she had visualized while engaging in the movements; she felt that putting herself into her imagined environment brought her a core feeling of peace. Participant One recognized that the embodying approach gave pause and added meaning, by saying, “There was more intentionality to it.” Participant Four found embodying the words and “taking a moment to recognize each territory” added value and meaning.

Participant Three shared that the activity could enhance school wellness for families and parents by providing a way to connect to “the why” behind the common short belief statement. Participant Eight found merit in the activity for teachers and expressed interest in eliciting student attention to captivate flow and mindfulness, and to reduce students’ cortisol levels, which is the hormone associated with stress. Participant Four suggested it would be good at a school assembly because it would involve students more meaningfully, rather than have them merely go through the motions of hearing or repeating the common short belief statement. Participant Seven suggested the activity would work well in small groups, as well as being grounding for her busy students. She said,

It’s using your whole body. It’s pushing everyone out of their zone a tiny bit; I think it would be so effective. I love the grounding of it. I love reminding us of our favourite place. And then every time we’re touching it, it’s like, “Wait a minute—this is someone else’s favourite place.”

(These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020.)

Participants also shared perceptions about when the process of engaging in group arts activities had encouraged agentive creativity in participating artists. Participant Seven reflected on how watching an Italian horror film as a teacher community, during a professional learning day, prompted her and her peers to “crack open” new ways of thinking. Participant Eight spoke about how play, storytelling, and improvisation offered an essential gift in staving off depression and developing individuals intellectually. Participant One spoke about how inviting students to engage in a virtual group dance activity was an effective way to motivate the individuals in the school community to come together voluntarily. Participants Three and Five identified building an arts-education community as a significant motivation for attending the art-lab. Such examples and reflections from the participants represent the agentive creativity within individuals participating in group activities.

Theme 4: Individual Arts Activities

Participant Seven identified an individual art inquiry activity, when describing past experiences with arts that were effective in encouraging school wellness. However, other participants did describe occurrences of individual arts inquiries embedded within the collective creation and community arts activities. These inquiries were believed to add to artists’ self-understandings as well as augmenting their efforts to contribute to the collective school community. Participant Seven shared her experience of helping students to use their sudden distance from school during lockdown as an opportunity for each of them to create a dream learning-space design that used music, images and google slides. The participant shared that this

activity seemed to help students to look at themselves and express their needs using multiple forms of expression.

Participants' reflections revealed the importance of personal inquiries in efforts to comprehensively encourage school wellness through the arts. Their perceptions and recollections from practice illustrated the capacity of the individual arts inquiries to support personal well-being. Participant Three realized that she was happier for having gone through the experience. Participants One, Two, Three, and Five stated they were inspired to take up new school-wellness inquiries. Participant Four noted that the lab had given her time to think and develop arts activities to use immediately, including in her school's development plan to achieve their wellness goal. Participant Two was interested in offering a new project to her students, so that they could express how they are feeling and to use creative expression to support their healing. Participant One was looking to extend her arts abilities related to organizational change into her master's program in educational leadership. These comments describe people who are exercising their agentive creativity by engaging in personal inquiries to enhance their own school's wellness.

Themes: Concluding Remarks

In this section, I have explained how arts activities and processes which are considered effective in enhancing school wellness enabled participants to apply their agentive creativity and create opportunities to contribute to school communities in the making. The analysis of data and the resulting four themes support the conclusion that arts activities and processes can provide opportunities for participants to exercise their agency to influence the school wellness in the making. The main finding in this section is that participants have found that arts-activities and processes can be helpful for developing an individual and for providing opportunities for a

school community in the making, two objectives that contribute to school wellness. Four key themes emerged that support strengthening the school community's wellness: (1) the power of collective creations to provide a touchstone to provoke thinking and engagement between the art, the artists-as-educators, and the educators-as-audience; (2) the capacity of community arts events to positively support the fulfillment of individuals' roles and potential; (3) the influence of social reflection on helping individuals identify areas of personal significance during group arts activities; and (4) the potential to change personal well-being as a component of individual arts inquiries. Finally, often student well-being is addressed on an individual basis and while the arts do provide a process to develop the artists, these educators stressed arts' community strengthening capabilities, an important perception when considering an arts-based participatory approach to action research to enhance educators' school wellness practices.

Reflections for Next Steps

In the next section, I discuss my goal to intervene in the status quo by conceptualizing pathways from arts-based wellness to activism, focusing particularly on reducing school-wellness gaps. In response to sub-question three, the potential consequences and successes this research could inform in participant's current school wellness work according to participants, I outline the emerging next steps in this research plan and explain my process, to clarify my impending actions. I then discuss what I perceive as potential connections for the participants of my research. Finally, I examine the possible influence of this work for practices that invoke arts-based activities to enhance school-wellness activism.

I began this research with the understanding that students were unavailable to participate and teachers were feeling overloaded given the changed teaching arena related to managing the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This information guided me in making my action research study a

professional learning opportunity for interested educators, one in which educators could exchange and field-test ideas that identify and enable collective practices to advocate arts-based education within this new landscape. After beginning the study, I found that some participants joined because they felt that this timing, in fact, offered more space and time to try new things.

The Toolkit: From Arts-Lab to Think Tank

The toolkit provided activities adapted for virtual learning and also served as an artifact that could stimulate activity. In the final phase of this research, I used the insights garnered from this phase to improve the toolkit, which included changing the title of the toolkit to reflect the shift towards discussion and away from the practical arts-lab design I had originally envisioned using with schools and students on school wellness journeys. I also checked the accuracy of the insights with participants, and one of my final steps is to communicate our knowledge to the educational community through this dissertation. The original draw of this research for me was to influence activism, aimed at narrowing school-wellness gaps, through three activities: 1) engaging in a participant photo series examination of wellness perspectives, 2) using arts-based activities to explore the implications of these perspectives, and then 3) animating the findings as a video story. However, the context and shift in the study (as a result of pandemic restrictions) changed this initial aim. While some participants did engage in the participant photo series activities, it was strictly a voluntary extra; indeed, most participants did not carry out this activity. Further, those who did undertake participant photo series work did not share their photos with me until after the end of June, so while I have included them here as part of my analysis, I could not use them to inform the second virtual arts-lab. Further, these photos, though interesting, are a moment in time (linked to the pandemic). These photos are not necessarily a means to direct the virtual arts-lab into storytelling activities for futures in school wellness. What

they did, though, was provide a space and visual activity for the participant's colleagues to gather around, to generate and stimulate thinking for when they would return to school in the next academic year. This is a significant accomplishment in and of itself. The participants and data collection and analysis also provided me, as a researcher, with a rich view into the wellness strivings of the participants and arts-based capacity to reveal illuminating ideas.

In contrast, the individual intermediate sessions in which we focused on designing learning activities, which I did not include in my original design, offered practical opportunities to orient the research towards transforming practice (Kemmis et al., 2014). The goal to co-author arts curriculum in broader ways and in virtual environments—to suit the narrow educational directive and to honour the personal strivings of the participants—was more comfortable to achieve when working closely together with participants on a one-on-one basis. In one case, a participant and I created a virtual drama camp solution to be offered by the YMCA. In another, a participant and I co-authored a co-curricular wellness, science, and math unit that she provided for the last two months of the school year. In a third case, a participant and I moved on entirely: based on our shared vision, we began a new school design project in which we imagined radical new ways to meet the needs of the changing circumstance.

For these reasons, I decided to drastically change the script on the upcoming video animation (Appendix C). I decided to tell the research story as a piece of fiction, using the master plot arts-based research tool (Abbott, 2008). In the new story, Lucky Ladybug shares how her research experience was affected by the collective adversity of Coronavirus and the gifts revealed to her by her community-of-change. It stars some local animals that symbolize a mixture of the different participants from the study and the various ways they took up the research with me. The story includes a diverse group of characters: the Free-Spirited Eagle who

flew with the concepts, the Fun Loving Red Fox who engaged primarily for personal enjoyment, the Hardworking Beaver who diligently moved forward, the Wise Owl who offered the type of profound insights only a veteran practitioner could, the Loving Porcupine who supports unconditionally, and the Clever Raven, whose reflective voice provided thoughtful direction.

A valuable perspective on how to view art in a dissertation is provided by Duchscher's (2018) dissertation on the hidden curriculum; they used an arts-based inquiry to cause a disruption in taken for granted school rituals. Duchscher's work motivates researchers to include the arts created during research as a result and to frame the inclusion as an invitation for viewers to see and share what they see through the use of what is titled a Mumuration in the results chapter. Viewers in Duchscher's work, in this case teachers, can use what they see and discuss as ways to learn and connect to their own teaching practices. This invitation is reminiscent of the TAS notion of teachers-learners all (Stetsenko, 2017). One of the results of my study, the toolkit, also contains this invitation to search for beauty and connection, for example in the works I reference below, and to "feel the freedom to see [your] own classrooms within" (Duchscher, 2018, p. 143) the images, poetry and video that informed and was informed by this study. Our toolkit is meant to be flipped through and read as a magazine⁶. The stable version and media embedded version of the magazine exists in my google folder, which is shared in the abstract and the appendix. Three pieces of the toolkit are included here: 1) the poem, 2) the video and 3) some of Participant One's drawings. I chose these three pieces of the toolkit because I trust in the power of each piece to do their work alone and alongside each other, which is to provoke

⁶ For that experience it resides at <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/63817721/from-arts-lab-to-think-tank-10>, for the magazine viewing experience. However, I could not embed multimedia, and further, due to constraints such as not owning the webspace outright including the magazine link as part of this dissertation's artifacts is deemed unstable.

thinking, to see oneself in the works, and to connect us to ideas beyond ourselves. The first is a poem that was a collective achievement and reflection (our group title was the **GREENE** FREIRE Collective), the second a video story that reflects on my journey as a researcher (Figure 4.2, Because Covid), and the third are animals that Participant One drew that depict some of the group members (Figure 4.3). Readers can click the video box and then the play button to play the video. To return to the poem, close the video link.

Toolkit Excerpts

For the Love of School by the **GREENE** FREIRE Collective

I am part of something bigger than myself

I am not alone

I am appreciative of the space and people I have to work with

I am a listener and observer and want to expand and extend

I am passionate about artistic creation as a form of collective and individual change for wellness

I am involved in something bigger

I am a reflective being who believes we will move forward

I wish that healing was a simple process.

I wish for warm sunlight, and the smell of toast and sage

I wish school were more freeing

I wish there will be a recognition that the arts are giving space for calm in this crazy

I wish that we don't forget about our realizations and

appreciations that arise from our current state

I wish we could be more open in the world to our stances so that we can be flexible.

I wish art played more of a role everywhere.

I wish for stillness

I hope for a future filled with empathy and compassion.

I hope to find solace in the days to come

I hope for joyous returns

I hope post-quarantine is a return to place, to community, to art, to learning, not a lurch into Post-apocalyptic Techno-learning

I hope to collaborate more, with students and teachers taking advantage of our ability to be together

I hope that we all become more empathetic from the situations we are experiencing at this time

I hope I can return to this calm space in times of chaos and uncertainty

I worry that capitalism will win the day

I worry we won't be back with students next year

I worry the imaginative world will get lost in the logistics of survival

I worry that teaching will not be enjoyable after the changes that will occur after this

I worry that we won't be ready, that we will rush

I worry the world will go back to business as usual

I worry about how we all often unintentionally focus on the negatives

I wonder what might be possible

I wonder what the world will look like in one year

I wonder how we can change

I wonder what schools will look like in the coming years if we all will remember this moment of collective action

I wonder how we can move furthest

I wonder if we let go of certain things would we be able to remember that it is okay

Figure 4. 2

Because COVID video



Figure 4. 3

Some of Participant One's drawings



These pieces are both a final moment and a beginning, a reflection for next steps, a provocation for a discussion and also a kind of conclusion. What is not included above are the many practice drawings, the shared stories, the teacher slideshows, the participant photo series activity and classroom activity planning, that many of the participants shared. I consider all these gifts a special part of the toolkit and evidence of learning that I want to infuse in my practice moving forward, and I extend the deepest gratitude to the participants for sharing of themselves and their finely tuned craft so generously and in the spirit of continuous improvement. I anticipate that I will be able to revive the arts-lab shortly. A reason for my hope is that there seems to be so much interest in creating an arts-lab orientation session with a wellness theme to start the new school year, once we have a better idea of how that will look. The most significant learning that has emerged from the project so far is the importance of uncovering what supports wellness for participants; then, we can use the arts-lab to advocate for those changes and supports for the greater community.

Potential Connections for Participants

This research augmented the participants' knowledge of and experience with arts-based learning and wellness. Examples from the participants' discussions, provide evidence to corroborate this claim that they were impacted by their experience with this research. Specifically, through the course of engaging in the virtual arts-lab, the participants were impacted in two critical areas of professional growth: trust and collaboration, as well as in capacities and skill (Hassan, 2014). A particularly reliable way that participants demonstrated their growing trust in and collaboration with each other from engaging in the virtual arts-lab came from their interest in connecting outside of the lab to work together on integrating arts and

wellness content into their programs. The participants' comments during the labs also showed evidence of building trust and collaboration. More than one participant started a statement with the preface, "Building on [so-and-so]..." As well, numerous participants took time to express gratitude for the group being there together. Throughout the process, participants frequently gave encouragement to support people who were sharing personal content or experiences or insights from practice. Working with arts-educators who understand and value arts as a tool for wellness activism served to support my articulation of purpose and strengthened my resolve, I presume that by accepting my invitation and engaging with me in that space, they felt similarly about these aspects.

Participant Four's comments offer examples of building capacity and skill, in that she appreciated the space to collaborate with others who shared this interest, and her stated intention to hold onto these ideas in the face of what she would be going back to at her school. She also emailed me for supplementary resources to use with her fellow teachers, to embed arts and wellness in their fall school-start-up professional learning days. Participant One indicated that she found the process of using roles in the discussion valuable for promoting equality in the discussion, and that she planned to share the process with her students in an attempt to support them in developing confidence in using their voices. Participant Three echoed the appreciation, noting the positive atmosphere in which everyone had their own voice. She stated her excitement at incorporating her learning into helping kids, after returning from the pandemic to in-school instruction. Participants Four and Five indicated that they were compelled by the research to learn new terminology and Participants One, Three, Five, Six, and Seven all took roles in helping to facilitate the session.

Technology also emerged as a theme related to building community and developing tools to support teaching and learning. I observed numerous instances of participants making gains in understanding new ways to use the technological tools—ranging from opening links using control-click on OneDrive, entering the space using Outlook for Microsoft Teams, and using the chat feature and the break-out group features in planned online collaborative activities. In-depth conversations also took place synchronously, such as Participant One wondering how to address the inequity in technological resources and Participant Five warning the group not to be fooled that new technological wins were solutions to all problems. The work that Participant Three and I did in building virtual drama camp solutions for the YMCA was incredibly fun because we had to test all the activities, which pushed both of us to develop our skills as online drama teachers.

These comments and themes revealed that the participants built trust, increased opportunities for collaboration, and developed capacity and skill with arts-lab and technology through participating in the virtual arts-lab action research.

Arts-Based Activities for School-wellness Activism

The compelling school-wellness activism story shared by Participant One, presented in detail below, provides meaningful evidence of the educative influence participants' involvement in this research had, particularly as it pertains to two critical areas of organizational growth. Although the following account came during the second virtual arts-lab, it was the result of multiple intermediate sessions between the researcher and participant to co-author curriculum. Here Participant One reflected on her process of creating a spiritual virtual arts-lab in her math and science class. She had created two videos to introduce concepts, one on connection to the land concerning math, and the other on belonging. We also had worked together to create a statistics unit supported with arts activities. This lengthy transcript excerpt below highlights that

service and infrastructure, and knowledge and learning are both critical areas of organizational growth (Hassan, 2014):

My principal and my brother-in-law, who's the chief of police for the [Name of Tribe] Reserve police service, were both in the video. I saw the value of expanding art, math, science to gather student voice. This pandemic scenario, the hours reduced and essential outcomes, yet students are coming to the table—it's a perfect opportunity for creative exploration and for using arts for change. Students talked about what they thought wellness was and I expanded their ideas with them, to include environmental, social, emotional, physical, intellectual, vocational and spiritual.

I did the same poem with what wellness was to students and what they're doing to keep well. They were pretty shy when it came to the larger group, so using the chat feature was very effective. Few students spoke about the intellectual, spiritual and vocational wellness. The majority spoke on environmental, social, emotional, and physical wellness. From the poetry, I drew some insights; it helped enhance student voice and agency. I am still trying to get the idea across that the students get to choose what it is they want to change. They are talking about nutritional breaks to socialize, merging of classes, more field trips, long lunch breaks, shortened ACE [arts-centered experience] instruction, different teaching techniques in core classes, more feedback from other students, doing work outside, [and a] wellness hour.

We looked at how using art and statistics together has the power to influence ideas. If you can gather enough support for wellness ideas you want to move

forward, then this is a way to use math and arts together to work to your advantage. I'm thinking of moving the project to a virtual variety show to ask the question of what art would have the most impact. We are looking at different art that has made a change in the world: movies, poems, dance, etcetera. It requires trust. I asked them to use art, math, and science as a vehicle for change, for a wellness idea that they see as important. Some students just want the math that they need for high school as opposed to trying to move the school forward. So, in terms of what I can do, I can continue on this. We've polled the ideas that they came up with. And some [do] question if it is going to change anything.

My principal is super open. I shared the poem and videos, and she shared [them] with her colleagues and area director. She thought it was valuable hearing what the students had to say; she would like to see it come to fruition, so that helps the students buy in [to the process]. I see the arts-lab as an inexpensive way to work on change through art, and more powerful for student agency than deregulation techniques, which I'm not seeing impact student anxiety very well. Arts has been cut from instructional hours and potentially from the budget for next year. As a professional, it's a process to encourage student agency more deeply. We haven't done enough of that. In the future, I will start this process at the beginning of the year. I've talked with our grade teams to see how to use it in an interdisciplinary way and connect our SDP [school development plan] to it more strongly.

(These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020.)

Participant One's work is significant as service and infrastructure activism in that it focused on students propelling their own improvements to school wellness. This is especially the case in how she continued adapting her instruction to meet the needs of the students who felt that math for high school was a priority over school change. She also demonstrated significant service and infrastructure activism by integrating arts and wellness curriculum into the concepts in her math and science curriculum. Additional conversations with her revealed that balancing these two needs in her program design was new work and knowledge that she attributed to our work together in this study. In particular, she was introduced to the TAS concepts that describe both co-authoring, and striving to operate as teacher-learners, as means to confront inequity in the school experience. She also enhanced service and infrastructure by including the greater community in her effort, such as her brother-in-law and her principal. Her intention to connect the project in an interdisciplinary way to both her grade team and her School Development Plan reflect the potential impact of her work on organizational knowledge and learning. She also influenced instructional and program development by instigating conversations with her grade group link learning objectives with addressing wellness gaps and improving the School Development Plan. These actions demonstrate that critical, creative process skills have a place in furthering the knowledge and learning of a school, and that the arts-lab experience had impact on this teacher's practice and activism.

This is one example of the types of conversations I had with participants that support my claims about the potential of a virtual arts-lab to influence school-wellness activism. Other

examples include the following: Participant Seven used the words “absolutely we will use this learning” when discussing using arts-lab processes to support reimagining our educational spaces in the fall also said, “With arts we can crack it open.” Participant Two indicated that she had been struggling with the virtual format and thought that the wellness content would make the work more authentic; she shared that after listening to Participant One’s experience with her class and her math and wellness virtual-arts-lab unit and engaging in the virtual-arts lab activities herself (with us) she would use the collective poetry-writing in her own work to move what she termed “the healing work” forward. Participant Six stated that when the school community coalesced again, after quarantine, maintaining decentralized networks, like this one, would be necessary to support school success. Participant Five expressed gratitude for finding people to work with to move things forward. More than one participant shared appreciation and thanks for the experience. Participant Four said the virtual arts-lab was a valuable opportunity to reflect on the difference she had made with students using arts and listening to others. She believed her experience in this research project would support her to intentionally use more wellness and arts activities in the future.

I am optimistic that the findings and outcomes from this combined action research TAS approach will contribute to blueprints that can guide future organizational change. The individual practices and collective activities mentioned above capture and indicate the potential for improved service and program development, just as participants imagined it during the virtual arts-lab. It is also what I hoped to achieve with this research.

Next Steps: Conclusion

The analysis, observations and themes in this section together support the claim that the activities and processes of the virtual arts-lab action research provide opportunities for

participants to contribute to areas critical for organizational growth, thereby addressing school-wellness gaps. Themes that emerged in this section included the potential for the virtual arts-lab participants to build knowledge, skill, and capacity, as well as to develop trust and collaboration within the group. Further evidence supports the claim that arts-based activities support school-wellness activism, including improving the service and instructional practices within future programming and school improvement for instance in privileging student voice. The main finding in this section is that participants who engaged in the arts-lab found opportunity to strengthen areas critical to organizational growth, thus influencing school wellness. Although I have concluded with reflections on my broad claim that arts-based activities can support educators in school-wellness activism, I also recognize the limitations of generalizing the work to educators' work with students given the context of this study. Therefore these results must be interpreted as provisional and local to this study.

Summary. The purpose of this fourth chapter was to summarize, analyze and connect the collected data to the intention of influencing school-wellness activism, which was framed through a TAS that participants experience through an arts-lab. I shared the wellness perspectives as expressed and interpreted through participant art and reflections. Moreover, I shared my perspective on the contribution and potential of this research to move forward in the community through my analysis. I presented three observations that emerged from my analysis of well-being commitments, namely:

- 1) The arts-lab provided opportunities for the participants to actively engage in interrogations of the gaps between their personal values and their current school realities.
- 2) The arts-lab activities supported participants in reflecting upon and acting on shared school wellness commitments.

- 3) The arts-lab enhanced the participants' development of practices that support school wellness activism.

I also presented four themes that emerged from my analysis of promising arts activities for school wellness, namely:

- 1) The power of the collective creation to provoke thinking and engagement in a school community.
- 2) The capacity of community arts events to support an individual's growth.
- 3) During group arts activities social reflection helps individuals develop insight.
- 4) Arts inquiries have the potential to influence personal well-being.

My findings suggest that in general, the arts-lab offers opportunities for participants to contribute to areas important to organizational growth and thereby influence school-wellness. In chapter five, I present reflective interpretations and analysis of enacting a transformative activist stance.

Chapter Five: A Reflective Analysis of TAS

In this chapter, I review the research purpose, and present my reflective interpretations and analysis. By considering my approach to enact a transformative activist stance (TAS) in practice I focus my reflective analysis on a personal framework guided by my understanding of TAS. My analysis findings show that an arts-based participatory approach to action research, investigated through an arts-lab, can enhance educators' school wellness practices by influencing how participants affirm their role in affecting their school community and their control over the future. This enhancement of educators' school wellness practices comes about by creating conditions where teachers can explore their concerns and their potential as teacher activists to intervene in school wellness. The experience was also an opportunity for me, as a researcher and practitioner, to hone my own philosophy about arts-labs as an effective tool to bring about change in a school community. My findings show that one way an arts-based participatory approach to action research in and through an arts-lab can enhance educators' school wellness practices is in influencing conditions for developing both my personal philosophy and educator participants' experiences in affirming participation and control over the future. This chapter explores the viability of a TAS in this context – and evaluates whether through this research I achieved TAS as a meaningful aspect of utility in an educational research context. Finally, I share my perspectives on the contribution and potential of this research for practice and further research.

The purpose of this study was to explore arts activities that inspire educator's school wellness action, by developing a guiding toolkit for school change practices—one that integrates insights from arts education and a TAS into an arts-lab. This overall research aimed to privilege arts, students, wellness, and participant perspectives by engaging educators in collective, creative

activities that critically interrogate current realities and imagine improved possibilities for school communities. The goal was to engage in participatory arts activities to inform critical analysis of the well-being of school communities and to inspire agents of social change who may then tackle constraints that contribute to unhealthy school communities. In this way, educators can bring forward new visions for a better future. This study aimed to reveal the potential of arts in school change practices.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, I articulate how I have developed my personal philosophy while learning and facilitating from a TAS. I considered how TAS could support the overarching research question and study objective: in particular, in what ways can an arts-based participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab, enhance educators' school wellness practices. I show where my attempts to conduct school-wellness research from a TAS contributed to how the research evolved. I draw on the work of Stetsenko and Vianna (2014) to incorporate abstract ideas into practical choices that unify participant values with my research objectives. My findings show that transformative activism is engendered in the experiences of the research participants who attempted to create a positive participatory approach to the research aims that were themselves transformative. This in turn suggests that there is capacity within school communities to potentially have some control of their future school wellness.

Transformative Activist Stance Applied

The research question cited in the paragraph above focused this inquiry. As a first analytical step, I examined the participatory approach through four principles, identified because of their overlap with TAS and my developing philosophy of practice. In pursuing the study goal of creating and facilitating an arts-lab for participatory wellness action, I have held myself

accountable by judging my acts and claims against the principles of current theories of research from a TAS (McNiff, 1999/2012; 2013). I did this by developing a framework (Table 5.1) for conducting an arts-lab from a TAS. I based my decisions concerning strategies of practice on an explicit framework of transformative activist-informed strategies to develop a more conscious practice. In particular I addressed issues of solidarity, agentic creativity, freedom, and equality. To support a TAS in my research methods I embedded these components into my research framework. This is a method described by Stetsenko and Vianna (2014); they are shown on Table 5.1 in column one: researchers' initial commitments, co-authoring the research situations, clearly taking sides, and focused praxis. In column two, I relate each component to values of wellness and social action in the context of the virtual arts-lab—developing solidarity, agentic creativity, freedom, and equality and justice— which I call *considerations*. In the third column, I describe the actions and data-gathering techniques used to achieve a link between the stance and the goal of the research, called *conscious action*: Following the presentation of Table 5.1, I discuss my considerations and my claim that this process has implications in my personal practice.

Table 5. 1*My Personal Framework: Tool for Conducting a Comprehensive School-Wellness Arts-lab from a TAS*

TAS Components of research (Stetsenko & Vianna, 2014)	Personal considerations connected to the research question	Opportunities for practical operationalization
<i>Component 1: Researcher's Initial Commitments</i>	<i>Consideration 1: Developing Solidarity</i>	<i>Conscious Action</i>
<p>Researcher's initial commitments should be explicit and open. This sets the stage for designing all research components and steps. These commitments are explored and expanded in collaboration with participants. The working out of a common vision/endpoint and agenda for social change through research is its most critical component.</p> <p>The ensuing collaborative project of realizing a common agenda provides the context in which knowledge is produced and warranted. Achieving objectivity has to do with transparency of ideological underpinnings and goals of research to which others can object.</p>	<p>Within the framework of developing an arts-lab, a participatory approach to action research from a TAS enhances this school wellness initiative—by creating educational practices that support solidarity and challenge competition.</p> <p>Three aspects were important: My actions of meeting with arts-based change leaders to share my objectives and test their significance within the changed educational landscape.</p> <p>Completing an introductory presentation and draft toolkit that articulated my connection between values and practice.</p> <p>Completing the above actions before inviting community input—my attempt to be explicit about my initial commitment and ask for suggestions to strengthen a common agenda.</p>	<p>Delivering an orientation presentation with the following features developed my ability to explain my research commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended by educators who self-selected their participation based on shared motivations. • Articulated the relationship between school wellness, arts, and TAS in my introductory presentation. • Voiced the shared values and objectives between potential participant groups and the research goal by discussing published documents and context with potential participants. • Transparently outlined how the research process was chosen, and how data were to be collected, interpreted, and shared. • Asked others at each presentation opportunity for suggestions and direction, which I incorporated as appropriate. <p>Designed a draft toolkit (Appendix C) of appropriate forms of arts-lab activities to develop my ability to explain my research commitments. It included the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-authoring a collective creation working agreement (Appendix E). • Discussing and expanding on research commitments as a collective, using TAS questions (Appendix B). • Individually and collectively reflecting on each participant's values for school wellness through art-making and discussions; I adapted these reflections into a virtual arts session for participants. • Exploring the thematic universe of the research question from the participants' perspectives through the opportunity to field-test a Participant photo series activity (Appendix R). <p>Asking educators to reflect on the objectives and seek stories, experiences, and reflections to guide and strengthen the action research</p>

<i>Component 2: Co-Authoring the Research Situations</i>	<i>Consideration 2: Developing Agentive Creativity</i>	<i>Conscious Action</i>
<p>Research situations straddle both history and change. The process is constantly evolving through participants' unique contributions that are collectively realized.</p>	<p>Within the framework of developing an arts-lab, a participatory approach to action research from a TAS enhances this school wellness initiative by creating conditions that support agentive creativity and challenge repression.</p> <p>My actions of learning from participants about their interests and intents and considering these understandings when creating spaces for participants to bravely test their voice by questioning existing conditions and imagining how things could be otherwise.</p>	<p>My ability to co-author the research situation by engaging both participants and myself as teacher-learners was developed by designing activities for a virtual arts-lab, informed by arts-educator one-to-one meetings. I used the following key processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging participants in contributing their unique perspectives. Reexamining the educator's role as student and teacher, in light of the teacher-learner role. Assessing the current school-wide wellness development goals and predicting the significance of new goals, for a post-SARS-CoV-2 quarantine school community. Through discussions, learning from participant collaborative and individual contributions regarding the effectiveness of the art to meet their individual wellness goals and school-wellness goals.
<i>Component 3: Clearly Taking Sides</i>	<i>Consideration 3: Developing Freedom</i>	<i>Conscious Action</i>

TAS research invariably disrupts the status quo at research sites through its mere presence; by clearly taking sides, researchers can expound and magnify this disruption.

Within the framework of developing an arts-lab, a participatory approach to action research from a TAS enhances this school wellness initiative by creating educational practices that support freedom and challenge social control.

My action of engaging in participatory roles and including my voice in the discussions by explicitly sharing my opinion—thus, temporarily opting out of the participatory facilitator role—allowed me and my participants to take sides. For example, I candidly discussed how using arts-based research, which is traditionally excluded from school improvement initiatives, was an attempt to support freedom by engaging generative practices that challenge the usual socially controlling approach to school improvement.

Moving away from instructional interventions, usually measured through achievement tests and survey questions, is a radical choice for traditional or marginalized knowledge. In the SARS-CoV-2 quarantine climate, arts education has been eliminated from the required Alberta curriculum, and I shared my fear of arts cuts in the next provincial and school budgets. Further, if anyone wanted support with this radical work, I committed to meeting with them for a focused support session to work on our shared objective, focusing on their context, even after the data collecting was finished.

My ability to explain my side (and clearly take sides) while encouraging participants to also clearly take and explain their sides, were developed through virtual-lab session roles and practices. These were shaped by the following intentions:

- To acknowledge endemic power relations and invite additions to a shared agenda.
 - To exercise agency in that participants could choose the focus of their work.
 - To make space to practise being brave, taking stands, establishing personal authority, and making choices.
 - To set norms for decision-making—for action, for taking roles, and for participating in discussion.
 - To explicitly pay attention to kindness, boundaries, respect and courageous offerings, through use of a “vibes-watcher” role.
 - To encourage trust-building, equity, and generosity of spirit by engaging ongoing encouragement.
-

<i>Component 4: Focused Praxis⁷</i>	<i>Consideration 4: Developing Equality and Justice</i>	<i>Conscious Action</i>
<p>Research should provide resources and tools for youth to analyze their current positions within social practices (schools) and recognize inconsistencies to help establish a common vision about how to transform these practices and in doing so change themselves</p> <p>The expertise of the participants, especially those typically marginalized from decision-making, (such as students) provide valuable insights into power dynamics and the conditions at the research sites.</p>	<p>Within the framework of developing an arts-lab, a participatory approach to action research from a TAS enhances this school wellness initiative by creating educational practices that support equality and justice, and challenge discrimination and injustice. My action of working with educators to support them—by providing resources to analyze the dimensions of school wellness through arts—was aimed at focusing action and reflection on a shared agenda. It was also intended to set conditions to engage in the zone of proximal development as teacher-learners, all by designing activities that answered the participants’ requests for specific actions.</p>	<p>My ability to produce knowledge democratically was developed by witnessing what Freire (1970/2000) calls the “thematic universe” of the oppressed (p. 86). This includes understanding how students and teachers perceive their plight and by developing arts-lab activities informed by this understanding that: Privilege student authors in developing agendas for a better school life</p> <p>Negotiating “collectivindual” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 214) intentions and understandings, that include educator voices.</p> <p>Establishing conditions for collective creation and critique. This includes rules of doing, collective online spaces, and asking and being responsive to questions about the objectives and the strengths of the art that is produced.</p>

⁷ Freire’s (1970/2000) theory of praxis that aims action and reflection at the system it changes.

I followed my ongoing self-reflection, outlined in the chart above, with content analysis of the two group arts-lab sessions. I focused on the statements that participants made during the virtual arts-lab group sessions. I transcribed them word for word, separated them and coded them line-by-line under themes of participatory approach to action, wellness activism, and arts activities for learning. In the following sections, I focus on the support these statements showed for the themes linked to TAS principles and a participatory approach, which is followed by a segment focused on the support these statements showed for arts activities and wellness activism.

I identified 26 statements in the two virtual arts-lab sessions audio-recording and transcriptions that reflected the participatory and TAS approach. I will explore four observations, each related to the main research question and connected to one of four types of conditions expressed in these statements, categorized as follows:

- *Showing solidarity*: The majority of comments (65%) depicted support for our shared purpose (17 of 26).
- *Strivings towards equality*: 15% of participants' comments demonstrated this tendency within the doings of the arts-lab (4 of 26).
- *Agentive creativity*: A few statements (11%) were taken to illustrate participants' motivation and purpose towards this aspect (3 of 26).
- *Freedom and shared power*: I made a few comments within the sessions about my own actions that referenced this aspect (2 of 26).

These reflections and statements reveal how an arts-based participatory approach to action research in and through an arts-lab could enhance school wellness, by influencing conditions for developing practices and experiences that affirm participation and control over the future of school wellness.

Observation 1: Validation for Developing Conditions for Solidarity

Following the main research question about how an arts-based participatory approach to action research grounded in and through an arts-lab enhances educators' school wellness practices, is that it develops conditions for solidarity. I critically reflected on my conviction about the importance of solidarity and sharing power through many phases of the project, such as the design of the facilitator toolkit, the virtual arts-lab orientation design, the arts-lab sessions one and two, the one-to-one pre-sessions, and the intermediate sessions. During the collaborations, I shared this commitment and the tensions of motivating the action with participants, along with initiating and facilitating the agenda, from a position that is open to critique. As mentioned in the methodology section, I recorded my reflections in a journal related to the pre-sessions; I also audio-recorded, transcribed, and pulled themes from the discussions in the two group sessions. Finally, after the first virtual arts-lab session, I discussed my intentions with the educators who chose to meet with me for additional one-on-one sessions between the arts-lab sessions. The reflections about the verbalization of the TAS throughout the first sessions informed some changes to the second session. One notable adjustment for the second session arising from my journalling was to take longer pauses, so as to create explicit openings for participants to add to the agenda, and a more definite step away from my role of participatory facilitator when adding my insights to the discussion.

In personal reflections, some spoken aloud to participants, I envisioned practical approaches to enacting TAS in this research, as outlined in column three—Conscious Action—in Table 5.1. These approaches supported me so that I could deepen my “morally just” program development by acknowledging ways to highlight solidarity, agentive creativity, freedom, and equality in co-authoring an agenda that I was driving. My goal was and remains to create a

program that is morally just, and which welcomes all participants. During the process, participants provided me with significant insights about the potential of aligning a broadened understanding of our personal values with a TAS. One example was the positive and participatory response of the participants to the proposed roles during the sessions; they showed no hesitation to participate and one of the educator participants went so far as to make the role her own, which I describe below.

During the orientation, I asked for volunteers to participate in three roles: speakers list stacker, timekeeper, and a vibes-watcher⁸. The participants were familiar with the first two roles as they are everyday tasks for teachers; however, there was some hesitation with the third role. I described the vibes-watcher as a “Yoda”-type role (the wise teacher in the Star Wars movies), charged with keeping notes during the session as a way to appreciate the gifts and offers in a sensitive manner aimed to draw people in and not call people out. It is also a way to acknowledge mistakes, like being unaware of space or language. Finally, Participant Five agreed to the role, although she asked that it be titled the “Spock”-type role (a character from the Star Trek universe), because of Spock’s logical understanding, like that of an empath (another Star Trek character, who can literally experience another person’s emotions and pain). At the end of the session, I asked people to share their answers to some of the process questions. I invited Participant Five to speak first because of her role. She had this to say:

I won’t be speaking to these final questions. What I want to say is what a beautiful, incredible opportunity, to be able to hear from such thoughtful people. I wanted to

⁸ As participatory facilitator for activist groups I learned about the effectiveness of these roles. The timekeeper reminds people of agreed upon timelines so they can decide what to prioritize; the speakers list stacks the names of those who want to speak and prioritizes need. They are encouraged to be progressive and give time to people who have not taken much space, or who have lived experience that is of higher priority.

say that [Name of Participant Two], right at the very beginning you talked about building community and how important that is. You reminded us that we are all wondering about our future together, and sometimes we get these little opportunities to be together with like-minded people. What a great reminder that we're not alone! [Name of Participant Three], that you recognized that every act that we have, we want to ensure that there are none of those biases. I loved your pragmatic approach: As soon as you saw something that needed to look a little bit better, you already had some great ideas to move it forward. [Name of Participant Four], you kept us positive, you reminded us all the time that we have to be hopeful, we have to think that there are lots of crazy wild things going on, but we have to be positive for ourselves and our students. That was wonderful. [Name of Participant One]: always student voice, and reminding us that that's why we're here, to think about our students. [Name of Participant Six], right at the very beginning, that there is this notion that we are in complex systems and here is a moment of disruption and we have two choices—we can run with it and do something better, or we can fall back to something that was there before. And Karena, thank you for this generous opportunity to be reflective and to remind ourselves that there are people out there that think and know that this is good work. (These words were transcribed from the first group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the third part of the data archive dated April 24, 2020.)

In another instance, a participant discussed their experience of this process. I interpret this example as evidence of the potential of operating from a TAS to deepen our collective

solidarity. At the very end of the second session, after engaging in this work in a one-on-one between arts-lab session with me and field-testing activities with her own online class,

Participant One stated her thoughts regarding the notion of shifting to teacher-learners:

I feel this experience is making me a better educator—this idea of shifting away from teacher and student. I see it when I initiated it, and I understand I have to adjust based on the feedback I’m getting from students. This idea of teacher-learner is this creative tension and openness that’s required to engage students where their voice is equal amongst mine. My agenda is not the only agenda, and theirs is part of it, too. Embracing this complexity, and I like this idea of taking this virtual arts-subject in phases so that there’s an ongoing improvement which gathers the voices of kids. And this idea of collective engagement with students, I think sort of brings us together.

(These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020.)

Participant One’s observation of the complexity she embraced exemplifies the potential of designing an arts-lab, through TAS, to influence the community to challenge dominant ideologies and build solidarity. In our second intermediate session, she shared that her students at school had struggled with the shift and requested more direct math instruction and a stronger connection to math in the arts-based change-lab. As a result Participant One and I shifted the project to include a large statistical component that supported the notion of using mathematics to influence momentous change. Participant One thanked her students for their feedback and opened her second session with direct math skills instruction.

In an ideal strategy, the arts-lab would engage both youth and adults as co-facilitators, outside of typical school and institutional constraints, to voluntarily design the lab together. While this intervention only included adults as participants, some of these educators took the work into their virtual classrooms with students. They sought to engage in the process of a school-wellness inquiry, alongside the current wellness crisis, because they saw within the challenge an opportunity to do things differently. Shifting action for educators in this way is a radical change: for a self-aware educator, the activity may meet their progressive views about what ought to be, but it is not an easy act to actually do it. Pedagogical theorist bell hooks (1994) writes about the demands of holistic, engaged pedagogy, which aligns with Stetsenko's (2017) pedagogy of daring, as being uncomfortable for educators; unlike conventional critical pedagogy it emphasizes that teachers "actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (hooks, 1994, p. 15). Educators can be uncomfortable with holistically viewing themselves as teacher-learners and simultaneously seeing students as teacher-learners. She notes about this, "I have witnessed a grave sense of dis-ease among professors (irrespective of their politics) when students want us to see them as whole beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge" (hooks, 1994, p. 15).

The significance of this research goes beyond my personal achievements in critically developing personal strategies to enact values. The participatory activities extended the influence of TAS into the participants' educational practices.

Observation 2: Validation for Creating Conditions to Develop Agentive Creativity

Observation two concerns developing the conditions for agentive creativity as a means to enable an arts-based participatory approach to action research grounded in and through an arts-

lab to enhance educators' school wellness practices. In my design and facilitation of the virtual arts-lab, I focused on my belief about agentic creativity and engaging participant voice; this belief also infused the intermediate sessions set up to support educators with their own objectives. I expressed this intention with the participants and welcomed their observations on this topic. I also documented these considerations through audio-recordings and written evidence.

During my reflection, I settled on practical solutions to incorporating TAS, as described in Table 5.1. These strategies helped me strengthen my program development. During the research, participants offered crucial insights into the capacity of this program to elicit voice and choice in collective creativity. Two activities helped to facilitate this dialogue—visioning and some poetry. Participants discussed an example of the strategy after engaging in an exercise of collectivindual poetry-writing to capture the wellness perspectives and research intention. My hope was that this activity would provide evidence of the potential of the arts-lab to strengthen participant control over the purpose of their activities. The participants shared their personal reflections on their current school-wellness agenda by simultaneously contributing to poetry in the chat tool.

After the visioning exercise, I had participants reflect on their wellness goals within their particular school's wellness approach by responding to various "I-statement" prompts: I am... I wish... I hope... I believe... I want... I worry... I will... I wonder. Then they discussed the potential of the exercise from their perspective. Participant Six noted that she found the I-statement framework revelatory and was curious to see, "if there was a way of setting up some of the prompts to be "we": We are, we hope, and we see what happens if I position myself as a

“we,” then what comes out of it?” (Participant Six, April 24, 2020). Participant Five responded to Participant Six with this thinking:

Coming out of what [Name of Participant 6] is saying, I think there are two approaches here. I think from our perspective, [as] people who work as adults in collectives, often we rings true. When I think about my students, they’re coming out of the I space and giving them an opportunity to see [the] I supports agentic creativity. And this notion that everything that we create and everything that is created is a collective. There isn’t a moment of genius other than a spark that happens because so many other things have happened before. It’s one of the beautiful pieces I think that are important about the arts, [it] is that it is a collective space, always.

(These words were transcribed from the first group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated April 24, 2020.)

Following the visioning activities, participants engaged in a second activity that added to the discussion of agency. Specifically, the exercise of collectivindual poetry-writing was aimed at capturing the wellness perspectives and research intention. I intended for this activity to provide evidence of the potential capacity of the arts-lab to give participants’ control over the purpose of their activities. The participants shared their personal reflections on their current school-wellness agenda by simultaneously contributing to poetry in the chat tool.

Through this practice, I learned the importance of providing opportunities for participants to identify their individual stance through reflecting on collective activity. The reflection accommodated both individual and collective learning. The independent visualization followed

by the collaborative arts activity, which was in turn followed by time to collectively reflect, built deeper understandings of the arts-lab collective art-work. By articulating the importance of the stance in the poetry activity the participants contributed to the collective agenda of developing collaborative arts activities that welcome each unique position and view of the world. Stetsenko (2017) offers a description of the pluralistic relationship between collective and individual practices, which resonates with my research. She characterizes it as a “mutually co-constitutive process of social practices, inclusive of individual and collective agency, [that] can be expressed ...[by] saying that social practices form the agent who acts to form these practices—as a simultaneous process of their mutual becoming” (p. 213). With reflection, study, and practice, I have come to an understanding that collaborative transformative practices are constituted through the interactions of individual agentive creativity.

This observation fundamentally concerns developing and testing theory through practice. Connecting my educational practitioner craft and participant practice to professional reflections on theoretical understandings helps me to develop my vision and insights into the people I work with; importantly, it gives authority to practitioner knowledge. In this arts activity, participants used the space that the arts activities provided them to imagine how things could be otherwise. Afterwards, the participants used those imaginative musings as touchpoints to intelligently construct future arts activities, guided by the same goals.

At this point in the experience, I returned to Greene’s (1995b) writings on “wide awakesness” (p. 148). I believe the collective poetry writing activity came closest to this notion in that it highlighted the potential of the arts to open our minds to social action. However, at that stage of the research, the educators’ reflections about arts-lab activity development were perhaps more important than the values that were emerging from the art-making, or, indeed, my

reflections as the core researcher, since I did not have to commit to putting anything into upcoming classroom practice. I also believe the participants could have benefited from engaging in reflective praxis. This would have enabled them to further connect the values that emerged from the art to their school-wellness goals and to liberation and activism. For effective praxis, the inquiry must be “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 51). This arts activity therefore fell short in this objective, though certainly, it can be expanded on in the future.

Observation 3: Validation for Developing Conditions for Freedom

Observation three turns to how developing conditions for freedom support the investigation here into how an arts-based participatory approach to action research, carried out through an arts-lab, can contribute to enhancing educators’ school wellness practices. In the development of the virtual arts-lab sessions and the intermediate sessions where I supported educators with their own arts-lab designs, I concentrated on my aim to develop freedom in learning. With this explicit purpose in mind, I drew on participants’ visions and ideas to guide the design. I recorded conversations and logged written evidence to this end. In closing, after each session, I requested participants’ feedback about the integration of the TAS in the design.

As described in Table 5.1, I have focused on concrete approaches to integrate TAS. Questioning and conversations led to ongoing improvements to this plan. During the virtual arts-lab sessions, I invited the participants to field-test arts activities for change, to critique the in-development toolkit, and to share practical stories from their experiences to contribute to this investigation. I shared my perspective that privileging arts in instructional design is educational activism, and I offered myself as a volunteer to do that work with them if they reached out to me—because I am interested, I am passionate about the arts, and this work matters.

Two examples of encouraging autonomy, while simultaneously encouraging challenges to my perspective, happened during the intermediate sessions. In the sessions I had with Participant Six, we focused on the idea that improving the Western School District public education system may best come from creating a proof-of-concept program, one that is developed outside of the Board context. The concept we explored was creating an accredited summer learning program that could be developed into a charter school. We dug into the details, we reviewed the charter requirements (including the Alberta government's proposed changes), and we researched the summer learning programs in Calgary that are currently successful. With marginalized learners and parental needs in our minds, along with some preliminary cost and budget figures, we did some brainstorming.

At one point, I suggested online tools to develop student learner profiles and diagnostic assessments quickly. Participant Six adamantly rejected the tool, which she judged to be terrible. She also suggested that this type of a compromise, and others like it necessitated by time and money constraints, might mean the alternative program we could create would be little different than existing programs. As such, it would lack the power to disrupt the system, which was the intention. She then contemplated the conflicts inherent in creating education, as a business. She expressed that we were not aiming to create a business, in part because we do not know each other well, but also because she saw this as exciting and valuable personal volunteer work. After a pause, I shared my hesitation that if we did not include financial realities in the design, we might be "band-aiding" the system by providing a free stopgap. But for lasting change, we required systemic funding.

My journalling and reflecting on this conversation revealed that I knew Participant Six and I both welcomed these conflicting perspectives, but we could also benefit from further

conversation before committing to next and future steps. I also realized that I was not pushing myself hard enough to imagine potential changes in the institution. I was allowing the impenetrable barriers of a rigid school system to box in my imagination, and I struggled to see a way out. I was reminded of Stetsenko's (2017) words:

The crisis of inequality most certainly cannot be resolved at the level of theory only—it has wide systemic and structural economic and political causes, and it would require radical changes at these levels for progress to be made. However, neither can this crisis be resolved without challenging the starkly outdated theories including their underpinning philosophies, worldviews, and ideologies that in effect support and perpetuate this crisis. (p. 14)

Thus, developing an alternative within a system of fixed boundaries, like outdated programs of studies and standardized measurements of academic success, has intrinsic difficulties: Unless wellness educator activists compromise they are not likely to see success in getting off the ground, but if these educators do compromise they may not see success in making lasting changes.

Participant Six and I discussed inviting other interested educators to engage in conversations about the potential of this project. While we have not arrived at any conclusions, and perhaps we will not, we found the act of imagining a different future and translating that imagination to our practical reality aligned with the transformative activist premise of developing freedom, upon which this project was premised.

The second example of encouraging autonomy came from Participant Seven, with whom I brainstormed on an arts-lab for the last week of school, intended to help her students support themselves and build their resiliency to be successful in their next school year. During an

intermediate session, Participant Seven and I engaged in a conversation about where she felt the toolkit would fall short of its objective in her classroom. She pointed to four gaps: (1) the toolkit lacked an assessment piece for students; (2) the toolkit was missing a metacognitive piece, whereby students could investigate how they learn best and their emotional strengths; (3) the design thinking process for constructivist change-making was missing from the process; and (4) the toolkit was missing activities to support building equity in content creation. Through this exchange and with her feedback about the toolkit, I was able to improve it.

During our time together, I had shared with Participant Seven a lesson on arts-based activity, collective creation commitment, and working agreements, which she realized she had missed in her review. She also shared some supplementary resources to add to the toolkit. I felt the toolkit covered the areas she was highlighting, although I realized they were not sufficiently articulated. Notably, this conversation raised my awareness about an understanding that I already had, but which I had failed to articulate well. I had assumed that the arts-lab assessment would be the exit art-piece that would provide a further reflection for participants, that the comprehensive school wellness experiences included student individual learning needs, and that the creative processes operated in place of the design thinking process. I could see how these assumptions worked for me but fell short for her, considering her entrance point as a classroom teacher. We continued working on an arts-lab for the last week of school so her students could support themselves and build their resiliency to be successful in their next year at school.

These one-to-one intermediate discussions were very rich, albeit intense, conversations. I was aware of the tension I created within myself in working this way; however, to operate in truthful solidarity it was important that I be cognizant of the amount of critical reflection time I was able to give to these offers to have intermediate sessions. For this reason, my journal was an

important part of this learning. While I ultimately found shifting the project towards mini-projects outside of the core virtual arts-lab difficult to manage, it was also rewarding. I understood that supporting my participants so they could explore these ideas through their individual perspective and situation was a process of creating a practice through sociality; this space then furthered our collective investment and grounded our solidarity.

Observation 4: Validation for Developing Conditions for Equality and Justice

Observation four takes up how best to enact an arts-based participatory approach to action research within an arts-lab to support educators' school wellness practices through developing conditions for equality and justice. I focused on my goal of developing equality and justice at several points in the research process: in the draft of the initial workshops, during the design of the virtual arts-lab I facilitated, and during the intermediate sessions, which I undertook to support educators with their own objectives. I used participant impressions of the design for this express purpose. To that end, I inscribed recorded talks and documented written confirmation. I asked participants for comments on the inclusion of the TAS in the system after the sessions.

I have focused, as described in Table 5.1, on solid strategies for TAS application in the design and planning of this study. One way I created conditions to focus on themes of social justice and equality was by engaging in a reflective discussion with participants about how well we all worked together during the session, vis-à-vis the intentions set at the start of the session. During this discussion, I set key questions on the slideshow to help participants articulate their understandings of the ways of doing that worked or did not. This was to ensure all participants were encouraged to voice their visions for the future of school wellness; it also set the stage for them to critically examine social justice issues alongside students, from positions of shared

power. Importantly, my discussion framework directed that I ask the participants to consider how they were challenged, if they could influence school wellness, and whether they got the most out of their arts-lab work. The ensuing discussion demonstrated their collective thoughtful stance towards developing equality in the arts-lab learning space. Furthermore, the educator participants and I adopted a sense of fellowship in designing these conditions. The statement below from Participant One demonstrates how the work strengthened conceptions of equality within the relationships:

I love this idea of reimagining your question, how school wellness might better promote wellness of individuals, [as] a community. It's also going to hopefully build empathy. I love that student voices are being included and they might be able to see that impact moving forward. The other thing, the last thing, stems from the last session and this one—your process to promote collective efficacy amongst us. The fact that we have roles, I think promotes equality. I learned from those processes and I've seen it function in groups where people have more of a voice because they're allowed to enter in these ways. It's clear from the fact that you have a stacker and a timekeeper going on last week, I remember how amazing it was to hear each person's thoughts captured through the eyes of another person. I thought [that] was extremely valuable as a summary at the end to end off. I definitely have appreciated the roles and the processes, [and] because in doing this work with kids, I realized that I can share the activity. Those rules help them to engage and be more confident in our coaching and realize they all have a voice.

(These words were transcribed from the second group virtual arts-lab audio-recording; the original transcript is in the second part of the data archive dated May 8, 2020.)

This comment shows how the application of TAS to the design of the arts-lab can potentially deepen personal critical understandings that support the development of equality and justice in educational design and activities, particularly those that encourage participants to contribute to the community. This participant perceived the group as individuals who could influence the direction of the collective. This demonstrates consciousness, confidence, and authority in the participant voices and implies that the participants' practice will be strengthened. A strengthened relationship can broaden the vision of wellness, in that participants are more aware of their own responsibility in directing the collective and encouraging activity in the other participants. Sawyer (2008) describes how paying attention to group phenomena emerging from communication processes among individual members creates change: "When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 13). Sawyer's perspective can account for the group effectively building upon each other's knowledge together during the discussion of the collective process.

One constraint in this relationship shift, from teacher and student to teachers-learners all, lives in the rules of behaviour associated within the roles of teachers and students. For instance, the teacher's task of academic assessment and enforcing rules, such as no skateboarding or no vaping rules, affects the outcome of the youth participants expressing agency by freely voicing their thoughts and opinions. Another relationship boundary is that specialized knowledge from the educators brings influence with it. Further, Participant One shared the clear goal that youth participants confidently take roles in class activities and, by extension, take on the long-term

activism stimulated by the experience. However, in relation to her practices, this vision was hindered by our context and timeline. As an example, in this virtual arts-lab I did not engage any youth as participants or any participants as facilitators. I felt that the amount of training time required was an unfair request at this time of remote emergency schooling. However, in my personal future practice I hope to have the opportunity to explore this potential further.

Conclusion

This section reflected on my developing practice and in doing so revealed how my co-authoring of the research aims with participants resulted in the study being useful for informing the participants' developing practices. I outlined the contexts and wellness aims of the participating educators and their respective schools. I reflected on my approach to infuse my research practice with a TAS. The four observations that emerged from my analysis of my TAS are:

1. Research from a TAS offers opportunities to develop strategies for developing conditions to enhance solidarity.
2. Research from a TAS provides reflection points that support facilitating conditions that enable agentive creativity.
3. Research from a TAS opens possibilities to research participants to share power a practice grounded in the value of freedom.
4. Research from a TAS sets out reflective considerations about equality and justice.

My reflections support the conclusion that applying the TAS to the study design served to develop my practice, influence the thinking of individual participants, and shape the joint direction of the group. My theoretical understandings were deepened by my practical activity, especially that of articulating the TAS and developing the practical strategies to open the study

to contestation and contributions within the different phases of the arts-lab agenda.

Documenting my observations revealed three key aspects of the research: 1) challenging the dominant ideology of the role of teacher; 2) broadening the research vision among participants by facilitating their conscious co-construction of the practices engaged in; and 3) focusing on themes of social justice as a means and an ends for learning. Key constraints in this phase of the design were the lack of student participants, the short timeline, and the mandated virtual context due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This last constraint meant that youth could not engage in the arts-lab as participants, and that it was not feasible for participants to engage as co-facilitators in the virtual arts-lab group process; I see both of these aspects as gaps in this research process.

Nevertheless, my study results support the idea that a participatory approach to an arts-lab design, facilitated from a transformative activist stance (TAS), has potential to create conditions in which participants can collectively foster a positive school-wellness agenda. These findings amplify the possibility that the participants can realize their individual potential as educators and as activists in influencing and improving school wellness. What I have described in this chapter is how an arts-based approach from a TAS can and did support the learning and development of an arts-lab community in virtual or online spaces.

With experience, they learned to detach themselves enough from the immediacy of their circumstances to observe the bigger landscape and their place in it, and to take action—within themselves and in relation to external goals—from this perspective. (Koehn, 2017, p. 6)

Chapter Six: Discussion

The disruptive educational circumstances of COVID-19 complicated the arts-based participatory approach to action research method in this investigation. Nevertheless, through this research, I found that arts and wellness educators were committed to using the educational setbacks as an opportunity to sharpen their skills and to intentionally choose to make their schools better, even amid the added pressure of emergency remote learning. I consider each of my participants to be outstanding educational leaders, and this research benefited greatly from their engagement, commitment and contribution. In this chapter, I address my research questions and describe my experience and the outcomes of this arts-based participatory approach to action research. I begin by reviewing the purpose I set for the research. Then I reflect on the process, as I perceived it; this includes examining the strength and limitations through an arts-based research (ABR) lens. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the implications and contributions of the findings to learning science scholarship, as well as my recommendations for further research in this area. Finally, this chapter concludes with my summary of how using a participatory approach to arts-based educational research grounded in and through an arts-lab built from a transformative activist stance (TAS) can support educators' school wellness practices.

Review of the Research Purpose

In this inquiry, I aimed to develop an arts-lab that contributed to school wellness improvement—specifically by exploring educators' insights that are clarified through participatory arts activities and processes, which are rooted in a TAS. My research grew out of three elements: (a) my experiences with an arts-based health-focused homeroom initiative, in response to school-wide wellness concerns faced by my school community; (b) my academic interests in arts-based learning; and (c) my passion for activism. When I started designing the

ABAR, my activism goal was to privilege student and teacher agency through an intervention into the status-quo. I saw the arts-lab wellness model as an effective tool to express gaps in the current school wellness reality, and to envision a more satisfying vision of school wellness that was artistically co-authored into pathways and blueprints aimed at narrowing those gaps.

I had envisioned using arts activities as tools to help uncover changes that were needed and to imagine alternative possibilities. The design was influenced by TAS, which emphasizes transformative research aims that embrace the powerful and imaginative act of simultaneously achieving those aims and instigating meaningful change in the world (Stetsenko, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic changed the terrain however by aggravating contradictions and constraints in the status quo; it also distanced student perspectives and school activity from the research project. It made the hope of engendering school-wide transformative contributions to school wellness, motivated by students and teachers (which is already a complex goal) even more impractical. Still, I never lost sight of my primary objective—to employ participatory arts activities to imagine and inspire social change focused on bettering the well-being of school communities.

I continued my efforts to invoke Stetsenko's theory (2019), which urges educators to engage with *collectivindual* practices to create knowledge through emancipatory reflection that enlists teachers and students as teachers-learners all through a values-informed Vygotskian approach. This study also drew upon some principles of critical participatory action research (PAR) in the ABAR design. In particular, I sought to manage the research project as a social collaborative, making an effort to change actual practices in our shared world (Kemmis et al., 2014). The principles of PAR inform the ethos of the study. The findings flow from the TAS

model. These ideas worked together to reveal the potential of privileging student and educator perspectives through arts in school wellness improvement initiatives.

The study began with a clear commitment to meet the critical developmental and activist aim to “move beyond the given” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 293). This was not intended in the abstract sense, but by facilitating *collectivinduals* to take mindful action of their own making, thereby developing agentic creativity, freedom, solidarity, and equality, which are fundamental pillars of wellness (Prilleltensky, 2012). I put forth my research with room for measured but changeable endpoints—and change they did! Here, I will highlight the strengths in the potential of the arts-lab as a learning tool to contribute practical research examples to the theoretical literature.

Discussion of the Research Process

Phase One

Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014) advise that “in the interests of making our practices and their consequences more rational and reasonable” (p. 113) intentional reflection into the why and the how of planning, enacting, reflecting and re-planning—both individually and with others—is fundamental. Therefore, in this section I review how and why decisions were made during the research process. During the first phase of the research, I focused squarely on locating and engaging educators in directing and shifting my planning. I was incredibly grateful that some educators would be receptive, despite being caught up in a significant disruption in their own practice given the pandemic. Some teachers were not assigned classes given the Alberta Government’s directive to pause teaching arts and wellness education (CBC News, 2020) during the lockdown, which meant that some targeted educator participants were not working with students at all. Further, the Western School District research department indicated they could approve an educator-only study, given the emergency remote learning directive.

I realized that, at best, I would only be engaged indirectly with students in any potentially transformative arts-based learning activities and could not use their contributions as data. I felt disempowered: influencing school comprehensive improvement initiatives in the manner I had first conceived, by identifying what needed to change, seemed to have lost significance. Still, the educators that I spoke with expressed opinions that generalizing the learning from a field test of a virtual-arts-lab, linked to their particular contexts, would be worthwhile for their individual learning and practices. Thus, I began the process of locating educators with an interest in using arts to improve school wellness.

The second part of phase one of the study, field testing arts-activities to further school wellness goals, included the first virtual arts-lab session; which was designed to orient the participants to the project purpose of ABAR to enhance educators' school wellness practices, founded on a TAS. The multiple goals of the research were achieved: to identify collective arts activities that support mindful agency in guiding school wellness improvement; to uncover perspectives on improved futures of school wellness; and to contribute to the existing research literature on social innovation change labs (Torjman, 2012; Westley et al., 2015) regarding the value of the arts-based school change-labs.

In this session, participants were inspired and motivated to employ diverse and flexible tactics to work towards a clear and common purpose (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). I shared my motives as transparently as possible with the participants about choices I made that informed the arts lab (Hassan, 2014; Stetsenko, 2017). I also provided an overview of the roles, the ground rules, and the norms for participating, and explained how they supported the TAS agenda (Stetsenko & Vianna, 2014). The educator participants and I engaged in a discussion of the arts-lab wellness intentions, and then began testing activities and exploring concepts together.

Leading into the third part of the first phase of the study, I reflected on the insights and comments that participants shared in the intermediate sessions and through the arts-activities of the first session, in which they commented on feeling disconnected from other teachers and their students, resulting in an overall sense of distance. One participant even shared that one of her students had asked why they should start a school-wellness arts-lab when they did not think they would be returning to school this year or next. I considered these realities when I designed the second session. I also reflected on my own practice and tried to address what I viewed as inconsistencies between several elements: strivings for equal distributions of power, control over the agenda, the shifted arts-lab process, the aim for effective institutional change, the physical distance between the participants, and their lack of power over their new school realities.

With this in mind, I sent a follow-up email inviting educators to work with me for additional intermediate sessions. These sessions would be focused on developing activities and field tests that supported their unique intentions. Offering these extra sessions aligns with the iterative awareness in action research approach (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). As activism must be amenable to change and negotiation (Stetsenko, 2017), I therefore, took a step towards dismantling unequal power within the group by asking participants to bring forward the issues most relevant to them a step aligned with TAS where researchers position their own agenda transparently and for open contestation. However, it is a step that falls short of the PAR protocol that advances participatory commitments to include full partnerships in co-facilitation and co-researching (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The third part of the first phase of the study encompassed the second virtual arts-lab and further intermediate sessions one-on-one with participants. In the second virtual arts-lab, participants shared their personal stories about arts-based activities that influenced school-wide

wellness, and their insights after field-testing arts-labs in their individual practices. The group engaged in a creative movement activity I hoped would strengthen participants' feelings of closeness and connection, and support solidarity and shared purpose among the participants. Originally, this phase of the study would have used the arts-based perspectives, voiced by participants, on school growth opportunities from session one. These in turn would have been used to inform the design of arts activities oriented to collectively imagining new possible futures. Instead, during this session, what emerged as most compelling was the participants' reflective discourse, where they shared their experiences with arts education and explored the influence these experiences had on school wellness. Thus, I included these stories in the toolkit and changed the title of the toolkit to more accurately reflect the central theme of the research.

During both sessions, the participants and I discussed and reflected on the effects of the arts-lab field-tests and the exercises we engaged in together. Supporting our arts-based educational community and articulating our values for arts and wellness was a vital part of the success in this phase of the research. Educators entered the field-tests with a strengthened resolve to engage with students in arts and wellness learning despite power structures that devalue these learning spaces. In this way, they collectively advanced the TAS agenda that infused this research project.

Phase Two

The second phase of the project involved planning and designing the dissertation to account for the study and to contribute insights and findings to the research literature, as well as completing the toolkit and the video story to support the practice of teachers and learners. I collected and analyzed the data, generating a focused summary, and I continued my ongoing reflection on my TAS intentions. In particular, I reflected on the successes and challenges I had

experienced as a researcher using ABAR to influence school wellness. The video revealed the insights I gained by navigating the obstacles I encountered; moreover, I believe my experience exemplifies this historical moment in education. I hope that the toolkit, the poem, the Participant photo series presentation and the video will serve as triggers for further conversations and idea development among educators.

I am grateful that I had the community support of practitioners with specialized knowledge, who were willing to share their insights. Their experiences confirm the value of arts-based action research focused on school wellness. This confirmation is an important validation for the generalizability of arts-based notions (Barone & Eisner, 1997), given that transcontextual credibility could well be limited with such research (Levon, 2007). A researcher or teacher wishing to proceed with an arts-labs as conceived initially in this query (that is, as a tool to influence school wellness improvement) can assume some transferability. However, without prolonged participation at multiple sites in new cycles of action, anticipating particular outcomes would be difficult. Importantly, the flexibility inherent in an arts-based process, which is iterative and participatory, is a strength of this method, making it possible to adapt when faced with the research obstacles. The method is inextricably linked to co-authoring transformative educational practices through arts-based learning activities—that this study applies to educators’ wellness practices improvement but which could be useful for other school or learning goals.

Discussion of the Research Question

My primary research question was as follows, “In what ways can a participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab enhance educators’ school wellness practices?” The findings observed in this study indicate that an arts-based participatory approach to action research in and through an arts-lab could enhance educators’ school wellness practices.

The original conceptual framework suggested that specific student and educator initiatives would be influenced by exploring opportunities for organizational improvement drawn from the arts-lab practice and then connecting them to comprehensive school-wide wellness strategies. However, the revised research plan (mandated by COVID–19 related changes) pursued this intention by testing the feasibility and acceptability of this theory-driven intervention.

The interconnected data presented in Chapter Five highlight four observations about exercising an arts-based participatory approach to action research, infused with the TAS philosophy, grounded in and through an arts-lab that supports people in their initiatives to enhance school wellness. Throughout this research project, I have used this definition of school wellness (presented first in Chapter One): a growth-oriented collective effort to foster student and educator well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment. These four observations are explored below.

The Approach Shows Potential

The arts-based participatory approach to action research calls for the researcher to engage in self-evaluation and to participate in iterative reflective practices related to personal accountability, throughout the process. This helps the researcher to refine the standards by which they judge their practice; in critical educational research, this enables them to develop their pedagogy to align with their values. In my action research, I was able to advance my values-based understanding of wellness from a TAS and apply that understanding to my practice as an educator as it related to influencing school wellness development. Increasing my TAS awareness calls on me to reflect on two questions: “Who do I want to become?” and “What do I want my world to become [or be]?” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 285). Perhaps more importantly, it asks me to reflect on this question: “How can I contribute to this practically?” (p. 336). Further, I must

consider how to collectively contribute in a manner that is believable, agreeable, and reflects all the participants' aims in co-authoring future school wellness realities.

These reflections provided insight into designing a research process that was consistent with my intentions to do the following: 1) strengthen solidarity with myself and the participants, 2) create conditions for participants to feel daring in their contributions of *collectivindual* agentic creativity, 3) share power for freedom in the learning directions, and 4) design learning grounded in equality and justice. The process refined the standards by which I judge my practice as an educator and as a researcher and developed my pedagogy regarding practising a values-based understanding of developing well-being.

One of my research goals has been to develop my pedagogical practice rooted in TAS, and thus, I shared my commitment to open the project to critique. Specifically, I sought to orient and direct the research in response to participants' critique and reflection. Unlike a conventional PAR approach where a facilitator will facilitate the perspectives of the group, in TAS the facilitator must include their perspective since they are also part of the group. To remain true to this philosophy, the facilitator must reflect carefully on the different perspectives, including their own, so that they (themselves and the other participants) move forward together. I did this in my study by reflecting on the first virtual arts-lab session, wherein I realized that the shift in the research process had also shifted the process towards my being an agent of control. I was implementing the project in a manner that would not follow the traditional social change-lab process where the participant perspectives would be viewed together through mirroring activities to generate next steps (Torjman, 2012; Westley et al., 2015).

While it is important to note that the participants had volunteered, and I remained committed to the TAS philosophy, I also had to position myself to be in control of the agenda to

move the research forward in a timely manner. I tried to counter this by inviting participants to partake in intermediate one-to-one sessions with me to focus on the projects they were undertaking. Further, entering the third part of the first phase of the study, I was determined to take longer pauses, to make an explicit opening for participants to add to the agenda, and to demarcate a clear step back from my role of participatory facilitator when adding my insights to the discussion. I shared this intent with the participants, and it led to further discussion during intermediate sessions.

An important moment stemming from this process was the reflection of Participant One that her approach to teaching and learning could be opened to represent the TAS concept of everyone being “teachers-learners.” She expressed that it was an aim she had been working to incorporate into her very sophisticated instructional designs, even though she had not heard this particular term before. For this reason, it surprised her when she began to realize her students were getting frustrated: she is a very sensitive teacher, very tuned in to her class, and her students felt confident enough to share their feelings with her. Participant One and I discussed how opening her design to students’ input led to them challenging her. By employing the iterative process with her class, she was able to reorient her arts-lab field-test to respond to and embrace these challenges. She was able to elicit students’ feedback, in which they requested more mathematics skill drills and expressed distrust that they could authentically realize their ideas without being physically present at school.

This teacher reflected that she had not included enough opportunities for her students to demonstrate their agency, although she thought her practice offered choices about how students could represent their learning. However, she realized she could go farther so she reoriented her curriculum plan to respond to these requests. She responded to her students’ voiced request by

adding appropriate drills to the statistics unit that supported the integrated approach they were taking. She also found ways for the lab to end in a celebration of learning by virtually sharing their learning with their principal and other classes, and which her students would be part of this year, as opposed to other years, when they did not do this.

It is striking to note the careful development of this teacher's instructional design: she aimed to create an atmosphere and context with her class where the students could express agency related to learning effectively, but which also did not lead to their frustration if they felt the teaching and learning time were poorly structured. While the teacher's reflections uncovered student agency as a significant school wellness issue that she thought she could influence, neither teacher nor student could buy into student agency without a focus on strong instructional design in service of effective learning: this is indeed the shared contract of the classroom. Through careful design and focused student agency, she maintained attendance and interest in her classes, a feat that many other teachers were unable to do at this time when pandemic learning meant optional attendance for students.

I also realized that the sentiments shared by the participants in the intermediate sessions and through the arts activities of the first session revealed the complexity of the pandemic moment—apparent in their repeated statements acknowledging disconnection and distance. This shared experience moved me to employ a creative movement arts activity to strengthen awareness of everyone's interconnections to each other and the greater world. This contributed to the capacity of the educators to use the virtual space in ways that drew on arts-based ways of knowing, to shift disconnected dispositions to grounded collective strength. The creative movement activity combined meditation, movement, choral speech, and photography, as well as a dance “performance.” These were skilled educational practitioners, but none of them had a

background in dance; only one had a background in drama and another in mindfulness practices. The interest for the topic was very high: the activity itself, especially because it took place in a digital environment, challenged the groups' abilities, mine included. Doing a mindfulness activity grounded in creative movement—was risky, awkward, and could have been laughable. Instead, it felt genuine and as if we all pushed our well-being further.

Establishing connections as a shared objective, which emerged in the participants' reflections, and then developing these connections in an artistically mindful way opened the group to the understanding that shared arts experiences provide new opportunities for institutional improvement. In the moment right after the activity, when the participants articulated the meanings they found in it, participants shared that they had learned how to better collaborate for school wellness change—by connecting shared visions of wellness and enhanced capacities for changes and by drawing on available tools. This methodology does indeed show potential to effect change.

The Arts-lab Offers a Critically Reflective Lens for Exploring School Wellness

The sub-question that connects to this observation was this: “What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore—according to *educator* participants?” The original method would have had students and educators viewing the artworks together, searching for shared points of agreement and opportunities to influence school-wide wellness initiatives. However, the revised method tested the feasibility of illuminating these agreements and opportunities by attempting to create conditions for development. It applied an examination of participant-created art and impressions of arts-processes.

The arts-lab wellness activities that were field-tested, which I sequenced to develop trust, revealed points of agreement between participants and highlighted areas of opportunity. They

encompassed the following: 1) sketching symbols of well-being to get to know the personal strivings towards well-being of other participants; 2) collective visioning poetry-writing to trigger a response from each participant to each of the seven primary wellness categories, as well as to uncover shared values related to each domain of well-being; 3) a participant photo series scavenger hunt to open conversations about positive ways forward in each of the seven primary wellness categories after months of online and offsite learning; and 4) two field-test activities—a creative movement activity and an animated video of the moral learning story of the moment, invoked to support reflective practices.

Personal, relational, and collective well-being are all part of school wellness from the perspective of these educator participants. This finding has important implications for developing school wellness programs in a broad sense. The single most striking observation to emerge from this data to me is the effectiveness of the shared poetic process for building awareness that personal ideas related to school wellness connect with other people's unique ideas thus responding to research sub-question two that focuses on this aspect. The process that started with individual reflection and response, followed by an oral presentation to the group, and concluding with shared discussion, was found to build confidence within the group. My analysis of the data suggests that this stemmed from the shared experience. This test of poetry writing was successful as it identified that an artistic process is useful to pursue for school wellness. However, more research is needed to make clear the relationship between the artistic process and the shared confidence-building along with its implications for school wellness.

The visualization, creative movement and choral speech activity that participants engaged in together during the second virtual arts-lab served to narrow the gap between feeling disconnected and alone and feeling collective strength. The animation follows a master plot that

sees animals offer learning lessons. The movie ends with reflective questions aimed at triggering personal insights from students and teachers about their resilience and gratitude during a collective historic moment of adversity. It is through discourse and reflection that individuals can draw out the significance of their own actions in the pause between doing and doing again; providing questions for an audience tends to spark focused reflection.

The elements of wellness (The Alberta Teacher Association, 2019; President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2001), determinants of school wellness (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2008; Stolp et al., 2015), and crucial opportunities for organizational development (Hassan, 2014) could be easily found in the artworks. However, because the primary focus of the moment was not on a physical school community but on the well-being of each individual within that community, it was not surprising that the groups focus on specific school wellness initiatives gave way to the broader and more urgent issue of returning to school thoughtfully. In analyzing the group conversation for key themes, thoughts and experiences of well-being emerged as the most important and motivating at present. The discussion frequently returned to the COVID-19 learning disruption. The Participant photo series and the verbal remarks (recorded in the verbatim transcriptions) significantly represented ideas and values that promoted well-being. I believe it was partly because collectively our school system was in a moment of such uncertainty that opinions on next steps in individual school wellness actions were frequently posed as questions.

According to the educator participants, one significant area of arts-based school wellness research to further explore is the significance of art as a means to voice wellness perspectives and to provide a lens through which individual values and collective insights into shared wellness commitments can be investigated. The study participants endorsed the potential

effectiveness of a four-part arts-lab, in which participants make a piece of art together at every session. They saw the art as an important way to portray ideas from each part of the process, which would also provide a centerpiece for deeper conversations. The power of reflective conversation with the greater community emerged as an essential part of the collective creation process, one that ought to be considered when using arts activities and processes to enhance educators' school wellness practices.

Arts Activities Support Agentive Creativity and Contribute to School Community-building

This observation connects to the sub-question, “What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school-wellness—according to the participants in the arts-lab?” The original method would have had the researcher and co-facilitators observing participants who were involved in art-making processes and who together discussed how to promote engagement of the school community. Instead, the revised method explored the participants' perceptions and experiences in current field-tests and combined with past events to reveal themes concerning effective activities for building efficacy in influencing school wellness. The various elements that practitioners determined as effective and ineffective for supporting collaboration and collective development affirm the use of arts as an effective tool for educational research into school wellness development.

The group's reflective discussion on successful school collaborations affirmed their tacit knowledge about creating conditions for collaboration. Mindfully engaging in the arts, including creative movement activity, was also meaningful for participants and showed them the potential of the arts to influence their school communities and to aid their students' learning—because of the clarity and focus it offered each individual as they explored their particular topic. They spoke of the natural flow of the experiences, and endorsed the activities by employing them outside of

the group in their individual teaching practices. This conversation, which followed the group experiences, is consistent with what can occur in collaborative contexts, when innovation arises from ideas that cross-pollinate across individuals (Broderick et al., 2016; Sawyer, 2008).

Arts-lab activities and processes appear to be effective for building collective efficacy to improve school wellness, according to the educators who participated in developing and field-testing the arts-lab activities. They provided opportunities for agentive creativity for the artists and also influenced the collective school community in-the-making. Participants provided several examples of this, highlighting that the arts activities and processes bolstered the development of student artists. They also revealed the reciprocal relationship with the broader school community-in-the-making: this community helped to motivate the students, while building connections across the art, the artists, and the audience. Participatory arts activities that support school wellness development thus suggest real value for the wider school community, making them something that school leaders can celebrate.

An Arts-lab is a Tool to Support School-Wellness Work

This subquestion frames this observation: “What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants’ current school wellness work —according to educators who were participants?” The original question and framework presented the arts-lab as a better tool to inform school improvement than the tool most used to measure improvement in my experience, the standardized test. It focuses on seeking school improvement through comprehensive wellness, rather than assessing improvement based on academic improvements. Evaluations of institutional activism and optimal learning environments cannot be measured by

standardized testing that marginalizes student agentive creativity and well-being (Dagenais, 2011; Kemp, 2015; Sahlberg, 2011).

Building on these insights, the question positioned student agentive creativity voices as a key factor in leading school futures that embraced improved wellness, by “underwriting educational research with activist agendas of creating equitable futures” (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2014, p. 579). It invoked the ripple effect of learning through arts-based activist strategies that included the development of youth stories as important to both educational activism and participant learning. The major revision of this AR was having to let go of this student voice and students’ imagined stories as the primary agents for influencing institutional change. Still, the findings reveal that the individual teachers who enthusiastically took up the process acted as important representatives for student well-being and voice. Descriptions of participants’ intentions regarding multiple courses of action in various contexts validated the potential for a ripple effect of educators’ school wellness action, stemming from this collaboration.

I observed two notable shifts in our shared knowledge as a result of participating in this study: we (a) increased our knowledge about school wellness as it relates to personal values and school conditions and (b) increased our knowledge of collaborative and expressive arts-activities, both virtual and otherwise. The individual practices and collective activities that were co-authored through this research reveal potential consequences and successes for the participants’ current work in areas critical for organizational growth. This too indirectly supports school wellness improvement. The participants successfully implemented some improvement actions, which were made possible in part because they engaged in work they valued, were skilled at, and were motivated to expand their learning in. The credible authority of the group likely contributed to the conditions of mutual respect, which enabled collaboration across the activity plane and,

reflected the ethos of this research study—where agency in collaborative creative interventions is understood to influence innovation (Sawyer, 2008). Further, this research approach activates the power of transformative activism for learning and development (Stetsenko, 2017).

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study successfully achieved several research goals and had numerous inherent strengths, but nevertheless also had some significant limitations. Broadly speaking, the broader social context and the micro-political climate played a major role in the credibility of my findings, which is why I discussed these factors in-depth (Herr & Anderson, 2005) in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. This enables future users of my findings to account for the context in which they were gathered. Another problem with this approach is that the small scale and short timeline test the structural coherence of the research design (Anney, 2015). The significant implications are that sustainable change or a significant relationship between the experience in the arts-lab and the participants practice is difficult to identify.

Still, the art, artmaking, discussion, reflection, and observations provide strong indications of this ABAR's ability to generate ideas, emotions, and mental images, and increase the participants' sense of confidence in their ability to effect change. These are all-important evaluations of the success of ABAR (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). Additionally, several significant strengths contributed to the credibility and dependability of the research findings: the practical experience of the participants; researcher reflexivity regarding bias; the successful pursuit of collaborations with participants; and the quality of the educators in the sample.

Below, I explore the methodological strengths and limitations as they relate to ABR concepts of analysis, describing and commenting on several aspects (Barone & Eisner, 1997):

the *illuminating effect* (the capacity of the research to expose what has yet to be noticed), *generativity* (the capacity of the research to foster questions), *incisiveness* (wherein the research is able to focus on the intended salient educational issues), *referential adequacy* (in that it allows the audience to see the issue the researcher intends to develop), and *generalizability* (the significance of the research outside of the studied phenomena).

Illuminating Effect

One strength of the research was being able to expose participants' perspectives, questions, and wonderings about well-being and wellness; the study found common themes and values across these perspectives. The essential ABAR evaluation criteria, which the art met on a small scale, is that the research generates emotions and mental images (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). A broadening of the reflective practice by including specialists such as artists, wellness champions, and arts-educators would facilitate developing the arts-lab to explore, identify, and measure the intervention on a larger scale. Such a group would enhance assessments of the effectiveness of the arts-activities through the researcher's observations of how participants respond to and engage in the activities. These observations could augment considerations for optimizing arts techniques to uncover and influence school wellness improvement activities, providing insights from the very participants who develop them. It would thus broaden the illuminating effect.

Incisiveness and Generativity

How incisive the research is gets to its success in focusing on the pertinent salient educational issues; its generativity turns to its capacity to generate questions. Both aspects were clear strengths of the arts-lab, which has conclusively shown the potential to focus on the educators' school wellness practices and their influence on the well-being of the school

community. This was reflected in the insights and artwork shared by the participants and generated by the research. The arts-lab activities, processes, and focused reflective dialogue evidence success—through the capacity of the art that was produced to generate ideas, emotions, and mental images. It also increased the participants’ sense of empowerment and confidence in their ability to effect change in their practice (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

It is important to note that the reflections shared by participants in the virtual arts-lab revealed their perceptions of their past work and pilot activities. Additionally, only one virtual arts-lab asked student learners to identify what makes them well or not at school, and to advocate for that. Other activities that participants explored either did not work with student learners at all, or they did not explicitly focus on activities to improve conditions of wellness for students, both of which were due to the pandemic circumstances. Still, the Participants’ photo series and collective poetry activities identified arts as a valuable lens to view educator wellness perspectives, which is a cornerstone of the notion of the arts-lab as a tool for change on this issue.

Referential Adequacy

Referential adequacy allows the audience to see the issue the researcher intends to develop and it is of particular note because—although this arts-based research neither engaged the originally intended participants, saw the audience it had first envisioned nor influenced long-term meaningful institutional change— it still demonstrates meaningful insights about the issue of improving educators’ school wellness practices. Because of the iterative nature of the process, in close consultation with the participants I was able to gain understandings and insights even with the changed objectives demanded by the COVID-19 pandemic context. It is a strength of the ABAR participatory approach that it allows for updates to the endpoints of the research: in

this study that means that worthwhile learning emerged with the newly envisioned toolkit and animated video story. Thus, the model of a participatory approach grounded in and through an arts-lab satisfies the criteria for referential adequacy regarding engaging participant voices in illuminating an issue of school wellness that is important to them. Moreover, the findings confirm the ability of the art produced to both generate ideas and an increased sense of empowerment for participants about their ability to effect change on a small scale, an established strength of ABAR (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

Unfortunately, the research did not explore the response from a physical audience brought to see the work the participants created for them, nor did it engage the audience in creating art at the exit of the exhibit. The exit-art would be an essential piece in evaluating the success of arts-lab work to evoke the intended response from the audience invited to view finished artifacts. Thus, this absence is a limitation in the findings. Although participant members shared their judgments about the applicability of this work to their situations, the audience of educational leaders was not a part of the study. The perceptions of the artworks and questions it generated about the concepts examined by the participants is a strong indicator of the potential of the arts-lab to realize institutional improvement.

This study was unable to identify and influence systemic level institutional practices to improve school-wide interventions in school wellness. The closest it came to that was with the Participant photo series and collective poetry activities which the participants indicated they would use to start their school re-entry process when the educators meet at the start of a school year to plan how to welcome students back to the physical space after the lockdown. However, I am not able to follow up with the participants' actual use of the work to see its long-term impact within this research study. The reality of this research is that it is hard to observe the co-

authoring of school wellness and the development of school-wide wellness improvements without orienting the action and reflection towards a specific school and a narrow wellness issue and reflecting on that solution and the process of its success over time. Ultimately, it is not appropriate to consider the study findings relevant for other school or wellness issues.

Generalizability

ABAR asks us to consider if the research has generalizability outside the studied phenomena and focus. The original method called for an arts-lab for wellness to take place out of school hours and to have a broad group of participants. This small-scale arts-lab engaged a modest number of specialist educators who did field-tests together, within their respective classrooms and professional learning communities. While I consider the expertise of the participants a major strength because of the depth of understanding they provided to the study, considerable limitations are inherent in this sample size and demographic. That the participants shared specialized understandings of instructional design is a significant variable to take into account when considering the generalizability of these findings to non-specialist educators. Correspondingly the insights of students, artists and wellness specialists and educational system leaders are a disparity. Finally, with a minimal attention to trust-building, participants nevertheless shared personal insights openly and with a shared language, to make recommendations. Their confirmations of the value of the theory are strong endorsements; however, it is important to recognize that significantly more focus on developing conditions for collaboration would be necessary with more diverse participants.

Further, I expect that the successes the participants found with their respective classroom and professional learning communities were due, in part, to their thoughtful sequencing of trust-building activities and reflexive practices that took place outside of this arts-lab pilot. In an out-

of-school, cross-district day that involved artists with non-educational backgrounds, more effort on trust-building in instructional designs would be required to achieve similar levels of openness, confidence, and shared understandings of the ability of arts to effect change. On this, I look to Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) who remind me that this missing link limits the generalizability of the research and must be considered when evaluating the success of this ABAR research.

Implications for Future Practice

In this section, I present the implications I drew from my observations and reflections on the research data. I identify four implications for future practice with the arts-lab school wellness model: 1) arts-labs have potential to support transformative activist stance; 2) the arts-lab can support school wellness work by offering platforms to develop significance within school wellness perspectives; 3) arts activities and processes can provide supportive conditions for collective school wellness work; and 4) arts-labs can be used to support co-authoring future practices. I conclude that significant potential resides in using the arts-lab model to further school wellness action.

Potential to Support Transformative Activist Stance

I began this study with a personal mission to conduct my research from a TAS grounded in and through arts, to confirm the arts-labs as a valuable tool for educators' school wellness action. I saw an opportunity to design an arts-lab as a model for research that actively engaged a community in including individual voices in defining collective action. This research demonstrated enhanced learning and development, by drawing on available tools to create conditions for collective arts-creation; in doing so, I have learned how to better collaborate for school wellness change by connecting the participants' shared visions of wellness through art. I successfully continued to improve the arts-lab model to meet the TAS aims through the various

stages of the research. Participants' reflections indicate similar developments within their own pedagogies. Importantly, when educators realize the TAS goal of valuing all voices as teachers-learners, these developments could be instrumental in influencing students to effect change.

One surprising observation from this action research was how amenable the group of participants was to the participatory approach and the TAS concepts, so that their actions in the study had greater implication for their teaching practice. They demonstrated enthusiasm to take up roles of teacher-learners and develop ideas together, thereby contributing to the finding that a participatory approach can be effective. They demonstrated this through their increased motivation to offer more opportunities for student activist participation by opening agendas to students' motivations and interests; they also explained to me and to other participants how group roles support student leadership within their programs. Developing ideas together builds commitment and confidence in the group (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012)—in this case, the group of participants who are also a group of educators from the same organization. This experience offered contributions to organizational wellness in a broad contextual way, since the commitments and confidence of the individuals within the organization can influence the organization itself.

I believe I will be able to share the animation that starts the toolkit with students and teachers in my next academic year. I think it could help open a conversation that considers and values resiliency in continued arts and wellness learning through our changed educational context.

Participants in this action research were motivated to use the toolkit to help them improve the design of their learning spaces. In fact, they tried out some specific adjustments to improve their usefulness and effectiveness. The virtual opening and closing circles I used were made

better, in classroom practice, by using the chat feature so that an entire class could be included. The participatory online breakout spaces were made better by using Google Docs for landing pages, with links to pre-set Google Meets that were student-facilitated. The teachers prepared students to use activist norms and roles, which included vibes, a stackers list, and a timekeeper modelled after my experience organizing in the activist community (Neighborhood Anarchist Collective, n.d.). I facilitated and used an arts-based method to support participants to critically interrogate the values of social justice inherent in well-being objectives. This case example demonstrates what might unfold if this method were to be rotated for use with youth in an arts-lab. Five educators recognized portions of the Toolkit as tools they could immediately enact in their practice, such as the Participant photo series and Collective Poetry action, both with their colleagues and with their students. One of the established strengths of the change-lab is that it takes a participatory leadership approach to organizational development. It engages people in doing what they want and what they are motivated by, so that they connect and create together (Hunt, 2016; Magzan, 2011; Nagel, 2015; Schwartz, 2016). The arts-lab experience suggests that there are benefits to using this model, particularly when individuals are (a) working to support action research through cycles of iterative reflection, (b) actively working to empower youth, and (c) when motivated to take the work beyond the moment.

Supporting School Wellness Work through Useful Platforms

My revised protocol made it possible for numerous subthemes relevant to the central themes of well-being and school wellness to easily emerge, through an analysis of the artworks. A larger study on school comprehensive wellness would benefit from examining the four fundamental output areas of organizational growth voiced through the participant photo series: service and infrastructure, trust and collaboration, capacities and skills, and knowledge and

learning (Hassan,2014). Participants’ photo series and questions were designed to support the return to in person schooling for teachers and students once the pandemic-related school closures are over.

The participant photo series of images was thoughtful about the context and prompted the viewer and the artmaker to dig beyond the surface of the image, a technique common in traditional PhotoVoice research (Strack et al, 2004; Wang et al., 2017). The art itself contained added emotional insights, made possible because of the participants’ expertise in designing with the photographic medium (Barthes, 1981). The educators took the research opportunity further than simply revealing truth; instead, they aimed to use photos to start conversations about how they might re-enter the school in the fall, mindful of the school experience and its connection to well-being. The famous artist-as-educator Sister Mary Corita, an artist referenced throughout the toolkit (Appendix C), illustrates the power in this act: “Doing and making art are acts of hope, and as that hope grows we stop feeling overwhelmed by the troubles of the world. We remember that we—as individuals and groups—can do something about those troubles” (Kent & Steward, 2008, n.p).

It follows that a cross-district participant analysis would find that collectively interrogating perspectives of wellness, to be articulated through the participants’ Photo series, would widen potential interpretations and meanings and create opportunities to envision change. The visuals help highlight ways to make what works stronger, let go of what does not work, and make visible what is not yet present (Hassan, 2014). The artistic activities and participants’ development through these activities uncovered their thinking that well-being values are important, while also demonstrating that arts as a means to explore shared values of well-being provided an opportunity to interrogate current understandings of school wellness.

Providing Supportive Conditions for Collective School Wellness Work

I found that participants had many arts experiences they perceived as influencing positive change in school wellness. These experiences were linked to an encouraging community and the realization of youth agentive creativity. Their personal stories revealed the importance of the relationship between the artist, the audience, and the community; when focused on school-wide wellness initiatives, these could be even more successful in influencing school wellness. They also highlighted the established importance of the expert facilitator in building strong feelings of confidence within a group (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Scharmer, 2007; Sawyer, 2008). The personal stories indicated a profound and intimate understanding of facilitating learning processes that expanded student development, although the specific and explicit actions were infrequently detailed. This was likely because more time was spent retelling the emotional connections with their stories.

The aspect of enhancing the impact of ideas by drawing from the emotional connections in stories was echoed in the activities that participants discussed—specifically, those that were successful at provoking audiences to engage in learning. Video was frequently used as a medium for storytelling. For example, for an empathy film festival, students became filmmakers who shared stories they developed by interviewing people about their life experiences. As well, teachers used videos to tell stories to students, share student work back to them, and share class activities with allies, such as school principals, other teachers, and parents. These stories confirm educational filmmaking as a powerful change-leadership vehicle for stimulating and aligning conversation and vision at different levels of a system (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012).

Additionally, in the feedback and communications participants provided that confirmed my analysis they responded very positively to the video of the story of this research project. One

participant endorsed it by using it as a learning artifact to generate discussion with her summer master's class in educational leadership. The findings of this research project contribute to ABR by highlighting the significance in using story to draw out the emotional power of a master plot, a plot familiar to the reader or viewer (Abbott, 2008; Leavy 2015); they also add to learning science research by affirming video storytelling as a medium for research (Derry et al., 2010; Pink, 2007). As well, these findings underscore that the artist-as-researcher must remain cognizant of the audience of the arts objects generated during the study

My revised research protocol confirmed my prediction that collectively creating art through a four-part process focused on influencing school wellness activism could support community development. Each part was “stacked” with arts-activities that support iterative learning and collaborative flow, while recognizing the need to build knowledge step by step (Hassan, 2012). I interpret this positive outcome from my revised approach as a signal that my originally planned extensive program of research still has great potential: it would have entailed small groups of wellness teams, each representing a school through PhotoVoice, engaging in a day of arts-activities as a cross-district community, and presenting art as data to a community of allies. The research demonstrates that the arts-lab process was feasible with teachers. A future study could visit how this intervention can influence the greater school communities in their aims to understand and influence school-wide comprehensive wellness. The second phase of a future action research cycle could engage participants in an arts-lab, introduce participants to an analysis of their data by mirroring it back to them. This could provide triggers for further art-making and imaging new school stories of wellness.

Support for Co-authoring Future Practices

The findings reveal that, from the perspective of participant teachers, education policy that devalues arts and wellness is problematic for students. Disempowered as they were in influencing broad scale political-institutional change, these educators found strength and opportunities within their daily practices to make small or meaningful changes. The findings also reveal the educators' commitment to meeting the learning needs of their students, which means supporting well-being by changing institutional practices to meet these needs—despite the political directives and social stresses that pull focus elsewhere. To some extent, the pressure of the moment (the teaching and learning changes tied to the COVID-19 pandemic) emphasized contradictions within the system between educational values and activities, which reinforced participants' commitment to their ideals, supporting them to make powerful choices.

The activities also provided the opportunity within the group itself for participants to develop, supporting each person as an agentive player within the Western School District community. They were engaged together and began to build new networks that developed relational trust and provided new opportunities for collaboration. Their new skills developed their capacity and their deepened knowledge was confirmed, which implies that they will provide improved service within the organization. Nevertheless, it is not possible to characterize their personal changes as influencing long-lasting improvement in institutional practice. These new skills and insights strengthened solidarity in this network of educators and supported development of the participants' individual practices; however, it did not influence provincial or district leadership. Still, small connections were made at the level of the school educational leadership.

Thus, collective wellness activism aimed at institutional change remained out of reach. However, I see potential in the model of an annual arts-lab that focuses clearly on school wellness activism and that involves leaders. What did not remain out of reach is the hope I found in my peers' enthusiasm for the process; while hope is abstract, it is also powerful. As Freire (1994/2014) notes, hope is an "ontological need" (p. 2) and therefore, an important step in educational activism. It follows that if another group actively engaged in a shared exploration of personal, relational, and collective stories of well-being through artmaking, they could develop themselves while also developing their institution. One possible future avenue is theatre, which has significant potential to instigate change, as Boal (1992/2002) has pointed out: "Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it" (p. xxi). The arts-lab builds on this notion: it has the potential to influence educational activism in a meaningful way, by creating space to examine contradictions within the participants' values related to well-being, imagining new institutional practices, and engaging broader audience participation.

Recommendations for Transformative Activist Stance, Arts-Based Wellness Research

In this section, I present recommendations arising from the research. Through reflection on the ABAR data and the process, I identify four areas to strengthen future arts-lab school wellness research, detailed below. These four recommendations support using the arts-lab process as a tool for further research into transformative activism.

Broaden Awareness of the TAS Self-study

Creating opportunities for individuals to engage, alongside others, in school wellness inquiries they believe are important is one avenue through which an arts-based participatory approach to action research, grounded in an arts-lab, can enhance educators' school wellness

practices. I developed my TAS pedagogy in a way that was “self-consciously collaborative and democratic” (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 1) by explicitly designing and redesigning an arts-lab that included participant agency to define the collective pathways and engaging myself in ongoing reflective questions. In a future study, I suggest (a) asking participants how they would like to be given credit but also maintain their anonymity—whether through the use of pseudonyms or collective authorship or both, and (b) whether they would feel more comfortable were the researcher to divorce the work from their school system. I found that using TAS questions as reflective tools to guide the arts-lab supported critical reflection, a participatory approach, and refined the standards by which I judged my educational and action research practices. I was specifically watching for ways to enhance a growth-oriented collective effort that fostered student and educator well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment. In this way, I was able to practice Freirean scholarship, with disciplined reflection and action aimed at the system I sought to change (Freire, 1970/2000). As predicted, my pedagogy and my practice for research design and facilitation improved.

The mission of the Western School District is to provide public education that empowers students to develop their gifts and to thrive in life. The developmentally focused reflective practices of TAS align with this mission. To establish the TAS objectives and norms, I hosted an opening circle and orientation at the outset of the arts-lab. However, as a guide to support metacognitive learning, I recommend broadening the reflective practices that closed the arts-lab, to include the TAS self-study (in addition to the opening activities). Several interconnected critical analysis tools can help to explore the TAS reflection questions: specifically, Prilleltensky and Nelson’s (2002) values-based categorization table, the elements of wellness (The Alberta Teacher Association, 2019; President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2001), and the

determinants of school wellness through arts (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2008; Stolp, Wilkins & Raine, 2015). These resources share a common language and examining these understandings support social developmental learning (Vygotsky, 1962/2012). It is a way to pinpoint shared values and illuminate the participants' spiritual well-being and awareness of purpose, thus supporting community empowerment and the continuous improvement of the organization and the individual.

Take Time to Deepen Participant Perspectives

This research indicates that a longer timeframe would develop the collective's creativity within an arts-lab. In the short action cycle, the study demonstrated that following a classic four-part creative model is effective (Wallas, 1926/2014) with arts activities that support imaginative and iterative learning, and collaborative generative activity. It also contains opportunities to create and encounter art at each stage. Its findings illustrate Greene's (1995b) foci, that aesthetic education is a tool to design learning for freedom and to promote social imagination through aesthetic encounters. Further, magnifying imaginative knowledge that takes sides has capacity to be a valuable means to deepen our cultural, emotional, and critical understandings.

I recommend that future researchers spend more time deepening the perspectives that are possible with this process, as well as taking additional time to develop trust between the participants through collaborative arts activities. I also recommend using a mindful arts-activity, like the creative movement activity, as a part of an opening ritual for the arts-lab. In this way, participants can come back to it each time they start an arts-lab session, adding meaning through a shared experience. Future research should spend more time to explore the effectiveness and promise of the participant photo series gallery by extending this line of inquiry into schools with both educators and students as photographers and inviting the greater school community to be

involved as audience. I further recommend engaging the participants in a collective analysis of the subthemes revealed in the arts activities, along with conducting this process annually with the Western School District. As well, a cross-district approach that recruits small teams of participants to represent different schools would widen viewpoints and deepen perspectives.

The arts-lab event sequence would be made stronger if it became a pattern of activity the community understood better, as this would encourage support of an ongoing cycle of action (Hassan, 2012). If the system endorsed and underwrote the arts-lab with resources, autonomy, and pride for the experiential learning it provides, the arts-lab could be a sustainable output for the system. For a long action cycle, I recommend deepening participant perspectives by instituting an annual arts-lab that involves both past-participants and new participants on shared issues. The process could include training for past participants to become new facilitators in a continual cycle of arts-lab learning-by-doing. Prolonged participation at multiple sites in new cycles of action, coupled with annual iterations along with facilitators' training in the arts-lab model, could enhance perspectives, support sustainable development, and contribute to the transcontextual credibility of the research (Levin, 2007). All this could, in turn, enhance comprehensive school wellness.

Expand the Co-facilitator Role in the Research

The power of collaborative innovation, when the facilitators are experts, has been clearly established (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Scharmer, 2007; Sawyer, 2008). This study builds on that by demonstrating the power of the insights that artist-as-educators and educational leaders offer for team collaborations. The Lincoln Center Institute's Capacities for Imaginative Learning framework (Holzer, 2007) provides support for structuring the work around the strengths of "thinking like an artist." However, I found the shared

understandings within the group of artists-as-educators to be an even more powerful tool for critical analysis during the research. The participants took up the aesthetic challenge that rejects the notion that research photography should capture truth; instead, they favoured an understanding that the work should aesthetically provoke the viewer (Hayes, 2007; Leavy, 2015), which strengthened the research process and findings.

Because this work supports the mission of the Western School District, as well as many community partners, a wider group of participants from this board could engage with the activities of an arts-lab for school wellness. Certainly, the focus would be strengthened by expert co-facilitators that include community wellness specialists and artists-as-educators who could work together to collectively design the experience of the day. For example, these individuals could improve the participant photo series scavenger hunt by using it to highlight new research foci. As well, a video team to film the process would aid in unpacking markers of empowerment and development, thereby helping to translate the learning into a resource for future facilitators. An annual application of the collaborative and expressive arts-lab for school wellness model could even potentially result in a powerful tool to support school transformative wellness activism, which would likely then reciprocally support the ongoing improvement of expert facilitators.

Institutional Leaders are Important Participatory Audience Members to Advance School Wellness Action Research

In the artistic context, the power of the participatory audience has long been recognized as a strength to engage transformative learning objectives (Bakhtin, 1986/1993; Barone, 2006; Boal, 1992/2002; Greene, 1995). Using this method to engage educational leaders in organizational development requires further research. Encouraging dialogue to collaborate on

methods and collectively look at data increases the chance that the learning will be used more broadly and thereby influence school change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). In other words, it points to the potential of participatory audience activity. The arts-lab model enhances the relationship between arts, artists, and audience—when the facilitators are experts, the artists are students, and the art is focused on exploring a meaningful issue. Indeed, if the participatory audience were to include an actively engaged provincial, district, or school educational leadership, it could lead to a program that inspires school wellness action.

Summary

This final chapter offered a review of the research purpose and a reflection on the research process. It considered the strengths and limitations of the arts-based research and discussed the observations made in relation to the research questions, including the implications of these observations and recommendations for future research. Although the COVID-19 pandemic provided a learning obstacle in this research, ultimately the research demonstrated proof of concept as a pilot study. The findings suggest that the participatory approach to influencing school-wide wellness initiatives grounded in and through an arts-lab has strong potential for success. This study also validates my personal attempts to develop a more just and TAS-aware pedagogical practice. The findings show direct support for my primary aim—confirming that an arts-lab model could provide a critically reflective lens to view wellness, enable agentive creativity, and contribute to a school community-in-the-making.

Finally, this study offers a window into the potential of an arts-lab to influence institutional change. Involving motivated experts in an arts-lab process oriented to school wellness, and even changing the world by influencing institutional activism, may seem trivial—especially during a pandemic, with a provincial government directive that devalues arts and

wellness learning. On the contrary, I argue that this is a crucial means to orient agentive creativity towards imagining more progressive futures. Optimistically, it paves the way for a future participatory arts facilitator to engage in research that adds arts-based action for school wellness to the educational change-lab literature. I offer this comment by Henry David Thoreau (1899) as a concluding remark: “It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or carve a statue, and so make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look. To affect the quality of the day—that is the highest of arts” (p. 103). I posit that arts-labs exemplify this capacity.

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Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
AB	Arts-based
ABAR	Arts-based action research
ABR	Arts-based research
AR	Action research
WSD	Western School District
FOIP	Freedom of Information and Privacy
GERM	Global Education Reform Movements
REB	Research Ethics Board
TAS	Transformative activist stance
WHO	World Health Organization
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Appendix B: Journalling Protocol

Transformative Activist Stance Awareness Questions

- “Who am I becoming?”,
- “Who do I want to become?”,
- “What do I want my world to become [or be]?” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 285)
- “How can I contribute to this?” (p. 336).
- What do participants agree is believable that school communities can do together?
- What did each participant contribute to?
- How might they identify success?

Arts-based Awareness Reflections:

- Have participants been stimulated with an illuminating effect (the capacity of the research to expose what has yet to be noticed)?
- Did I see generativity (the capacity of the research to foster questions)?
- Is there an incisiveness (wherein, the research is able to focus on the intended salient educational issues)?
- Can I perceive referential adequacy (it allows the audience to see the issue the researcher intends to develop)?
- Should I claim generalizability, (the significance of the research outside of the studied phenomena)? (Barone & Eisner, 1997)

Participatory Action Research Reflections:

- Thoughts about “Sayings”
- Observations about “Doings”
- Notes about “Relatings”
- Reflections on the project of the practice (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 175)

Appendix C: Video & Toolkit⁹

School Wellness Arts-Lab

GREENEFREIRE Collective
April - June 2020

From Arts-Lab to Think Tank



This animation video is the story of how my initial study plan went from including students, teachers, and artists in face-to-face arts activities to being an arts-based virtual focus group/field test with only educators because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In the initial plan, the animation was meant to close the process and to share the wellness ideas that the participants imagined with their school communities. The script on the video had to be drastically changed, but it can still serve as a field test of the original idea. It can open a relatable conversation about imagining changed endpoints with interested teachers and students in my next academic school year. The story stars Free-Spirited Eagle who flew with the concepts, Fun Loving Red Fox who engaged primarily for personal enjoyment, Hardworking Beaver who diligently moved forward, Brave Bobcat with big picture ideas, Wise Owl who offered the type of profound insights only a veteran practitioner could, Loving Porcupine who supports unconditionally, and Clever Raven, the reflective voice who provided thoughtful direction. It tells a relatable story about agency, resiliency, community and learning through adversity in the various ways the participants took up the research. A sincere and heartfelt thank you to the artist who gave generously of herself when she created and gifted the visuals that accompany our story of a study adjusted. There are reflective questions at the end of the video to help you reflect on your own learning during the remote emergency learning experience.



HeartWork | Artwork for the Heart

fair dealing
CANADA
utilisation équitable

We share this work with the hope that people will readapt it, build upon it, learn from it and most importantly use it to transform and reimagine schools. It's an invitation for learners, artists, creatives, educators and activists to explore the power of arts to create healthier schools that support the well-being of every teacher-learner in every learning community. We encourage you to use and share the original work we have created together, as well as any of the activities we put forth and their contexts, this handbook contains reasonable amounts of copyrighted material for educational fair dealing guidelines. Additional efforts were made to give appropriate credit when due, to pay homage gracefully and avoid known infringement. We in no way suggest that any of the licensed passages or images referenced endorse us or that this project offers more than ideas, strategies, and information that may or may not be relevant to our gentle readers' situations.

1

⁹ To watch the video, learn more about the activities, or download the resources, readers can visit <http://bit.ly/ARTSLABTHINKTANK>

Scrip idea: Lessons in a historic moment the story of how one learning journey was affected by the collective adversity of Coronavirus.

Because COVID featuring the characters

Lucky Ladybug, Clever Raven, Free-Spirited Eagle, Fun Loving Red Fox, Wise Owl, Loving Porcupine, Brave Bobcat, Hard working Beaver, Snake Snatcher

Act One - Establish the Problem Ladybug took some deep breaths and told herself to clear her mind of worries, she brought her hands to prayer-center but somehow didn't feel clear from anxiety. She flew over to her smartphone to try calling Raven again just as the radio announcer again reminded her of the current Covid-19 reality that we "were all in together".

"Hello?" "Hello" Raven's voice came over the notoriously bad line.

"Can you hear me now?" Ladybug switched to a headset

"That's better. You must be so happy you finally got your research approval!"

"I was...but the timing is off! Schools all need to close their doors to help flatten the spread and I designed the arts-lab under the assumption of a stable reality and now that isn't realistic. My plans include ridiculous things, like group filmmaking, improv games and collaborative arts-making! I'm totally devastated. If I don't get my research problem done this year during my leave from work I won't have time next year when I'm starting a new job. You know, not only will I fail out of school but the school board will make me pay back the 15 thousand dollars grant they gave me and I've been living off my saving for six months, I can't afford that" Ladybug moaned.

"Well, you're not as devastated as you would be if you had a double lung infection" Raven corrected "Maybe you can rethink your process and still stay true to your purpose."

"OK, you're right. Of course. I'll meet with Porcupine and Owl and brainstorm some ideas" Sighed Ladybug

"That's a powerful support network. I'm off, I have to go pick up my curbside toilet paper order. Good luck and talk soon." Said Raven

Act Two - Complicate the Problem Ladybug looked at her reflection on the computer screen, she patted her hair down and stared at the digital meeting place. She would be lucky if anyone came. Porcupine and Owl had been clear that they, like many educators, were particularly amped up because they were shifting from face-to-face learning to a distance strategy under new public health guidelines. They also told her that arts and wellness were cut from the curriculum. To be fair, they had also voiced their belief in the need for the study now more than ever. Ladybug knew that need and capacity to meet the need didn't always go hand in hand and with fingers crossed she watched the screen.

Bebop. Eagle's face popped onto the screen.

"Thanks for the invite Ladybug! I flew your toolkit to a mountain top under the light of the midday sun and I was so inspired I went ahead and added my thoughts. Perfect time for this project, I can't wait to try some of this with you and then take something to my class to see the creative ideas my students come up with".

One by one, more wildlife arrived, until the space was packed. Owl, Eagle, Bobcat, Porcupine, Beaver, and Fox were in the crowd. After Owl got through some cursory technology learning and everybody agreed to rules of engagement, the group participated in the online arts-lab activities and started sharing their experienced voices to the ambitious initiative. The creatures shared their worries about the future of arts in education under Minister Snake, they worried about their students' realities now and in September in underfunded classrooms and expressed empathy to each other's stories about inequity in their programs with things like technology. They were relieved to hear how everyone was doing, felt good about connecting with a community of like minds and contributed a beautiful collective poem to express their stance on school wellness after Covid. They agreed to look at the framework and engage with the proposed action. Ladybug felt so lucky to be part of such a strong community.

At the end of the session, there was only one creature left.

"Brave move, Ladybug, way to level up" Bobcat called out.

"Hmmmmm, it was out of necessity, not sure it's a level up or down, Bobcat". Said Ladybug "I uhh..dreamed this action plan would be about students voicing their future, possible, and probable school visions through improv activities that we could animate into informative stories to share with school leaders. As cool as all these wild arts and wellness educators are I don't know how effective this is going to be."

Bobcat shrugged, "It's hard to be open to alternative visions when you've got your mind set on one. It's a brave move to put your intentions into the community and involve the pack in unfolding the unknown. You're not a lone wolf, you're a lady bug and like Maxine Greene reminds us, "we are not yet".

Swallow your pride and buzz over to each creature to encourage their ideas along, I promise the works you receive, although different from what you first asked for, will be worthy of your time and attention". Bobcat waved her paw goodbye and disappeared from the screen.

Ladybug bit her lip and typed out an email, inviting all the participant creatures to connect with her one-on-one so she could support any projects they were inspired to activate. She hoped she wasn't taking on more than she could handle.

Act Three - Resolve the Problem Ladybug stretched her arms and thought about the past few days, over the past few days Ladybug had been very very busy. Eagle was the first to reply, she wanted to set up a google meet. She had already started working with Owl testing out some of the activities and she could see potential to develop the wellness arts activities to a school-wide year end project that tied statistics and humanities together and used arts and wellness as a vehicle for the mandated curriculum.

Ladybug was impressed with the depth and thoughtfulness of the ideas and she enjoyed all the time they spent working closely on developing the amazing project. Bobcat was second. They met through a zoom invite because she had a radical big picture perspective she wanted to experiment with. Together they looked to expand the lab idea into an alternative school design as a disruptive innovation. It was beautiful. Fox had text messaged her request to meet to design an online drama camp for the YMCA. They met for hours brainstorming games that could be played online and were appropriate for the three different camps Fox had decided to pitch. They had so much fun and spent a lot of time laughing and at the end of their pitch design session, Fox said, "you know I was blocked on this and I never would have tried to pitch online drama camp if we hadn't played together. Thank you for the gift of play" Ladybug laughed, "You're thanking me!?! I should be thanking you for the gift! And that reminds me, you know the improv game where you give a gift to a person and they have to unwrap and react to it? You could play that online!" Fox laughed too. Beaver had sent an email asking for a write up of the poem activity to use with his school professional learning committee meeting. He thought it would help them get in the right mind frame for getting the school up and running after COVID and it aligned perfectly with the work they were already preparing for next year. Porcupine had sent an email meeting request but rescheduled twice. When they did meet she said she loved the notion and wanted to support it - she had already done an arts-lab focused on learning with grade 6s during COVID, she thought she might test a new arts-lab project in association with wellness-check ins and community development in her students.

She was excited to start but wasn't sure what objectives she wanted to focus on, maybe storytelling, maybe resiliency, also she was feeling busy with everything going on and wanted to gather a little more information before getting started. Ladybug was lost in thought and startled back to reality when the phone rang.

"Hello?" "Hello" Raven's muffled voice came over the line.

"Hi Raven, I can hear you but you're muffled. Can you hear me?" Asked Ladybug

"Oh right...let me just take my mask off... So? How goes your research project?" Asked Raven

"Well," said Ladybug thoughtfully "It's not really on the track it started out on, and I'm swimming in it right now, so it's hard to see the river for the water if you know what I mean? I'm learning a lot working with these amazing wild creatures and I am honoured they've decided to use my work to jump off into their own and share their experiences with me. You couldn't expect a wild one to do anything but what they did, determine their own path freely with their own viewpoints leading their contributions. And this is a real strength of arts-based ways of knowing, it's flexible to change and inclusive of diverse voices. Do I think we're stronger for working together? Do I think school wellness will and has been influenced, yes and yes, I could see it in their poem. Can I add these new ideas and voices to my old toolkit? Well kind of, yes, I guess ...as an offering"

"It sounds like you have some hesitation in your voice." Said Raven

“Yah, I’m lucky this went as it did but I think more work needs to be done, still I’m confident I’ll get the chance to try.” Ladybug hung up the phone, laid out her yoga mat and began the type of deep meditation that is only possible when your mind is calm and grounded in resolve.

Denouement That story is my learning story during covid-19 and it’s a story that I think is echoed in the experiences of many teachers and learners during this pandemic.

Like many learners I was really invested in my learning project and I took for granted that it would happen and would be a face-to-face physical interactive group experience.

I had to accept this was not possible and turn my attention away from anxiety or disappointment and towards learning through the obstacle.

I gained some important lessons 1) what an incredible personal gift it is to me to be part of committed learning community that shares my values when we are in a crisis, 2) the need and strength of arts activism for school wellness was confirmed, especially given the governments imposed curriculum that devalued wellness and arts learning and 3) that sometimes when governments make mistakes in a crises there are people who subversively respond so the cost is not as high.





....a little reflection.

Does this story sound familiar?



I'm grateful for a learning community that shares my values.

I think we need arts—activism for school wellness.

We don't need to wait for people above us to guide the way, we can find our own solutions.

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Definitions & Terms

Transformative Activist Stance: The researcher's stance involves the deliberate approach of co-authoring "collectivized" activist strivings with participants to simultaneously make up our world and make up our minds as teacher-learners all through a dynamic interplay of being, knowing, and doing towards a regularly revised endpoint (Stetsenko, 2017).

Collectivized: A unitary realm where individual gains are made through agentive contributions to changed collective practices based in a commitment to a shared vision of what the world ought to be (Stetsenko, 2017).

Social labs: Platforms for addressing complex social challenges that are social, experimental, and systematic (Hassan, 2014).

Arts-Lab: Space to address a complex social problem through a facilitated process that privileges arts-based creative processes, products, experiences and developing artistic behaviors as a key aspect of creating favourable conditions for action.

Arts-based research: "employs the premises, procedures, and principles of the arts" and "contains aesthetic qualities (or design elements) within both the inquiry process and the research text" (Given, 2008, p. 27).

Action research: "Integrates social research with exploratory action to promote development" (Given, 2008, p. 4) that is "carried out by a partnership of participants who are insiders to the situation under research" (Given, 2008, p. 6).

Collective Arts Action: The process of artistic creation that promotes transformative social imagination and fosters a reflective, meaningful interconnection between the artists, the art, and society.

School Wellness: A growth-oriented collective effort to foster student and educator well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment.



"You should add terms to the toolkit." Raven



imagine

Gentle Reader,

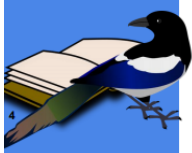
You're probably a teacher-learner. I hope you're the kind of who likes skimming through content and drawing out new ideas by combining your objective with the goods you steal. If you're that kind of person, you might find something useful here. I'm going to assume you are; I'm also going to cast you as a Magpie. Magpies are excellent scavengers, and they have an eye for things that sparkle.

This focus group experiment was supposed to privilege student-voice through an arts-lab. The adjustment is all Covid's fault. The plan was to gather arts-based (heavy on the improv) activities to use to help students and teachers imagine a new future in school wellness. Paradoxically, if I were to go through the plan in my proposed timeline, the individual well-being of the participants would have been at risk. Instead of an arts-lab school wellness toolkit, we're left with a book of "not yet's", a book that could easily help a future arts-lab enthusiast with a dissertation project and also teachers and students imagining new ways of doing things. Hopefully, some of these stories stand out for you as a way to add something to your practice.

The cast of characters in the introductory story represent the educators who participated in two virtual arts-lab sessions and/or one-to-one intersessions with me. They are experts and thought leaders in their work and it was a great gift that they joined with me in this journey. Their thoughts, their practical observations, and even their own virtual-arts-labs are shared with this toolkit which we discussed together.

For entertainment sake, and for anonymity, the educators are cast as wild animals that reflect their personalities. Thank you for reading this, please do steal like a Magpie.

Much Love,
Lady Bug (AKA Lucky)



School Wellness

Arts-lab:

Implementation Guide & Facilitators' Toolkit



HeartWork | Artwork for the Heart

This toolkit was developed to strengthen arts-based educational research capacities of individuals interested in hosting an arts-lab for transformative school wellness activism. Karena Munroe developed initial materials for the toolkit as a part of her dissertation research with the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education Educational Doctoral studies with the intent to pilot an arts-lab as an action research project. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, all physical school locations were closed and face-to-face activities, like the ones proposed in this research, ceased. Hence this pilot project shifted in nature. Guidance on the process was provided by a targeted group of eight school educators from a western school board who via collaborative document discussion named themselves the **GreeneFreire Collective**. The toolkit greatly benefitted from this team of passionate school leaders' guidance, field tests and contributions. Responsibility for the stance voiced and for any mistakes of fact or errors of judgment rests with Karena Munroe.

The School Wellness Arts-Lab is an approach for educators and students to act together as artist-activists to conduct a systematic inquiry that engages the power of arts-based learning to improve school wellness. This handbook describes the hands-on arts activities that a collective of educators designed and field-tested and concluded could support artist-activist teams focused on improving the spiritual, social, environment, physical, intellectual, and emotional wellbeing of their school communities.

¹ Participants quoted passages of from Marlene Greene and Paulo Freire, we shared encounters with their words and they fit our we are "not yet" feelings toward our social action agenda of "wide-awakeness" and "consciousness".

Getting Started Tip from Participants.

Get your school-based leaders on your arts-lab wellness team.

"You want to do this work with your school leadership included as part of the critical mass of champions leading the charge."

"My Principal has been very supportive of my student team which has made all the difference!"

"The Administrative team at my school did not embrace the voice of my students and this stifled their growth and buy-in on the project."

"My Principal shared my students work with her colleagues and her director. My students and myself both appreciated her support."



Introduction

An overview of the key concepts.

This toolkit compiles lessons learned through the active participation of a team of artist-educators who shared ideas, reflections and interpretations. The researcher played the key role of documenting these shared aims and interpretations and invited participation in agreement with the following commitments:

Transformative Activist Stance (TAS)

Transformative activist stance sees learners developing through community development when individuals co-author forward-looking activist practices that strive to transcend the status-quo given their unique position. Participants are all teacher-learners focused on producing a wellness future through co-authoring collective aims premised on freedom, equality, and justice. For TAS to be valid individuals must suspend rigidly elevated dogmatic agendas in favour of real solidarity. Transformative activists need to transparently and critically interrogate their perspectives and ideological underpinnings in repeatedly collective points of agreement and conflict. Thus we change the world, while being changed by it (Stettenko, 2017). To find out more read The Transformative Mind: Expanding Vygotsky's Approach to Development and Education by Anna Stettenko.

Comprehensive School Wellness

Traditionally schools have tended to view wellness within biological boundaries of physical education and health, incorporating daily activity and healthy catering options as key determinants of school wellness. This toolkit takes a broader scope, that comprehensive school wellness means nourishing communities that engage teachers and learners in practices of education for freedom (hooks, 1994). Historically, schools have been competitive environments promoting the "banking" style of education (Freire, 1970/2000) and we have seen consequences such as rampant isolating communities, unsupportive environments, and unbalanced thinking in students and teachers in this style of education.

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Comprehensive school wellness ought to be considered a human rights issue. The distinction is that health is a state of being where wellness aims to enhance well-being in a much larger sense (World Health Organization, 2019; Smith, Tang, & Nutbeam, 2008). Comprehensive school wellness is in this way focused on achieving potential and developing positive practices. This distinction may seem trivial; however, it is, in fact, crucial in terms of continuous school improvement because healthy choices stem from a culture of wellness (Stettenko, 2015) and this arts-lab toolkit aims to cultivate positive culture improving the social, ecological, and emotional wellbeing of their school communities.

This toolkit supports a world where school communities are caring, just, loving learning environments, where each person can thrive in learning. Where agency, solidarity, and a visionary future of school wellness is a humanistic value and everyone's goal. Central to wellbeing literacy and happiness are literacies of democracy and justice because the goals of liberation and well-being are inseparable. For further reading see Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-being by Geoffrey Nelson and Isaac Priesterley.

The Creative Process

Graham Wallas is an educationalist and a social psychologist who advocated for a free society, collectivism, and studied innovation as a process. He is widely credited for his model of creativity that includes four stages, often thought of as overlapping, interacting and non-linear. The stages follow in the next section with interpretations and connection to the imaginative capacities in brackets: 1. preparation (orientation and goal setting, pose questions, identify patterns, make connections), 2. incubation (natural and unconscious exploration of solutions, live with ambiguity), 3. illumination (Conceptualizing and synthesizing ideas, empathize, create meaning, take action) and 4. verification (evaluate and polish, and reflect/ assess, notice deeply, embody). For further descriptions of the creative stages see The Art of Thought by Graham Wallas.

While creativity itself is not subject to a linear model the design architecture of this lab understands this process to consistently yield results and as such follows it in an effort to support innovation. The capacities for imaginative thinking are a formalized system of aesthetic-educational strategies designed by the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI) for the purpose of developing artistic behaviors. The LCI sees the imaginative capacities as an ongoing non-linear practice that serves the purpose of educating for a democratic society (Michell, et al., 2011). Arts-activists see that incorporating imagination into one's vision is essential for challenging the status quo and understand that moving artistic ways of knowing out of the educational periphery disrupts the status-quo by its mere presence.

6

The development of this practice is grounded in the philosophy of Maxine Greene, who served as the LCI's philosopher in residence from 1976-2012 and famously taught about the power of aesthetic education as a tool to design for freedom. Magnifying imaginative knowledge that takes sides is a valuable means to deepening our cultural, emotional, and critical understandings. This project believes that participant developed artistic exhibits have powerful potential to expand school wellness improvement. For further readings see *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change* by Maxine Greene or visit the Lincoln Center Education web presence.

Noticing Deeply: To identify and articulate layers of detail in a work of art other object of study through interaction with it over time
Embody: To experience a work of art through your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that experience.
Pose Questions: To use questions throughout to reposition thinking and further conclusions; to ask the question "What if...?"
Identify Patterns: To find and analyze relationships among the details you notice within a work or study, group them and recognize patterns.

Make Connections: To connect and make comparisons what you notice and the patterns, details, and ideas you see to your prior knowledge and experiences, & others' knowledge including text and multimedia resources.
Empathize: To respect diverse perspectives; to understand the experiences of others emotionally as well as in thought.
Live with Ambiguity: To understand that issue have more than one interpretation and to be patient with complexity and divergence in your search for resolution.
Create Meaning: To create your own interpretations based on previous capacities, to see these in light of others in the community, create a synthesis and express it in your own voice.

Take Action: To act, to realize what you imagine, in the world and in your community, based on what you have learned.
Reflect/Assess: To continually pause, look back on what you have done, analyze what you have learned, and look forward to renew curiosity/ reposition goals.

6

Capacities for Imaginative Thinking

The capacities for imaginative thinking are a formalized system of aesthetic-educational strategies designed by the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI) for the purpose of developing artistic behaviors. The LCI sees the imaginative capacities as an ongoing non-linear practice that serves the purpose of educating for a democratic society (Michell, et al., 2011). Arts-activists see that incorporating imagination into one's vision is essential for challenging the status quo and understand that moving artistic ways of knowing out of the educational periphery disrupts the status-quo by its mere presence.

'One difficulty with school wellness initiatives is they ask how students can be well within the structure being what it is. How do wellness aims disrupt the means of education?'
Bobcat

6

Helping young minds perform in a dynamic world



NOTICE DEEPLY

How many layers of detail can you identify if you take the time? Can you go deeper?

EMBODY

Use your body to explore your ideas. Try it out.

POSE QUESTIONS

What do you wonder?

IDENTIFY PATTERNS

How might different details relate? Analyze them.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

How is this like something else? Make personal, textual, and wider connections.

EMPATHIZE

Can you understand how others think and feel? What are their perspectives?

LIVE WITH AMBIGUITY

What if there is not just one answer? Be patient with complexity.

CREATE MEANING

Bring together what you've thought so far. What new interpretations can you make?

TAKE ACTION

What will you decide to do with your ideas? Put them into practice.

REFLECT/ASSESS

Look back on what you've experienced. What have you learned? What's next?

Lincoln Center Education

Launch Tips From Artists

Ask your own questions. Moving from the creative process to the artistic creative process is a very personal shift that you must create yourself. Eric Booth (1999), expert teaching artists says, "asking good, and then better, questions in a work-of-art skill we must develop for a lifetime. Indeed, human nature responds only to the questions we put to it. If we pose simplistic questions to our consciousness, our growth will be equally limited. If, however, we develop the habit and skills of pursuing personal interests with good inquiry, our possibilities for growth become infinite" (p. 102). Your own artistic process needs to be driven by your own questions. Only you can ask yourself the questions about which art and which direction your art should be taking. Your mastery of artistry will come from a process of learning by doing and reflecting on the doing. We must seek out masters to learn from and pay attention to our learning through a personal and reflective process.

"In school, a student's job is to get right answers; in apprenticeship, a learner's job is to find, ask, answer, and outgrow the right questions" (Booth, 1999, p. 260). Finally, your why, your work as a facilitator and artist should connect to a higher purpose. You can assess your own success on the basis of how your work influences something bigger than yourself, be that beauty, connection, community and justice.

Workshop Structure: Change Labs and Arts-Labs

There is no established orthodoxy about what a change lab is, the concept draws from numerous distinct scientific traditions (Westley et al., 2015) and is polyprocess, in that the change laboratory (Engström, Vinkonen, Heide, Pihlaja, & Puhola, 1990), social lab (Stettenko, 2014), design sprint (IDEO, 2019) and participatory processes with other names that are run by scientists, activists, and entrepreneurs all share the same core characteristics. They are a facilitated process for addressing a complex problem, they include diverse participants in activities that extend beyond simple consultation and aim to co-create solutions.

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They are not project based but iteratively experimental and committed to continual improvement and aim to deal with systemic root causes (Hassan, 2014) over a long period of time. Change labs use understandings of collective dynamics and draw on the arts extensively to facilitate the process (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Schaner, 2007). However, for the most part, they do not explicitly engage with the aesthetic lens. They do not often recognize what the arts bring to the process of knowing, by commonly avoiding the role of the arts in critically examining both things as we are imagining how they could be in the future—a key tool to collectively generating interest, excitement, connection, or lateral thinking. Manuals to support change lab facilitation process (Art of Hosting, 2014; IDEO, 2019; Presencing Institute & Schaner, 2007) do not mention attending to the artistry in the process, nor does the work use arts-based ways of knowing to guide participants' reflections on the art activities.

The change lab, therefore, offers a favourable opportunity to further a collective understanding of using arts in transformative activism. Pedagogy which urges educators to take an activist position by "contributing to collaborative practices and knowledge creation in collectively realizing the world and ourselves" (Stettenko, 2017, p. 353). We use arts to facilitate student agency in an effort to reshape the school to meet their wellness needs.

Preparation - Art as Record

Topic	Activity - Photo/Video/Poetry/Voice
Recruit	Clarify Intentions Broadcast Invitation Work Networks and Develop Partnerships Challenge Brief Collectively
Designing the Process	Wellness Purpose & LCI Principles Establishing Guidelines for Co-Facilitators Facilitation Toolkit Tips, Tools, Norms Decision Making, Roles & Agency
Setting Goals	Introduction to Challenging the Status Quo & Wellness Creative Creation & LCI Guidelines for Artist Participants Gaining Commitment & Personal Stories Photo/Video Voice Activity Reflections

Incubation - A planned break that is followed by a co-facilitator revisions session to finish designing the arts-lab informed by the voice and work uncovered in the first session.

Revising the Process	Clarifying Purpose Generate Checklists - Arts-Lab Logistics Insights - Consider choices and gather feedback
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Illumination - Art as Study

Topic	Activity - Arts-Day
Building Community	Ground Rules & Collective Power Listening & Complete Concentration Strengthening the Ensemble Rules of Improvisation
Imagination	Noticing Deeply - Gallery Walk, Punctum, Rules of Critique Embodying - Entering the Text and Living Sculpture Questioning - Improvisation and Constraints Joking/Testing
Creativity	Making Connections - Wellness Story building Identifying Patterns - Endpoint Negotiating Exhibiting Emphases - Problem Solving Creating Meaning - Innovation
Innovation	Taking Action - Future Scenarios Reflecting - Group Takeaways Assessing - Co-Facilitators Observations

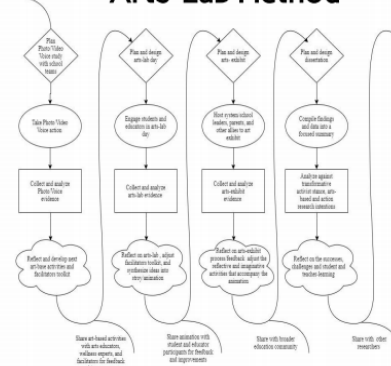
Verification - Art as data

Topic	Activity - Animation
Creating the Product	Creating the Animated Video for Future Wellness Scenarios Artist and Co-Facilitator Verifications
Designing the Process	Invitations Establishing Guidelines for Audience participation Exhibition Logistics
Exhibition	Introduction Exhibition Activity Audience Arts-based Reflections on Potential to move the learning forward
Closure	Arts-exit piece, write and share key insights for the participating school communities

Arts-Based Action Research

Elliot Eisner, widely credited for establishing ABR as a legitimate form of research famously wrote, "not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that is measured matters" (Eisner, 2002, p. 178). This notion that focusing on what can be measured is limiting, forms the base for generative arts-based processes that enable creative insights to unfold across the collective. Collective arts processes, like photovoice, poetic reflection, improvisation and story-telling, can guide participant-driven school wellness activism. Learning how this can be cognitively effective for transformative learning and socially effective in supporting organizational development should happen naturally by sharing in collective art-making and interpreting with different audiences.

The School Wellness Arts-Lab Method



'For an arts-lab to be really effective there would have to be an element of we do this together with everything, like arts-lab PD, and arts-lab parent council. You say we're doing a four part arts-lab. There is an actual piece of art made together to represent each part that you hang meaning on to bring into other contexts.' Owl

The photovoice/poetic voice activity session will inform the arts-lab full-day activity development. The animation story development. The animation in final form will inform the community audience. McNiff has proposed that "Action research above all is a methodology that requires practitioners to accept the responsibility of offering a public account of their own educational journey, of how they grew in understanding". For educational arts-based research, like the proposed project Barone and Eisner (1997, p. 75) elaborated two success criteria. (1) It can be employed to enhance perspectives pertaining to (educational) human activities; and (2) "Aesthetic qualities [will] infuse the inquiry process and research text". These criteria help evaluate the success of the arts-based action research that is the proposed school wellness arts-lab.

Eisner's messages support the notion that arts-based research and action are a good fit. His view that artistic development is not a natural consequence to developing or an easy opening to creativity, that artistic ways of knowing are special understandings and a means to rethink important issues mentally, and that works of art enable us to know something about feeling that cannot be revealed in scientific statements. Illustrate this fit, Isaksen, Hultunen, and Hultunen (2015) also articulate how art and science complement each other, by using each of the practitioners' focus and express our views of the world [more] clearly" (p. 434). For more information on Arts-Based research look to the *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* edited by Patricia Leavy.

9

School Wellness

Arts-lab

ART ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL WELLNESS CHANGE

"For classroom teaching this toolkit is missing an assessment and would really benefit from a metacognitive piece connecting students with their learning and emotional strengths. Here are some resources that could help with that objective." Porcupine

Link to additional intelligence reflective learning resources.



Preparation

Step one: identify school Principals, Co-facilitators, Advisors and Arts-Lab Participants who want to contribute to arts-based school wellness activism. Search for Principals that acknowledge the conflict and disengagement in school wellness objectives and school realities. Leaders who could help create urgency for the project within their school (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009), to help frame the arts-lab within each context (Higgs & Rowland, 2011) and support an emotional connection to the importance of arts-lab, by articulating and inspiring belief in the inquiry (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012) and its relationship to the system and school vision.

Recruit

In the beginning, the aim is to network with school Principals and expert facilitators that share the arts-lab school wellness goals. The cover email, orientation slideshow and script linked below were designed to invite interested parties to host an arts-lab and be edited in the future to this same objective. The intentions to schedule a meeting for further information, to suggest connections for new partnerships, and seek resources to support the arts-lab are noteworthy. Following that, a meeting with interested principals to share an overview of the arts-based research proposal and determine if the research is consistent with school goals, make any needed changes, as well as outline how they would be willing to support the project would be helpful.

For the schools who identify as having shared goals and who have people interested in participating supplementary information to share with staff, parents, and students to clarify intentions would be necessary. These linked documents were created with that in mind.

- [School Wellness Arts-Lab Invitation](#)
- [Letter of Introduction](#)
- [Recruitment Information](#)
- [Study Preparation Document](#)

Once a group of people from a school resolves to participate in the research, a school meeting is hosted to view the informed consent forms and answer any questions participants have before starting the project officially. During this meeting, facilitators will be transparent about strategic choices and set clear roles for participating (Hassan, 2012; Stetsenko, 2017).

The overview of the research proposal should be shared as a draft open to changes because of the objective to be as inclusive of the collective voice as possible. Tentative drafts for the three parts of the arts-lab should be set. And participant role sign-ups gathered as well as hard copies of supplementary information, consent permissions, and requested input on the participant interests all made available to help design the arts-lab.

- [ABC CWS Overview for Participants](#)
- [Participant Information Sheet](#)
- [Informed Consent Form](#)
- [Participant Role Sign-up](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)
- [ABC CWS Arts-Lab Full Day Session](#)
- [Participant Role Sign-up](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)

Participants who choose the role of Arts-Lab Participant are then invited to participate in

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Revising the process

Co-facilitators and Advisors are invited to another planning meeting. During this meeting, one of our goals is to write lists of all the arts-activities we could use to help achieve our goal. The "SHOWED" photovoice research questions (Strick, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004, p. 51) will be considered in connection to more traditional arts-critique methods, analyze, interpret, judge, practice (Feldman, 1994), and hopefully combined into something useful. Then we'll decide what we actually need to do, and make practical checklists that include who will do what. Co-facilitators focus carefully on engaging artistic processes that create meaning and that create platforms for taking action (Holzer, 2007) with the school wellness and artistic development goals participants highlighted in consideration. Once we choose arts-based tactics, we can consider how to organize the arts-lab into "stacks" (Hassan, 2012, p. 137) for engaging flow. Then, each co-facilitator will design participation platforms they relate to and organize the roles and resources needed for that part of the arts-lab full-day session. Co-facilitators will take time to document and generate checklists to help prepare for future arts-change lab events and will design with the end of the arts-lab in mind.

- [ABC CWS Arts-Lab Full Day Session](#)
- [Participant Role Sign-up](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)

Tips From Artists

Designing processes to create meaning and platforms for action is hard daily work, and it can be rewarding to do it collectively as peers, but it takes a tremendous amount of creative skill to be an artist-teacher. Corita says, "as teachers, we try to participate in the process of empowering people to be the artists they are. And as artists, we accept responsibility to create—to realize our immense powers to change things, to fit things together in a new way" (Kent & Steward, 2008, n.p.). The key to this work is understanding how important it is to stack learning processes and care into the design elegantly. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look. To affect the quality of the day—that is the highest of arts" (Thoreau, 1899, p. 103).

Illustration

During the arts-lab full-day process, the objective is for activities to roll through forming, storming, forming, performing, and adorning norms (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Initially, knowledge can be shared by having school teams present their photovoice and poetry voice projects as well as current school visions and plans. Then group storming activities take place to develop and interrogate the contradictions, questions and opportunities that co-facilitators have highlighted to deepen understanding.

These activities are followed by diverse groups performing school future scenarios, and then determining which stories aligned with the school's reality.

Arts-lab full-day process

Arts-lab participants, co-facilitators, and a volunteer school counselor acting as extra support attend this full-day of study hosted in a community school. During this phase, our focus is on engaging artistic habits to make connections, identify patterns, generate reflection and empathy, and create meaning (Holzer, 2007).

Co-facilitators make these habits explicit to the participants before engaging them in activities and roles that practice and develop those objectives.

Co-facilitators and participants start with a ritual to build a feeling of community and to remind the group of the collective vision. Then they move into small, diverse sub-teams to share their photos, develop their ideas, and imagine possibilities.

Participants play different roles throughout the arts-lab, engaging in activities and documenting these engagements in ways that ensure that information jumps and spreads amongst the group tangibly. School teams reunite at a set time day to agree upon which future visions of wellness are most realistic in their school; they have to feel that the ideas are actionable and address a real need.

Co-facilitators employ arts-functions intended to enhance participants' sense-making, thereby working together to evolve the

School Wellness PhotoVoice Field Test

"We were really looking at photos to start conversations about how we might re-enter the school in the fall mindful of the school experience and its' connection to well-being." Eagle & Owl

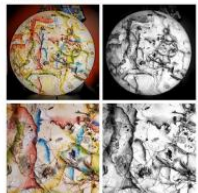


These functions include interpreting events, focusing language (Plowman et al., 2007), creating iterative moments of movement, and framing, creating (Higgs & Rowland, 2011), affirming, and encouraging creativity and healthy ideas. Community-building is supported by communicating shared ideals and aspirations, and by bringing diverse perspectives together (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013). Finally, developing the ideas together into a narrative for the video animation builds commitment and confidence with the adult and youth participants (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012).

- [ABC CWS Arts-Lab Full Day Session](#)
- [Participant Role Sign-up](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)

Tips From Artists

At this point, both arts-lab participants and co-facilitators need to engage and work from the source material. Working from a source is not the same thing as plagiarizing, copying, or stealing. First, you need to consider why you want that source, what it might be useful for, recognize the style, where the work came from and why the work came to you, and then you recreate from your experience, your perception for your context. Austin Kleon, author of *Steal Like an Artist*: 10 things nobody told you about being creative writes, "imitation is like copying. Emulation is when imitation goes one step further, breaking through into your own thing" (Kleon, 2012, p. 38). Much of the arts-lab owes a debt to the great artist-educator, Augusto Boal. His idea that the work that is done through improvisational games is a rehearsal for changing the world inspired the notion that an arts-lab could be a great place to generate stories to influence communities. In his words, "theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it" (Boal, 1992, p. xxi).



"A good extension for the collective poem activity on slide 15 would be to choose a photo to attach to a line, hang the photo in a collective collage and say the line as you cross the room!" Owl

THE LOVE OF !
A stream of consciousness writing as a technique to exploring our artist vision

Designing the process

Participants who sign up as Co-facilitators or Advisors are subsequently invited to a planning meeting to help design the arts-lab process and establish the shared culture we hoped to cultivate. Co-facilitators add to the toolkit and discuss and tweak the process of collective arts-making along the way, learning together. They also participate in art-making activities to test the process.

Arts collectives work best when there's the courage to be brave within the group, when the ground rules are clear, posted, referred to often, and all members are involved in creating the list, and as such we will work to remind each other to operate from that position. Co-facilitators will draw up first drafts of these documents and activities to support building this culture.

ABC CWS 1st Co-facilitator Planning Meeting

Compensation for the Co-facilitator

Throughout this process, the facilitators look to structure activities that develop capital in four fundamental output areas (Hassan, 2012): services and facilities, human capacities and skills, increased trust and collaboration, and new knowledge and learning.

- [ABC CWS PhotoVoice Study Session](#)
- [Collective Poem Writing Agreement](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)
- [Participant Role Sign-up](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)

Participants who choose the role of Arts-Lab Participant are then invited to participate in



Link to slide deck with facilitator notes.

arts-lab session one, a session aimed at uncovering what opportunities reside in each school. In this session, Arts-Lab Participants will work to contribute art to the project that highlights their perspectives and acknowledges the commonality of the community in action and subject.

Before the session, Arts-Lab Participants will focus on gathering information from peers and specialists, choosing a medium (video or photo) and choosing at least one other participant to be a teammate. When we begin the session, we will open with a collective creation agreement discussion and some independent thinking and poetry writing about our individual and collective purpose. Co-facilitators will frame this session to encourage novelty (Plowman et al., 2007), diversity, and flexibility (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). During this session, teams learn the basics of storytelling in photography and video from the artist specialists, with a particular focus on the imaginative capacity of noticing deeply (Holzer, 2007). They have specific instruction on the holistic nature of wellness (The Alberta Teacher Association, 2015) and elements essential to support comprehensive school wellness programs (Stops, Wilkins & Rame, 2015) from health professionals. They also look at a photovoice taking research guidelines for getting permission and use structures to gather focused content (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013) to support teams in identifying common models of what is happening in school wellness and what needs to happen. Finally, they produce and share school photos or videos that focus on at least one area of school wellness, deeply.

IT IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY. IT IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND THERE'S ONLY MAKE.

The only rule is work. WORK WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING. TO DO ALL OF THE WORK, THE TIME EVENTUALLY CATCHES ON TO THINGS. IT TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYZE AT THE TIME. THERE'S NO WIN AND THERE'S ONLY MAKE.

"Don't miss the collective creation working agreement, it supports equity in content creation - see slide 8, it's important to look at both resources in your planning." Porcupine

Tips From Artists

Work. According to rule seven of the famous artist and art teacher Sister Mary Corita Kent's art department rules, the only rule is work. "If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all of the time who eventually catch on to things" (Corita Art Center, 2020). Corita's mission as an educator is to advocate the ideas that we all have the potential to create and that caring is the key because art is not separate from life. For her, the journey and living the questions were more important than the answers. She insisted that creativity is based on the close observation of the ordinary, learned through the heart, "doing and making art are acts of hope, and as that hope grows we step feeling overwhelmed by the trouble of the world. We remember that we—as individuals and groups—can do something about those troubles." (Kent & Steward, 2008, n.p.). It matters so much in developing who our students are, in contributing to what we want the world to become, to live a life of meaning, joy, and hope that we allow our creative instincts to thrive. There is no room for perfectionism or fear of failure; there is only room to work.

Incubation

The objective during this stage is to finish building the full-day session and the rest of the participatory workshop informed by the points of contradiction, questions, and opportunities that the photo, video, and poetry voice work uncovered in the first session. Further intent is to connect artistic ways of thinking and the school district vision of wellness to the workshop

11

The arts-lab event sequence could be made even more powerful if it became a pattern of activity the community could embrace and supported in an ongoing cycle of action (Hassan, 2012). If the system helped the arts-lab with resources, autonomy and pride in the experiential learning it provides, the arts-lab could be a sustainable output.

Co-facilitators encourage dialogue and non-linear interactions and explicitly acknowledge the strength in making progress in ambiguous situations (Plowman et al., 2007). They pay attention to creating and transforming the space (Higgs & Rowland, 2011) into an art show to push the envelope, so that it goes beyond communication from artist to the art, but also communication from the art to the audience.

This exhibition, as an information-gathering event, would be strengthened by the nature of cross-organization participation (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013), multiple schools means multiple school community realities. The event itself communicates successful initiatives to the audience. It encourages dialogue to collaborate on methods and to collectively look at data which will increase the chance that the learning would be used more broadly and influence school change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013).

- [ABC CWS Arts-Lab Exhibition and Celebration](#)
- [No PhotoVoice Project](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)
- [Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol](#)

Tips From Artists

When sharing products with audiences, it's important to set the stage and atmosphere to engage in the ritual that celebrates the work. This includes giving the audience techniques to see truly, and paying particular attention to what it is they see and how they describe things; this helps shape the growth of the collective. Roland Barthes, famous for his study of the impact of the symbols on society and his explanations of the unique potential of the camera, has two suggestions that are easy to apply. He suggested searching for "studium" and "punctum," in looking for artist intention, studium, and poignant—even "bruising or stinging" (Barthes, 1981, p. 26) viewer evocations, punctum, we can develop deep personal meanings. Understanding the audience's interpretation of what is important in the art is an essential part of the artistic process, as Barthes notes "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Barthes, 1978, p. 148).

"Our PhotoVoice series explores the question: How might we re-imagine an educational institution, open to the shifts in innovative learning possibilities, while rooting pedagogy in sound human connections promoting social, intellectual, and emotional wellness? We looked at our purpose, at opening the door beyond the ordinary school experience, encouraging diverse stories, and imagining new possibilities." Eagle & Owl



Perspectives From PhotoVoice

13

FIELD

"We didn't get to do this research in a manner that privileged student voices to imagine new school wellness pathways but I was very lucky to get to host two virtual arts-lab sessions and gain insights and insider knowledge from expert practitioners. This is slide-deck one."

Facilitator Script
Virtual Arts-Lab Session One

[Link to FS1 slide deck.](#)

GREETINGS
Share your name, pronouns & your wellness symbol meaning.

[Link to VGL1 slide deck.](#)

This is the arts-lab my students and I took up to focus on wellness, math, and science. It integrated the notion that statistics, market analysis and art can all be used to influence collective change. Successfully connecting arts with core.

[Link to SCMathAL slide deck.](#)

The first facilitator script is right here. It was wonderful to be able to articulate the ideas and connect with people that understand the value of arts and wellness in education. Second session slide-deck below.

Facilitator Script
Virtual Arts-Lab Session Two

[Link to FS2 slide deck.](#)

During COVID-19 educators were directed to focus on literacy and numeracy skill building exclusively, enrichment teachers (arts, wellness, languages, as so much more) were asked to take on math or ELA or other roles and not run classes.

Acknowledge the Land
At this gathering we are mindful that we live in a society that is founded on stolen land and stolen lives and we ground our work in principles of love that restore our faith in each other to help correct these injustices.

[Link to VGL2 slide deck.](#)

I also used some of these activities with my professional learning community. Next year at my school we will be opening with a variation of this project for all our grade 9 students".
Eagle

YMCA Arts PRESENTS
VIRTUAL DRAMA CAMP

[Link to VDrma slide deck.](#)

"This challenge inspired me to brainstorm drama games and projects you could play and do virtually which a pitched to the YMCA summer camp, there are a bunch of games you could play virtually on the last slide."
Fox

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

[Link to Perfect Class slide deck.](#)

"I started an arts-lab on school wellness with my class before even hearing about this project. We were doing a design your perfect learning space arts-lab as a way to transition to learning from quarantine!"
Porcupine

[Link to Perfect Class slide deck.](#)

"A group called 6 Social from the Conservatory of Music in Toronto has a format that helped my students to look at themselves, be able to look at where they needed support in terms of wellness. I think it would add something metacognitive for classroom teachers looking to do this type of work with their class." Porcupine

[Link to 6 Social from the Conservatory of Music in Toronto resources.](#)

TESTS

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Effective Processes, Personal Story, Insider Knowledge

Many years ago the participant was the teacher of a segregated specialized learning and literacy class for students identified as having learning disabilities. Her perception was that her students were profoundly "othered." For example, to be admitted to the program evidence was required that they were unsuccessful elsewhere. Unlike the general population of the school, they arrived on special buses. As well, the rest of the school was open-concept, while a hallway led to their closed-door classroom. It was a challenging space to be in, learning was hard, and except for the story below, she never found a comfortable space for them there:

One participant's account of her experience facilitating an Andy Goldsworthy-style installation is a prime example of collectively contributing to an artifact for the school that triggers interest and motivation, and in so doing, contributes to the evolution of the school's collective consciousness.

For the Love of School

I am part of something bigger than myself

I am not alone

I am appreciative of the space and people I have to work with

I am a listener and observer and want to expand and extend

I am passionate about artistic creation as a form of collective and individual change for wellness

I am involved in something bigger

I am a reflective being who believes we will move forward

I wish that healing was a simple process.

I wish for warm sunlight, and the smell of toast and sage

I wish school were more freeing

I wish there will be a recognition that the arts are giving space for calm in this crazy

I wish that we don't forget about our realizations and appreciations that arise from our current state

I wish we could be more open in the world to our stances so that we can be flexible.

I wish art played more of a role everywhere.

I wish for stillness

I hope for a future filled with empathy and compassion.

I hope to find solace in the days to come

I hope post-quarantine is a return to place, to community, to art, to learning

...not a lurch into post-apocalyptic techno-learning

I hope to collaborate more, with students and teachers-

taking advantage of our ability to be together

I hope that we all become more empathetic from the situations we are experiencing

at this time

I hope I can return to this calm space in times of chaos and uncertainty

I worry that capitalism will win the day

I worry we won't be back with students next year

I worry the imaginative world will get lost in the logistics of survival

I worry that teaching will not be enjoyable after the changes that will occur after this

I worry that we won't be ready, that we will rush

I worry the world will go back to business as usual

I worry about how we all often unintentionally focus on the negatives

I wonder what might be possible

I wonder what the world will look like in one year

I wonder how we can change

I wonder what schools will look like in the coming years

If we all will remember this moment of collective action

I wonder how we can move forward

I wonder if we let go of certain things would we be able to remember that it is okay

One Participant shared a particularly strong example of an arts practice from her community that influences the individual and communal well-being goals, in her description of her annual Arts Market.

"I really encouraged her to apply, and she did. It was her grade nine year that she did this sale. She came to school and she was at school for the entire thing. She was there interacting with her peers. She made these cool art little plant terrariums, and sold out. She was just ecstatic about that, because making money when you're a junior high kid is amazing. But her mom was in tears, it brought me to tears. That that was something that she was able to totally break out of, this terrified shell she built for herself."

Andy Goldsworthy-style Installation

"Except for one day, we had been looking at Andy Goldsworthy's art. We talked about what we could do as a class project and what the kids wanted to do. What they came up with was there was a whole line of trees where the buses lined up. The buses were this symbol of their lack of identity and lack of belonging, because everybody else came on big buses and they came on little buses. They came on little buses with kids of all different other kinds of complex need that were going to other programs in the area. The project was to take the snow and make horizontal stripes on all the trees. We went during the school day and striped all the trees. But then

we went out and stood against the school at the end of the day and watched people's reaction to the stripes. It became this touchpoint for my kids forever afterwards. They had a presence, they had a voice, they had an identity, and they caused a reaction that they were in control of in the other kids in the school, sort of staking a claim on their belonging." Participant Voice. This account illustrates the significance of the curiosity of the school community seeing the installation. The change in her students' consciousness about how their art was recognized and that they triggered conversations in the school community positively influenced the relationships from artists to audience.

She told the story under the broad theme of "belonging" both for students and the broader community.

Andy Goldsworthy is a British artist who creates temporary landscape art out of found materials.

Here is a link to some Andy Goldsworthy artworks.

School Community Arts Market Event

The educator's process included facilitating discussions related to applications to participate and design plans, including the purpose, functionality, and pricing of the piece. She involved the students in determining reasonable pricing, arranging advertising, setting up vending stations, and even inviting the school and family community to attend the event. Finally, she had parent volunteers handle the money and distribute 80% of the profits directly back to the individual vendors to take home, 10% to the school arts program and 10% to a community charity the students agreed upon.

She drew attention to the excitement from the teachers in seeing their students shine outside of what they had seen in their classrooms. She also noted that the number of students who approached the work because of the financial draw. In her words, "They thought maybe they could finally use their talents and their interest in their personal projects that they were working on and be of value to themselves and their families." One incredibly powerful part of this belonging story was about a student who had severe anxiety, selective mutism, and extreme attendance difficulties.

List of World Wide Social Innovation Change Labs

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More Toolkits and Resource Documents

Arts-Based Methods for Transformative Engagement: Facilitating a Pedagogical Project What you need to know! **Facilitator Toolkit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results** **Guide to Forum Theatre** **Implementation Research Toolkit: Facilitators' Guide** **The Freechild Project: Youth Engagement Workshop Guide** **Youth Engaged in Learning about Leadership Curriculum**

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Appendix E: Sample Collective Creation Working Agreement Template

Participants in the Arts-based School Wellness Action Research Collective agree to study school wellness through collective art making in accordance with protocols developed together.

Important Language:

School Wellness: A growth-oriented collective effort to foster teacher-learner well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment

Collective Art: Artistic creation that promotes transformative social imagination and fosters a reflective meaningful interconnection between the artist, art, and society.

TIP: A key part of this discussion came from asking ourselves how we've contributed best in the past to creating conditions that foster equality within and what tips we could suggest to a facilitator trying to get the most out of an arts collective. For resources support developing a lesson plan to create this working agreement with the collective see:

- <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/speaking-kindness-in-democratic-classrooms>
- <https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/norms-construction-a-process-of-negotiation/>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/group-work/making-group-contracts>
- Resource 3: Critical Participatory Action Research Group Protocols <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789814560665>

GOALS: What are our goals for this project? What do we want to accomplish? What skills do we want to develop or refine?
<p>Develop as mindful artists and activists by striving to shape a common vision for a future of school wellness by contributing to arts-based collective creative practices.</p> <p>The artistic works will support a shared culture that doesn't worry about credit and includes both individual, small group, and collective creations, therefore authorship will be directly linked to ownership. The works developed through individual and joint authorship will be attributed as individual or joint authorship accordingly. Authorship for collective creations will enjoy collective authorship, creative commons licensing, and will be shared freely for the sole purpose of education.</p> <p>Collectively, we aim to develop artistic skills for shaping educational change. Individual skill development goals will vary.</p> <p>TIP: For resources to support further developing this section with the collective see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://austinkleon.com/steal/
EXPECTATIONS: What do we expect of one another in regard to attendance at meetings, participation, frequency of communication, the quality of work, etc.?
<p>Genuine interactions: We genuinely contribute our respect, trust, understanding and communicate and encourage the collective to help when an individual requests it or is unable to meet their commitments. Respect, no put downs, and speak for yourself.</p> <p>Equality: We set aside our egos and the masks we often put on in public places in order to respect and appreciate everyone for who they are within and the unique contributions they bring to our community.</p>

Freedom: We make space and we take space. We are aware of the space we're taking up. We treat each other's voice and contributions with respect, including the right to withdraw or decline participation or information sharing in any aspect of the study.

Agentive Creativity: We say yes to passion and no to obligation. All contributions are welcome. We strive to continually produce higher quality work and for full and sensitive inclusion of diversity, originality, and non-conformity. We will sincerely seek agreement about ideas, thus, critique and questions are seen as a gift to the group, given and taken with generosity of spirit, as we negotiate new endpoints in solidarity.

Confidentiality, safety, and identifiability: We agree to act with discretion so that the institution and the participants can be appropriately safeguarded. No personal questions, its OK to pass and discussions are confidential.

- We respect other people's right to not know things
- We won't take minutes on sensitive personal information
- We will use aliases in stories.
- We will use non-gender specific pseudonyms in the main narratives so that it is difficult for audiences to attribute particular comments to particular people
- This is a space for commitment and work for our school communities, While, truth, vulnerability and sharing emotions are encouraged we speak the truth to change the world for the better and as such must be careful not to publicly share personally sensitive, traumatic stories, in manners that are identifiable or self-absorbed. Emotional labour is essential, if I need to take a break then I will pause and take space for myself.
- We ask for support if we need it. I look out for people, including myself. We are private, do not intentionally "call people out" and are prepared to find supports for others when they need it.

Solidarity: We act in solidarity, not in charity – In order to ensure that the research process does not compromise the integrity or negatively impact people, we agree to periodically review how the research is unfolding for the collective and for individuals. Participants will be given access to draft reporting, if participants feel that representations relating to them are not fair, relevant or accurate, they will negotiate with the authors of the report to resolve the issue, keeping in mind the principles of genuine interactions above.

TIP: For resources to support further developing this section with the collective see:

- <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/08/10/10-rules-for-students-and-teachers-john-cage-corita-kent/>

POLICIES & PROCEDURES: What rules can we agree on to help us meet our goals and expectations?

Assume best intentions: We are all working towards the same goals; as such, we work to view the variety of individual expressions and actions through the lens of curiosity and comradery. There is no intentional oppression and if language or ideas require questions we are wide-open to learning.

Collective art and decision making: We look for opportunities to use collective arts-based ways of working and to have fun. We include everyone's input in the process and follow ways of working protocols to this end.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities: Before each collective activity we take time to clarify what to do and not do, so each person can properly demonstrate their commitment to the work and best support success.

Distributed Power: We work together, for the shared benefit of the collective voluntarily. While people have different roles, and are empowered to make decisions within their roles, no one has more power than anyone else in collective decision making. This means we listen to each other deeply.

TIP: For resources to support further developing this section with the collective see:

- <https://imaginationnow.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/capacities.pdf>
- <https://kicp-workshops.uchicago.edu/eo2014/pdf/Tina-Feys-rules-of-improv.pdf>
- <https://neighborhoodanarchists.org/norms>

CONSEQUENCES: How will we address non-performance in regard to these goals, expectations, policies and procedures?

Justice: In the event that there is conflict/relationship breakdown between participants that cannot be resolved independently and that is detrimental to the project and/or well-being of group members, a credible and neutral person _____ will be asked to help those concerned work through the issues through the use of an appropriate and agreed upon activity like a peacemaking circles, peer jury process, mediation, conferencing or collective discussions focused on building empathy.

Critique: We are not our ideas or our art-work, we are working to be better versions of ourselves and better artists. We're all learning and growing, constructive feedback is welcome. We do this through consistent and dignified individual and group reflection, discussion, and feedback. We are generous of spirit and open to both give and receive respectfully. I agree to be open with other group members if I think the research is having a negative impact on the group, or on me personally.

TIP: For resources to support further developing this section with the collective see:

- <https://www.creativebloq.com/features/how-to-give-and-get-more-from-art-critiques>
- <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/03/calling-in-and-calling-out/>
- <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/contracting>

We share these goals and expectations, and agree to these policies, procedures, and consequences.

Signature _____
 Signature _____
 Signature _____
 Signature _____
 Signature _____

Appendix F: Original Study Research Design

The Initial Plan

This section provides a detailed description of the original research plan. I describe and justify the methods chosen to collect and analyze data and also explain the investigation's ethical concerns. Finally, I present the measures I planned to take to establish trustworthiness, and also acknowledge the study's limitations and delimitations. The section ends with a brief summary.

The Research Plan

My initial research design included a variety of participants who would work together to support answering the main research question. The original question and the three sub-questions, are as follows:

Main research question: In what ways can a participatory approach to action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab enhance school-wide comprehensive wellness initiatives?

Sub-Questions. The three questions below are tied to the goals this research aims to reveal.

1. What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore-according to *student and educator* participants?
2. What are useful arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school-wide comprehensive health-according to the *students, educators, healthcare professionals, and artists* participating in the arts-lab?
3. What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants' current school wellness work -according to *students, teachers, educators, parents, artists and healthcare professionals who were participants, and art show audience members*?

The method includes transdisciplinary influences, and I planned to employ multiple methodological tools, and to iteratively respond and adjust to participant voices through reflective activities and thinking processes. Critical participatory AR (Kemmis et al., 2014), youth-led participatory AR (Ozer, 2016; Frاسquilho et al., 2016) and the TAS (Stetsenko, 2017) perspectives inform this ABAR design. I planned to consider these approaches in particular: critical arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2011), method meets art (Leavy, 2015), and ABR analysis (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Since a cornerstone of the method is the collective arts-based approach, a rigid design plan will not work, and process adjustments are anticipated. Expert facilitators were to engage in real-time practices, and youth participants would help inform my research direction.

I planned to take an integrated arts approach to the AR design, drawing from the classic creative model of preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Wallas, 1926/2014). This follows Freire's theory of praxis that focuses action and reflection at the system it changes (Freire, 1970/2000), while also drawing from contemporary change lab processes (Hassan, 2014). The research study was going to move through four iterative processes (Figure 3.1) and was going to set conditions for participants to engage in numerous non-linear conceptual stages of creativity, understanding, and art-building.

I am interested in facilitating the activity out of regular school hours. However, educators may recognize powerful connections to their curriculums and request to work within the school schedule for portions of the intervention, such as the Photo/Video Voice action. Should that have happened, I was going to adjust my project accordingly. During this AR, I also planned to involve youth participants' perspectives—through collaborative art creation, thoughtful reflection, and collective data analysis. I anticipated ongoing adaptations and was going to use

specialist facilitators to guide effective procedures with the student participants. The six-month project was designed to explicitly apply wellness, cooperation, and creativity to inform the research process and outcomes. Collaborative artifacts were to reveal shared stories about what is working and what is needed in the participants' school communities. Further, the development of media artifacts was meant to strengthen the mobilization of information for school communities. This original six-month project (Appendix B) promised to contribute to an understanding of how learners can make creative decisions through self-driven, cooperative action.

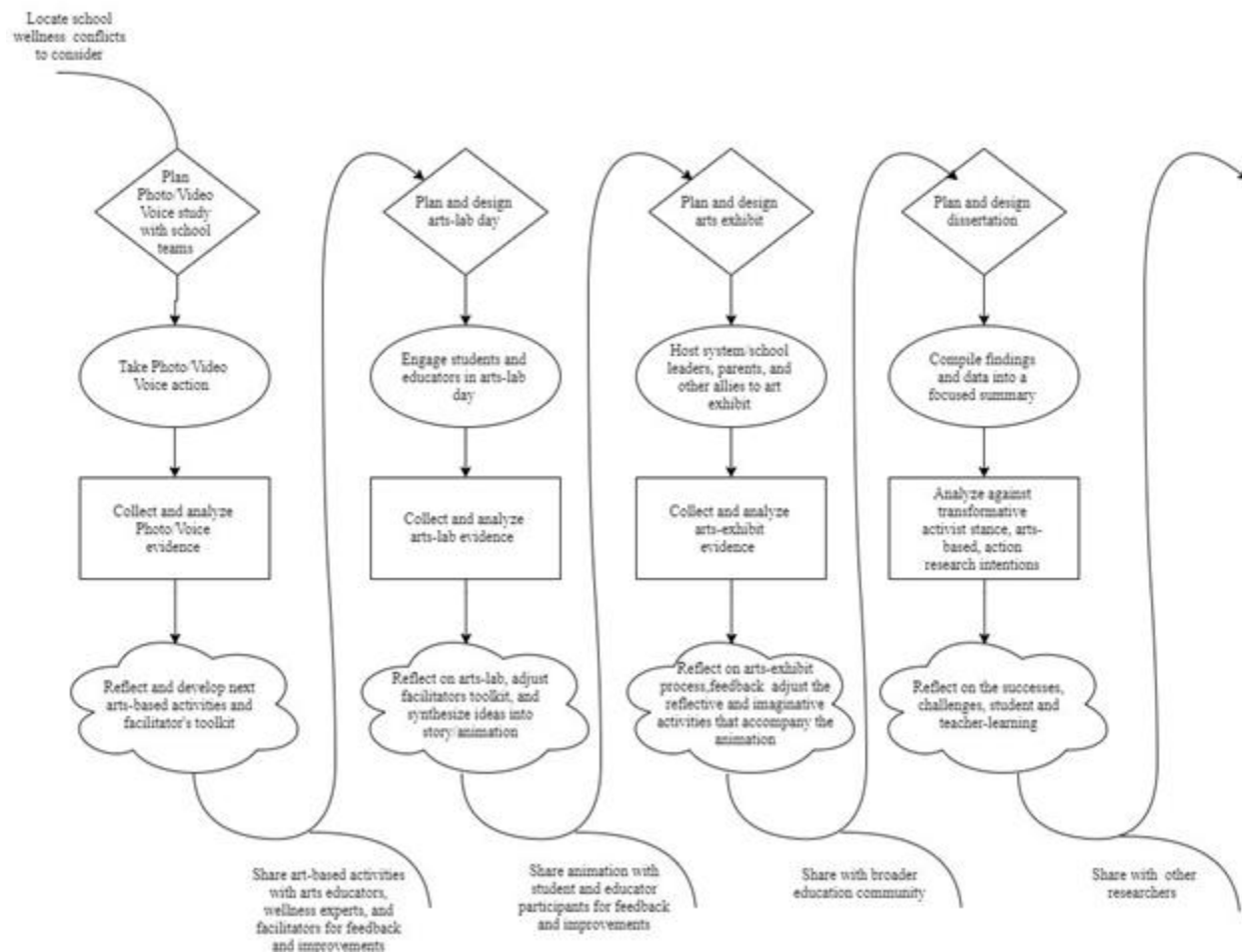


Figure C. 1: Planning Model—4 iterative phases of the research process.

Setting and Participants

This ABAR was to take place in Calgary and engage between 1 and 3 schools. The research group was to include the following members:

- A public junior high, middle, or high school that has an explicit commitment to comprehensive school health
- An existing student leadership group, in which two student leaders per school are willing to participate in the process

- Supportive parents, administrative staff, and/or teacher leadership, with each school sending at least one adult willing to participate in the process
- An educator or facilitator from Alberta Health and Wellness
- A media and performance arts educator to act as a facilitator
- System leaders and other adult and student allies who will participate as the audience
- A qualified counsellor will also attend the arts-lab sessions as a supportive ally

Research Design

Knowledge building, data creation, and data collection were meant to happen iteratively over six months, using mixed methods as an approach to survey the field quantitatively and dive into in-depth analysis qualitatively. The variety of methods were to include the following: a Video/PhotoVoice, performance journalling, improvisational exploration, collaborative arts, participant observation, narrative animated video storytelling, descriptive diaries (which will include photos) and survey responses (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018; Strack et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2017). The approach to analysis is outlined later in this section. In the following section, each of the data phases are described and examined.

Data Phases

One of the decisions when conducting qualitative research concerns the amount of data needed to accomplish the objectives of the research. This research does not aspire to be objective: rather, the study is meant to be a transformative, activist intervention. Therefore, the data collection was to include facilitation techniques that privilege youth voice, disrupt inequities, describe change, commit to key core values, and celebrate collaboration. This was the case even if other means of data collection would be more efficient. The goal was to collect enough information for the study to be replicable, so information descriptions can cease when no

new information is being produced (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Still, my approach may have potentially generated an over-saturation of data. Participants were to discuss the arts-based data in several ways to allow the development of different levels and perspectives on the data (Denzin, 2012), and I was planning to analyze the participants' ideas to identify research findings and propose next steps.

Data Phase One—Art as Record. The action phase of the first cycle was to ask participants to use digital media to capture wellness concepts in their schools artistically and to create Video/PhotoVoice stories. Then, the study would have utilized the Lincoln's Center's Imaginative Capacities to appreciate the work as artists (Holzer, 2007). It was to employ ABAR strategies to describe, critique, and evaluate the process (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018) and ABR to pull forward the significant aesthetic themes (Barone & Eisner, 1997) that participants visual presented. This combination of methods allows researchers to look back and describe how they got to where they ended up; this is important because, as Jokela, Hiltunen, and Härkönen (2015) recognize, art engenders a great deal of "tacit" knowledge (p. 438). This is a way to make this knowledge more explicit.

I planned to spotlight the domains of school wellness referenced in the data, which includes the WSD's framework for comprehensive school health (Western School District, 2019b) and draw on each school's defined goals in creating a healthy school culture and improving school wellness in their school development plans. These plans are usually published to their websites and relate to the provincial accountability surveys (Government of Alberta, 2019a). This information was going to help me to define categories for analysis. I planned to be pay attention to the emotional content of experience as it is value well expressed in the arts. The student photographers were to share their feelings about the images and situations they visually

depicted, by including an artist vision statement with their finished work. These statements will follow the TAS emphasis on such questions as the following: “Who am I becoming?”, “Who do I want to become?”, “What do I want my world to become [or be]?” (Stetsenko, 2017, p. 285) and “How can I contribute to this?” (p. 336).

The Video/PhotoVoice exhibit interpretation sessions was to begin with the clarification that liking the work is not essential to encountering an artists’ intentions. By searching for “studium” and “punctum,” students and teachers will be looking for artist intention, studium, and poignant—even “bruising or stinging” (Barthes, 1981, p. 26) viewer evocations, punctum. The researcher and facilitators were going to do a silent walk through of all the photos, looking for aha moments, themes, and opportunities. Our further discussions were meant to adapt the five “SHOWeD” questions described below to prompt participant discussion and interpretation that “progressively challenge[s] participants to dig beyond the surface of the image” (Strack et al., 2004, p. 51) and to discuss the underlying causes and imagined solutions. Strack, Magil, and McDonagh (2004) suggest the following questions as prompts: “What do you see here? What is really happening here? How does this relate to our lives? Why does this situation, concern, or strength exist? and What can we do about it?” (p. 51). Finally, the researcher and facilitators were going to agree on key messages that emerged that relate to improving school wellness and then develop arts-lab activities based on these messages.

Data Phase Two—Art as Study. The action step of the second cycle was to host an arts-lab to form a wellness agenda. Studying the process was to give rise to criteria for effective collective arts for an arts-lab and would have involved Eisner’s (2002b) exploratory questions for research in an art classroom:

How much access do students have to one another? What is the nature of this discourse? To what extent does it focus on aesthetic matters as contrasted with other topics and concerns? What kind of sharing takes place? What norms pervade the classroom? To what extent are students helpful in providing guidance to one another? Do they function as mutual mentors?" (p. 216)

Students, teachers, administrators, healthcare professionals, and artists who were going to participate in the arts-lab were going to be invited to generate answers and elements to explore, through their perceptions regarding the most and least effective innovative arts-based practices for school-wide comprehensive wellness goals. The arts-lab orientation was to establish norms for working *like an artist*, using the Lincoln Center aesthetic capacities which are to notice deeply, embody, pose questions, identify patterns, make connections, empathize, live with ambiguity, create meaning, take action, reflect, and assess (Lincoln Center Institute, 2012). I planned to also review the themes I had gathered so far using ABAR strategies for analysis. Importantly, this phase was also going to include creating a safe space and establishing a social agreement for collective risk-taking for positive action; activities to this end were to encompass dialogue activities to listen, improvisation to loosen the mind, and social drama to imagine futures.

Students and adult allies were going to complete an investigation using the ideas generated from the Video/PhotoVoice activity. In the collective interpretations, small groups with similar ideas of desired realities were going to engage in a living theatre activity where they can embody their desired realities. They were going to sculpt living pictures that depict key ideas for schools, reimagined with wellness at least three years in the future. This activity would provide space to facilitate an exploration of "jokering" (Boal, 1992/2002), where the group

would be invited to dramatize the opportunities and use improvisation to explore inherent contradictions in the quest for change.

All participants were going to be encouraged to consider each other's thinking and to imagine scenarios of schools that are redesigned with the new understandings of wellness in mind. This arts-lab was going to be a series of inquiries and probing arts-activities that set the conditions for insightful predictions and hopeful suggestions. These predictions and suggestions were to form the basis for creating an animated video of future wellness scenarios.

Data Phase Three—Art as Data. The goal of the third action cycle was to mount an art exhibit where participants and I would have shared the animated video with the educational community, accompanied by a question guide and an arts-lab facilitator's toolkit. The art, the discussion questions, and the toolkit would bring in to focus the learning, understanding, hopes, and insights of the participants for the broader system and school communities. The video animation and audience reflections on the animation would offer a means to evaluate the effectiveness of this ABAR, by seeking out themes like an illuminating effect (the capacity of the research to expose what has yet to be noticed), generativity (the capacity of the research to foster questions), and incisiveness (wherein, the research is able to focus on the intended salient educational issues), referential adequacy (it allows the audience to see the issue the researcher intends to develop) and generalizability, (the significance of the research outside of the studied phenomena) (Barone & Eisner, 1997) in aspects of the work. Participants and audience members' perceptions regarding the potential consequences and successes of shaping school wellness grounded in and through this arts-lab would have affected interpretations of the effectiveness of the animation as data and activism.

This phase of data generation focused on knowledge mobilization. The animated video was meant to be an artifact that encouraged discussion about the ideas formed by the participants. The voices on the video were to advocate for undertaking actions they believe would lead to school improvements. These animated transformative scenario stories would explore these questions: What do participants agree is believable that school communities can do together? What did each participant contribute to? How might they identify success?

Once the animation has been shared, a conversation between the audience and the participants would ideally have validated the animations and helped to clarify meanings. The animation is meant to draw attention to the complexities of school wellness and to raise consciousness for future wellness development.

Data Analysis

Several questions guided the research and were examined in my reflective journals. Additionally, a facilitator's toolkit acted as an audit trail. As well, the generated artifacts and the participants' responses to them were important data collection points for me to describe, analyze, and interpret. I planned to dive deeply into the analysis of the research data, keeping the research questions in mind, and will describe the influence of a TAS guiding this ABAR. Specifically, I planned to search for how individual and collective contributions to wellness action merge and were developed (or were not develop) through the research. This ABAR was about art as content, art as a way of inquiry and research: art in this research is a means to an end (Wang et al., 2017). Despite these distinct classifications, this process is messy and involves creating and analyzing the data simultaneously, which deepens my understanding of the phenomena—but which makes it challenging to clarify the artistic research categories in a singular manner.

I planned to engage participant checking and peer discussions to identify key ideas, from which the main findings would emerge. During these three phases of data creation and analysis, I planned to refer to aesthetic understandings that participants notice, along with the research questions that drive the art-making process. In my final review of the learning, I was going to piece together storylines that include a range of probable future scenarios and questions that reveal where school practice is at odds with wellness goals. I planned to also point to processes and innovations that supported the desired change.

Video (Derry et al., 2010) and PhotoVoice researchers (Paiewonsky, 2005; Wang & Hannes, 2014) have established effective tools for analysis, which inform this approach. For instance, viewing practices that start with defining social practices for viewing, and include guiding questions, are important to an aesthetic approach. Using video and photo artistically for ABAR rejects the premise that media tools can and should objectively capture truth; these processes thus challenge researchers to call on aesthetic understandings to offer mediated interpretations of data (Hayes, 2007). This research planned to attempt to embrace and privilege the aesthetic and subjective potential, without abandoning the research purpose.

The participants were to be introduced to my analysis of the themes they uncovered in the Video/PhotoVoice. This approach to analysis aims to reveal critical understandings and identify where schools could be more innovative or more supportive of wellness goals. Participants were to further explore the ideas of future wellness development through improvisational exploration, performance art activities, performance/drawing journalling and collaborative arts. As the principal researcher, I planned to use participant observation to document the effectiveness of these activities as ABR strategies (Appendix O). The participants would summarize their conclusions and recommendations in their future scenario narratives that they would share at the

end of the activities. My research journals and participant reflection journaling accompany this phase of the study and were to help me delve into the complexities of this process.

In customary ABAR form, the final dissemination of research results were to be published in multiple forms to be available and accessible to a diverse audience (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). For example, the research findings were to take the form of a dissertation for the scientific community, the form of an arts-lab toolkit for the educational community, and as a narrated video animation for the general public, the art world, and the research participants. All of this was maintained in the modified design. The aim of the animated video is not only to raise awareness but to serve as a starting point for further actions (Wang et al., 2017). The goal is and was to create a ripple effect that encourages multiple courses of action in response to the media artifacts and inquiry process; in this way, audiences are invited to respond to the arts created throughout the process by completing a voluntary survey.

Ethical Considerations

I understood that this research required an ethics review before research began due to the involvement of human participants. Approval was to be obtained from the Western School District and any other school districts included, as per the school district's requirements, the individual school, the school's principal, the participants, and the parents and guardians of youth participants.

The intention was to involve students, teachers, administrators, health professionals, and artists as participants in the study, so their approval and consent was to be obtained as well. Participation in the project was to involve visual collection strategies with underage participants: consequently, the Freedom of Information and Privacy laws (OIPC, 2019) and guidelines (FOIP) will be followed. All participation was to be voluntary, and participants would have been

cautioned to respect other's contributions and each other's confidentiality. Release forms would have been discussed with participants and training given on using them effectively. This work is subject to ethical consideration and release forms will be given to the photographers (with instructions about how to use them). As well, media release forms, FOIP considerations, police information checks, and adherence to the Alberta Education guidelines for inclusive and safe learning environments would have been required for research participation (Appendices G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, and P).

Limitations

This participatory and activist approach aims to encourage youth leadership within the collective group project. As educators, taking actions to develop students' sense of ownership over participatory projects can be difficult to put into practice. Skilled facilitation is often required to put scaffolding in place that promotes a sense of ownership; at the same time, intentional instructional designs are needed that help students to manage deadlines, organization, and any conflicts that may arise. Researchers have found that student engagement tends to correlate with their sense of power over major decisions (Ozer & Douglas, 2015). If I am unable to find skilled facilitators and participants able to work with my vision for this ABAR, it may have limited my ability to carry out this study. A risk to this research was attracting too few students to engage in the arts-lab. A further limitation was the potential the size of the group, as it may be easier to work with fewer group members; however, the more diverse the group, the more creative the potential of the work is. I also intended to work with students to be very clear about roles and norms in collective artmaking, to help address this limitation.

Another potential limitation is the tendency of adolescents to focus on their own peer group, family, and place in their community (Strack et al., 2004) versus the greater school

community and future student wellness. Participants were to be encouraged to look at the school community in a broader way, using critical analysis and aesthetic interpretations as discussion starters.

All youth participants who shared their data would be fully informed and agree in writing to participate in the study by signing the informed assent form (Appendix I) before participating. The adults would have signed an informed consent form (Appendix H). Participants under the age of 18 would have also had informed consent forms signed by their parents or legal guardians (Appendix J).

In the course of the work, facilitators may disagree with each other, or demonstrate or express conflicting values. The underlying philosophy of participation and privileging youth voices should be discussed and agreed upon in advance of the study (Ozer & Douglas, 2015). As well, my presence may overly affect the research direction (Anderson, 2010). The TAS encourages all participants to engage in teaching-learning and open-ended dialogues, where participants mutually bolster, but do not correct, each other. The risk is thus not one of having a bias, but rather of elevating my position or establishing it as unchangeable (Stetsenko, 2017). To counter this, I will clarify my preferences and hold back my opinions and perspective during participant discussions until everyone has expressed their ideas. When I do share, I will encourage the listeners to challenge my thinking.

Delimitations

This original study's delimitations have significant implications. The participants were to be adolescents and educators from junior high and high schools. The freedom in the curriculum and level of interest in wellness and youth leadership were considered when choosing this boundary. I planned to work with educators to determine how to credit students for this work,

and as such, planned to work from curricular areas that I am confident in. My decisions may also be driven by the convenience of working with educators who I know.

The setting was to be two-fold—part one was to take place on-site while part two, was to occur in an off-site public setting. The idea was to locate and present the work in a public space. Potentially, I saw the new central Calgary Public library as an option, or the rumoured and yet to be built, Mental Health Youth Hospital, or the Western District Education Centre. The power of performance to advance an agenda (Finley, 2011) would have been amplified by presenting the art exhibit in a public location and therefore to a broader audience. This platform was meant to highlight the importance of the youth in leading social change.

Summary

Qualitative research limitations do not invalidate the importance of this type of work. The diverse experiences of the multiple participants can partially answer the question of transferability, as can the triangulation of data. In the end, I will know that I have succeeded if participants and audience members share with me this commitment to expanding the activity past the arts-lab and into the broader context of school wellness activism. Fortunately, I am working in the wake of educational theories committed to change (Kemmis et al., 2014; Stetsenko, 2017), honest reflections on the conditions for collaboration (Broderick et al., 2016; Sawyer, 2008), successful social labs and change labs (Hassan, 2014; Torjman, 2012;) youth participatory AR (Ozer & Douglas, 2015), ABR (Leavy, 2015; Finley 2011) and ABAR (Jokela et al., 2015). I can attempt to transfer this knowledge to create favourable conditions for success with this research.

This doctoral research design has focused on providing the rationale for the value of this study's TAS perspective in engaging ABAR. It discusses the research design, including the training of participants, data creation techniques, and analysis processes. Arts-based

collaborative research successfully expresses meanings and insights in qualitative narratives that measurements cannot express (Barone & Eisner, 1997). In this research, I attempted to engage the narratives to exemplify how imaginative social change theories can extend collective school wellness efforts. In sum, this arts-based action research aspired to be transformative activism at the collective level; at the level of the individual, my hope is for agentive development. Thus, interventions at both levels are attempts to construct consciousness and transform the world. I cannot objectively measure the most significant contributions the arts make to this research; however, the value of placing an explicit focus on its role in this pursuit is compelling.

Appendix G: Original Study Letter of Introduction and Recruitment Information

January 6, 2020

Research study: Arts-Based School Wellness Action Research

Principal Investigator: Karena Munroe: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen

Dear Participants and Parents or Guardians,

My name is Karena Munroe and I am an Ed.D. student at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. I am conducting arts-based research to examine the future of school wellness at middle, junior, and high schools from the perspectives of current students and teachers. The results of the study will be used to inform the design and experience of future school wellness initiatives. The main purposes of this research are to:

- a) examine how doing participatory research grounded in and through arts-based change processes can support school-wide comprehensive wellness change efforts for middle, junior, and high school students and teachers
- b) consider how arts-based research and processes facilitate teachers and students to develop collective and individual efficacy in influencing school wellness change efforts and
- c) describe and examine student and teacher experiences and perceptions of wellness future scenarios as a result of arts-based change research.

The research integrates directly into the current curriculum and will take place outside of regular school hours. The consent to participate means consent for the researcher to collect and analyze student- and teacher-created digital artifacts, and group and personal reflections. I will also be observing the students during face-to-face sessions and taking field notes to describe teacher and student insights. If you or your student wishes to participate in the research, I will ask you to sign a consent form to use the work created in the study. Participants' names will not be attached to their work and they will remain anonymous. Permission will also be sought from students directly to include their work. There are no risks involved in participation. Consent is voluntary and individual. If you agree to participate in the study, you have the right to remove yourself at any time without any consequence until one month after the last day of data collection.

An orientation session will be held on (January Date TBD), I kindly ask that all assent and consent forms be signed and brought to the session at this time. This session will provide a brief overview of the project, what will be studied, and how to submit evidence. Participants will determine their medium (either photo or video), connect with their teams, and start focusing in on their idea. I look forward to seeing you then and I hope that you will participate.

This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions regarding this study or the informed consent, please contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karena Munroe

karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

(249) 490-8058

Recruitment Information

Topic: Arts-Based School Wellness Action Research

What is this? Arts as a medium to explore the future of your school's wellness. You are invited to submit a photo essay or video on the subject of the future of school wellness. The subject may address any issue in comprehensive school wellness that matters to you; however, three comprehensive school wellness areas of significant interest are to be explored: environmental, social, and mental wellness. You can help create a better understanding of the future of school wellness by uncovering possible opportunities and challenges in these three key areas.

What is involved in participating? You must be between 13 and 16 years of age, be willing to work with others, and currently be enrolled in a school. You require a teacher sponsor from your school and parental permission. Experience with photography, filmmaking, improvisation, leadership, activism, and/or volunteerism are helpful but are not required.

What are you going to do? Attend three sessions between January to May (Dates to be announced).

Before Session One (January):

- Determine your medium (photo or video) and start interviewing your peers for ideas.
- Have parents or guardians sign research assent and media consent forms.
- Secure your team and your teacher sponsor.
- Start focusing in on an idea.

Session One (January-February Date TBD):

- Orientation to using visual storytelling for research: an overview of the method and the subject.
- Complete and upload a brief.
- Return research assent and media consent forms to _____.

Before Session Two:

- Take pictures or video that depict a future scenario that highlight opportunities and challenges regarding comprehensive school wellness.
- Write an artist vision statement to accompany your work that discusses why this is a realistic scenario and what information (conversations with school peers, observations, understandings of external social climate) led you to this story.
- Upload the photos/video and the artist vision statement to _____.

Session Two (April Date/Location TBD):

- Attend a full-day arts-based research analysis session.
- Discuss the visual stories that have been submitted from school teams and use arts-based research methods to generate further predictions and insights.
- Compile the learning into three key stories to be animated into a movie for a school leadership audience and a public viewing.

Before Session Three:

- Review the animated movie.
- Add questions and recommendations for school leadership that will support them to improve school wellness for future students.

Session Three (May Date/Location TBD):

- Attend a public showing of the work created during this research project.
- If comfortable, answer questions about your work and your process.
- Meet for a group debriefing and reflection at the end of public presentations.

High school participants with a teacher sponsor can receive CTS credits for this work.
Junior high school participants with a teacher sponsor can receive health and art curriculum assessments for this work.

The process will be facilitated by Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, University of Calgary.
If you are interested in being part of this project, contact Karena Munroe at:
karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, and the _____ School District Ethics review have approved this project.

Appendix H: Original Study Orientation Overview

Introduction

This project is being conducted by Karena Munroe, Ed.D. Candidate, University of Calgary, as part of the requirement of the Doctor of Education at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. The following information answers some common questions about the project. Please feel free to ask questions about anything that is not clear.

What is the project about?

The main purposes of this research are to a) provide the opportunity for participatory research grounded in and through arts-based change processes so middle, junior, and high school students and teachers can examine school-wide comprehensive wellness b) facilitate arts-based research and processes to support teachers and students to develop collective and individual efficacy in influencing school wellness change efforts and c) create a platform for students and teachers to share school wellness knowledge with leaders and allies working on school wellness improvement initiatives. The proposed arts-based research will include the collaboration of researchers, teachers, and students in examining school wellness grounded in and through art. By participating in an arts-based experience, students and teachers will have the opportunity to amplify their voices using arts and to use their stories to influence school wellness beyond their school walls, thus contributing to an improved future for school wellness.

Why is the study important?

Comprehensive School Wellness is a whole school approach to building healthy school communities that supports students to realize their fullest potential. It can also decrease the incidence of risk-taking and self-harming behaviours in students. Arts has the potential to improve personal wellbeing and to transform schools to focus on meaningful learning. Many people believe arts are foundational to students thriving in their lives and their learning, because the arts respect and work with students' individual gifts. This study will attempt to harness the strengths of the arts to improve school wellness, seeking to provide understanding regarding how students and teachers see school wellness and what they understand about what needs to change. The project will be using arts-based research to get relevant information.

What is arts-based research?

In arts-based research, people use art and art processes as a form of research. In this project, we will be using photographs and videos to keep a record of participant predictions about the future of school wellness, based on their personal observations. Then we will use art to study and analyze these ideas. I will facilitate discussions and predictions using aesthetic reflections and improvisational activities to help participants identify important issues from their unique perspectives. These insights will be shared in video animation. The video animation is then used as data to help inform decision-makers in the school system community.

What will participants do in this project?

Participants will receive an overview of the method and the subject. They will receive training in the ethics of photo and video storytelling, and how to use images to tell stories. They will then use visual images to identify important issues for improving school wellness. They will write an artist vision statement to accompany this work and then they will participate in a group analysis session. In the full-day arts-based analysis session, the participants will participate in data analysis games that allow individuals to analyze content and integrate themes into key stories.

Their participation will also involve working as a group member and keeping a journal about the project's findings. Additionally, participants will be given the option of inviting other interested people to view a video animation representation of the key findings.

How will the art be used?

Participants will get together with other participants to discuss and enact improvisational stories related to the photos and videos that participants create. These discussions and enactments will occur in private group analysis sessions, and findings will be documented using participant journals. These findings will be made into a video animation representation of ideas. This animation and some photographs or videos will be included in a public exhibit that participants will be invited to attend. Individuals only need to take photographs and videos and share information that they consider to be appropriate and comfortable.

Are there other people involved in this project?

Yes, in this project, members of the Calgary arts and wellness communities will be invited to assist with the different activities. Additionally, school leadership and allies will be invited to participate as an audience for the public exhibit.

Will any identifying information be used?

Names will be used during group discussions, and individuals will be asked some basic information such as name, grade, and personal history that are related to the issue of school wellness. However, names and identifying information will not be revealed with photographs and narratives included in exhibits, presentations, or publications. Unless consent is received, all information will be removed that could allow others to identify individuals in future publications and presentations. Nevertheless, despite confidentiality efforts, there is always the chance that someone may recognize one of the participants at public presentations or in photographs or videos that individuals may use of themselves. Additionally, where photographed images are included in public displays, the primary researcher will have no control over any future use by others who may copy the images and report them in different formats or contexts. Also, absolute anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, due to the group setting and nature of the activities. If participants wish to be acknowledged for their contributions, consent must be given for first names to be available in public publications and presentations.

How will the data be stored?

All the information in the form of video, photographs, images, and text will be kept confidential and will have no individual student names attached. Anonymous data, like field notes and journal transcripts, will also be stored on a password-protected computer, of which the primary researcher (Karena Munroe) is the sole user. Although cofacilitators will be involved in the process of data collection, sharing, and analysis, they will be instructed not to retain or store data from the project. The data will be stored for a period of five years for use by interested and legitimate researchers, after which it will be destroyed. The project video animation will be licensed under a Creative Commons license and will be accessible after the completion of the project. The results of this study will be shared with other educational researchers through papers and professional conferences. If you are interested in publications of this study, you may contact the researcher for a copy of the study once it has been published.

How long will the project last?

The project will last approximately six months.

What are the risks to participating in this project?

There is minimal risk involved. The discussions and questions will be similar to that which participants would likely discuss with others outside the study. However, the presentations in the group sessions, or the sensitive nature of some questions or opinions, may cause emotional discomfort. Individuals can refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. If participants require counselling and support, they will be referred to services available in the community.

How will participants benefit from this project?

The benefit of participating in this study is that you will support school systems learning about how they might improve school wellness. An arts-based action research approach encourages people to deal with issues and enables them to discuss the issues in a safe environment. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with others and contribute to sharing solutions with policymakers that will positively influence the lives of future students.

Is participation mandatory?

Involvement in the study is voluntary. Individuals can decide not to participate in the study at any time without penalty or the loss of services to which they are currently entitled or will have access to in the future. At the time of withdrawal, involvement will be immediately terminated accompanied by an expression of gratitude. If a participant withdraws from the study, only the narratives and images collected up to the time of their withdrawal will be retained and used. If, during the study, new information becomes available that will affect an individual's willingness to continue to participate in the study, they will be informed as soon as possible.

Will participants be paid or need to pay for anything?

This research offers no paid compensation or credit for participation, and you will incur no cost to participate. Your sponsoring teacher can offer credit and official evaluations based on individual student requests and teacher-determined appropriate curricular connections.

What else does participation involve?

Individuals under the age of 18 will be asked to read and sign an assent form, but their parents must also sign consent forms. Those who are 18 years of age or older will need to read and sign a consent form. All participants will also be required to read and sign a digital ethics form and a media release form.

This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions concerning this project, please contact Karena Munroe at karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca or (249) 490-8058.

Appendix I: Original Study Informed Assent Form

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study.

Dear Student Participant,

My name is Karena Munroe and I am an Ed.D. student at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. I am conducting arts-based research to examine the future of school wellness at middle, junior, and high schools from the perspectives of current students and teachers and I would like to invite you to participate as a participant.

What is the project about?

In this project we will be using photographs and videos to keep a record of participant predictions about the future of school wellness based on personal observations. Then, we will use art to study and analyze these ideas. I will facilitate discussions and predictions using aesthetic reflections and improvisational activities to help participants identify important issues from their perspectives. These results will be shared in video animation. The video animation is then presented as data to help inform the design and experience of future school wellness initiatives.

I am asking permission to work with you as a participant researcher and to use the data you create during this study. Allowing your data to be included in this study is strictly voluntary and if you decide not to allow your data to be included, there are no negative consequences. You may ask questions about this study at any time and if you decide to allow your data to be included, you may also withdraw that permission at any time with no consequences.

The purpose of this study is to capture data from your participation in a series of workshops to learn how creating art through collaboration might affect comprehensive school wellness goals. The research integrates directly into the current curriculum but workshops will take place outside of regular school hours. Participation in the research does not alter or change your access to any part of the regular learning environment. As a research participant, you are being asked to give assent for the researchers to analyze and examine activities and outcomes from the arts-based research activities which include the following elements:

- Photo/video stories and artist vision statements that you create to describe a future scenario of school wellness
- Collaborative art you and other participants create during the analysis portion of the study
- Group and personal reflections created, journalled, and verbally shared alongside the research project
- Consent to observe and write field notes about face-to-face collaborative arts-based processes
- A video animation created as the data analysis in final form

Why is the study important?

Comprehensive School Wellness is a whole school approach to building healthy school communities that support students to realize their fullest potential and decrease the incidence of risk-taking and self-harming behaviours in students. Arts has the potential to improve personal wellbeing and to transform schools to focus on meaningful learning. Many people believe arts are foundational to students thriving in their lives and their learning, because the arts respect and

work with students' individual gifts. This study will attempt to harness the strengths of the arts to improve school wellness, seeking to provide understanding regarding how students and teachers see school wellness and what they see as needing to change. The project will be using arts-based research to get relevant information.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Your willingness to allow the principal researcher to collect information during this arts-based school wellness study will be documented with this consent form. The data will be stored and examined using randomly generated aliases. There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission for the following data to be analyzed and examined:

Photo/video stories and artist vision statement	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative artwork (collages, drawings, images)	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Group reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Anonymous observations and field notes	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>

How will the data be stored?

All the information in the form of video, photographs, images, and text will be kept confidential and will have no individual student names attached. Anonymous data, like field notes and journal transcripts, will also be stored on a password-protected computer, of which the primary researcher (Karena Munroe) is the sole user. Although cofacilitators will be involved in the process of data collection, sharing, and analysis, they will be instructed not to retain or store data from the project. The data will be stored for a period of five years for use by interested and legitimate researchers, after which it will be destroyed. The project video animation will be licensed under a Creative Commons license and will be accessible after the completion of the project. The results of this study will be shared with other educational researchers through papers and professional conferences. If you are interested in publications of this study, you may contact the researcher for a copy of the study once it has been published.

What are the risks to participating in this project?

There is minimal risk involved. The discussions and questions will be similar to that which participants would likely discuss with others outside the study. However, the presentations in the group sessions or the sensitive nature of some questions or opinions may cause emotional discomfort. Individuals can refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. If persons require counselling and support, they will be referred to services available in the community.

How will participants benefit from this project?

The benefit of participating in this study is that you will support school systems learning about how they might improve school wellness. An arts-based participatory action research approach encourages people to deal with issues and enables them to discuss the issues in a safe environment. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with others and contribute to sharing solutions with school leadership that will positively influence the lives of future students and teachers. Further benefits of participating in the study include the learning you gain by

participating in arts-based research designed to improve wellness through the creation of art, research analysis, and a final presentation event at the end of the study. Your sponsoring teacher can offer credit and official evaluations based on individual student requests and teacher-determined appropriate curricular connections.

I will not include your name in the final report about this study and your privacy and confidentiality will always be maintained. You always have the right to ask to not include your data in the study or to tell me up to one month after the conclusion of the study if you no longer want your data included.

If you agree to let us use your data in the study, please print your name and sign below:

I understand that:

- There are no negative consequences for participating or not participating in this study.
- I will have the chance to review recorded notes for accuracy before they are included in the research.
- Information I will provide will remain confidential.
- I may withdraw my data from the study at any time until one month after the data collection.

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

I hereby acknowledge that I wish to participate in the study, and I give permission for my data to be used in this study.

Student's Name (please print): _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education
(249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca
If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-6289/220-4283; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix J: Original Study Informed Consent Form

Authorization for a Minor to Participate as a Research Participant

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study.

Dear Parent or Guardian of Student Research Participant,

My name is Karena Munroe and I am an Ed.D. student at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. I am conducting arts-based research to examine the future of school wellness at middle, junior, and high schools from the perspectives of current students and teachers and I am asking permission to use the data we collect from your child during this study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and if you decide not to have your child's data included, there will be no negative consequences. You may contact me at any time (karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca (249) 490-8058) about your child's data being included in this study and if you decide to allow your child's data to be included, you may withdraw your permission at any time with no consequences if you decide to do so.

What is the project about?

In this project we will be using photographs and videos to keep a record of participant predictions about the future of school wellness based on personal observations. Then we will use art to study and analyze these ideas. I will facilitate discussions and predictions using aesthetic reflections and improvisational activities to help participants identify important issues from their perspectives. These results will be shared in video animation. The video animation is then presented as data to help inform the design and experience of future school wellness initiatives.

The purpose of this study is to capture data from your child's participation in a series of workshops to learn how creating art through collaboration might affect comprehensive school wellness goals. The research integrates directly into the current curriculum and workshops will take place outside of regular school hours. Participation in the research does not alter or change your child's access to any part of the regular learning environment. As a parent or guardian of a research participant, you are being asked to give consent for the researchers to analyze and examine activities and outcomes from the arts-based research activities which include:

- Photo/video stories and artist vision statements participants create to describe a future scenario of school wellness
- Collaborative art your child and other participants create during the analysis portion of the study
- Group and personal reflections created, journaled, and verbally shared alongside the research project
- Consent to observe and write field notes about face to face collaborative arts-based processes
- A video animation created as the data analysis in final form

Why is the study important?

Comprehensive School Wellness is a whole school approach to building healthy school communities that support students to realize their fullest potential and decrease the incidence of risk-taking and self-harming behaviours in students. Arts has the potential to improve personal wellbeing and to transform schools to focus on meaningful learning. Many people believe arts are foundational to students thriving in their lives and their learning, because the arts respect and work with students' individual gifts. This study will attempt to harness the strengths of the arts to improve school wellness, seeking to provide understanding regarding how students and teachers see school wellness and what they see as needing to change. The project will be using arts-based research to get relevant information.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Your willingness to allow the principal researcher to collect information about your child during this arts-based school wellness study will be documented with this consent form. The data will be stored and examined using randomly generated aliases. There are several options for you to consider if you decide to allow your child to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission for the following data to be analyzed and examined:

Photo/video stories and artist vision statement	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative artwork (collages, drawings, images)	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Group reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Anonymous observations and field notes	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>

How will the data be stored?

All the information in the form of video, photographs, images and text will be kept confidential and will have no individual student names attached. Anonymous data like field notes and journal transcripts will also be stored on a password-protected computer, of which the primary researcher (Karena Munroe) is the sole user. Although co-facilitators will be involved in the process of data collection, sharing and analysis, they will be instructed not to retain or store data from the project. The data will be stored for a period of five years for use by interested and legitimate researchers, after which it will be destroyed. The project video animation will be licensed under a Creative Commons license and will be accessible after the completion of the project. The results of this study will be shared with other educational researchers through papers and professional conferences. If you are interested in publications of this study, you may contact the researchers for a copy of the study once it has been published.

What are the risks to participating in this project?

There is minimal risk involved. The discussions and questions will be similar to that which participants would likely discuss with others outside the study. However, the presentations in the group sessions or the sensitive nature of some questions or opinions may cause emotional discomfort. Individuals can refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. If persons require counselling and support, they will be referred to services available in the community.

How will participants benefit from this project?

The benefit of participating in this study is that it will support school systems learning about how they might improve school wellness. An arts-based participatory action research approach encourages people to deal with issues and enables them to discuss the issues in a safe environment. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with others and contribute to sharing solutions with school leadership that will positively influence the lives of future students and teachers. Further benefits of participating in the study include the learning you gain by participating in arts-based research designed to improve wellness through the creation of art, research analysis, and a final presentation event at the end of the study. Your child's sponsoring teacher can offer credit and official evaluations based on individual student request and teacher determined appropriate curricular connections.

I will not include your child's name in the final report about this study and you and your child's confidentiality will always be maintained. You always have the right to ask me to not include your child's data in the study or to tell me later if you no longer want your child's data included. If you agree to let us use your child's data in the study, please print your name and sign below.

I understand that:

- There are no negative consequences for participating or not participating in this study.
- I will have the chance to review recorded notes for accuracy before they are included in the research.
- Information I will provide will remain confidential.
- I may withdraw my child's data from the study at any time until one month after the data collection.

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. I hereby acknowledge that I wish to participate in the study, and I give permission for my data to be used in this study.

Student Participant Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education (249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-6289/220-4283; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix K: Original Study Adult Informed Consent Form

Authorization for an Adult to Participate as a Research Participant

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study.

Dear Educator and Research Participant,

My name is Karena Munroe and I am an Ed.D. student at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. I am conducting arts-based research to examine the future of school wellness at middle, junior, and high schools from the perspectives of current students and teachers and I would like to invite you to participate as a participant.

What is the project about?

In this project we will be using photographs and videos to keep a record of participant predictions about the future of school wellness based on personal observations. Then we will use art to study and analyze these ideas. I will facilitate discussions and predictions using aesthetic reflections and improvisational activities to help participants identify important issues from their perspectives. These results will be shared in video animation. The video animation is then presented as data to help inform the design and experience of future school wellness initiatives.

I am asking permission to work with you as a participant researcher and to use the data you create during this study. Allowing your data to be included in this study is strictly voluntary and if you decide not to allow your data to be included, there are no negative consequences. You may ask questions about this study at any time and if you decide to allow your data to be included, you may withdraw that permission at any time with no consequences if you decide to do so.

The purpose of this study is to capture data from your participation in a series of workshops to learn how creating art through collaboration might affect comprehensive school wellness goals. The research integrates directly into the current curriculum and workshops will take place outside of regular school hours. As a research participant, you are being asked to give consent for the researchers to analyze and examine activities and outcomes from the arts-based research activities which include:

- Photo/video stories and artist vision statements student participants create, and teacher participants support to describe a future scenario of school wellness
- Collaborative art you and other participants create during the analysis portion of the study
- Group and personal reflections created, journaled, and verbally shared alongside the research project
- Consent to observe and write field notes about face to face collaborative arts-based processes
- A video animation created as the data analysis in final form

Why is the study important?

Comprehensive School Wellness is a whole school approach to building healthy school communities that support students to realize their fullest potential and decrease the incidence of

risk-taking and self-harming behaviours in students. Arts has the potential to improve personal wellbeing and to transform schools to focus on meaningful learning. Many people believe arts are foundational to students thriving in their lives and their learning, because the arts respect and work with students' individual gifts. This study will attempt to harness the strengths of the arts to improve school wellness, seeking to provide understanding regarding how students and teachers see school wellness and what they see as needing to change. The project will be using arts-based research to get relevant information.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Your willingness to allow the principal researcher to collect information during this arts-based school wellness study will be documented with this consent form. The data will be stored and examined using randomly generated aliases. There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission for the following data to be analyzed and examined:

Photo/video stories and artist vision statement support	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative artwork (collages, drawings, images)	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Group reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Personal reflections	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Anonymous observations and field notes	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>

How will the data be stored?

All the information in the form of video, photographs, images and text will be kept confidential and will have no individual student names attached. Anonymous data like field notes and journal transcripts will also be stored on a password-protected computer, of which the primary researcher (Karena Munroe) is the sole user. Although co-facilitators will be involved in the process of data collection, sharing and analysis, they will be instructed not to retain or store data from the project. The data will be stored for a period of five years for use by interested and legitimate researchers, after which it will be destroyed. The project video animation will be licensed under a Creative Commons license and will be accessible after the completion of the project. The results of this study will be shared with other educational researchers through papers and professional conferences. If you are interested in publications of this study, you may contact the researchers for a copy of the study once it has been published.

What are the risks to participating in this project?

There is minimal risk involved. The discussions and questions will be similar to that which participants would likely discuss with others outside the study. However, the presentations in the group sessions or the sensitive nature of some questions or opinions may cause emotional discomfort. Individuals can refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time. If persons require counselling and support, they will be referred to services available in the community.

How will participants benefit from this project?

The benefit of participating in this study is that it will support school systems learn how they might improve school wellness. An arts-based participatory action research approach encourages people to deal with issues and enables them to discuss the issues in a safe environment. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with others and contribute to sharing

solutions with school leadership that will positively influence the lives of future students and teachers. Further benefits of participating in the study include the learning you gain by participating in arts-based research designed to improve wellness through the creation of art, research analysis, and a final presentation event at the end of the study. As a sponsoring teacher you can offer credit and official evaluations based on individual student request and your professional discretion about appropriate curricular connections.

I will not include your name in the final report about this study and your confidentiality will always be maintained. You always have the right to ask us to not include your data in the study or to tell us later if you no longer want your child's data included.

If you agree to let us use your data in the study, please print your name and sign below.

I understand that:

- there are no negative consequences for participating or not participating in this study.
- I will have the chance to review recorded notes for accuracy before they are included in the research.
- Information I will provide will remain confidential.
- I may withdraw my child's data from the study at any time until one month after the data collection.

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. I hereby acknowledge that I wish to participate in the study, and I give permission for my data to be used in this study.

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education
(249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca
Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-6289/220-4283; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix L: Original Study Confidentiality Form for Co-Facilitators

Research study: Arts-Based Research on School Wellness Action
Principal Investigator: Karena Munroe: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca
Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen

In this arts-based research project, you and other cofacilitators will be assisting with training participants, working collaboratively in facilitating activities, and identifying appropriate ways to implement the findings of the study. Before participating in this project you must agree to:

- Keep all identifying information of participants confidential.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding any information shared in the group and not discuss or share any information in any form or format with persons not authorized by the group.
- Avoid retaining or storing any data from the project

Cofacilitator's Name (please print): _____

Cofacilitator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education
(249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca

Appendix M: Original Study Ethics Consent Form For participants

Participant's Name: _____

In this project, you and other participants will take pictures or video and share predictions about the future of school wellness as informed by your experiences and information gathering.

Use of Data

The primary use of data will be for a dissertation project, but participants will be involved in all other decisions around dissemination of findings.

By signing this ethics form you also agree to follow the ethics of arts-based research as they apply to this project. Please read the following statements and put your initials next to each statement to confirm that you have read and agree with the guiding principle.

_____ I will not intrude into an individual's personal space both publicly and privately.

_____ I will not disclose embarrassing facts about individuals unless they have given me permission to do so.

_____ I will not deliberately use my photographs or video to misrepresent individuals.

_____ I will respect the confidentiality of the stories that are discussed during the reflection sessions.

_____ I will obtain the signature of all individuals represented in my photographs or video.

Please note that, photographs or videos are included in public display, the researchers will have no control over any future use by others who may copy the images and repost them in different formats or contexts.

Signing this ethics consent form means that you have read, understood, and will respect the ethics and privacy concerns involved in this project. If you fail to follow these principles, you may be asked to leave the project.

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education (249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca

Appendix N: Original Study Media Consent Form

Consent form for people who may appear in photos or videos created by the participants. If a participant is under 18 years of age the consent must be given by a parent or guardian.

Research study: Arts-Based Research on School Wellness Action

Principal Investigator: Karena Munroe: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen

Introduction

This project is being conducted by Karena Munroe Ed.D candidate at the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education. I am conducting arts-based research to examine the future of school wellness at middle, junior, and high schools from the perspectives of current students and teachers. The research project which uses photography and video to describe future school wellness opportunities and challenges. The project encourages student and teacher voice in exploring school wellness. The principal researcher hopes the work will raise awareness and promote change surrounding this topic.

Your willingness to be photographed or videoed is voluntary and you may refuse. Photographs and videos become the property of the youth involved in creating art for the project. Some of the participant generated photographs and videos may be used in a public art exhibit; for these images, the researchers will not have control over others who may copy the images and repost them in different formats or contexts. The research project is confidential and your name or any other identifying information will not be included in the reports; however, despite efforts to maintain confidentiality, there is always the possibility that someone may recognize you in the photographs.

I understand that photos or videos of me/my likeness or my child's likeness may be used in a public setting and displayed for a definite period of time. I understand that identifying information will not be included in the captions. By signing this form, I voluntarily give my permission for the photographer to use my likeness or my child's likeness for research, display and promotion surrounding this project in digital or paper formats.

If the individual being photographed is a minor (under age 18), parental or guardian permission must be provided.

Student Participant Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adult's Name: (please print) _____

Adult's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education
(249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Appendix O: Original Study Participants Media Release Form

Research study: Arts-Based Research on School Wellness Action
 Principal Investigator: Karena Munroe karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca
 Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen

_____ Yes, you may use ANY of the media I created during this study to promote the purpose of this arts-based research project conducted by Karena Munroe, Ed.D. Candidate, University of Calgary.

_____ Yes, you may use SOME of the media I created during this study to promote the purpose of this arts-based research project conducted by Karena Munroe, Ed.D. Candidate, University of Calgary. (In the space below this form, please write the titles of any media that you do NOT want to be used)

_____ No, you may not use any of the media I created during this study to promote the purpose of this arts-based research project conducted by Karena Munroe, Ed.D. Candidate, University of Calgary.

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education (249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Michele Jacobsen, Werklund School of Education, 403-220-4123, dmjacobs@ucalgary.ca

Appendix P: Original Study Letter to Stakeholders

Presentation of Research Results

Dear Sir/Madam,

The _____ School District has assisted in the recruitment of participants for the research titled: Arts-based Research on School Wellness Action. The results of this study are invaluable regarding improving school comprehensive school wellness. Further, the information is particularly useful considering the current ecological, social, and mental wellness challenges.

It is the only such study that has been conducted in Calgary. The research participants, who are students and teachers from different secondary schools in Calgary, will present their findings to key people/stakeholders in school leadership and invite feedback on the outcomes.

The comments from specific stakeholders are significant because the central role of these individuals' in these organizations and institutions suggest some degree of influence on the formation of policy. The participants are eager to talk about this research experience and yearn for meaningful commitment from relevant adults in the school system.

Accordingly, as a key person in school leadership, you are invited to be part of this process and we truly hope you are able to attend.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Venue: _____

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact Karena Munroe, EdD Candidate, Werklund School of Education (249) 490-8058; Email: karena.munroe@ucalgary.ca

Appendix Q: Original Study No Photo/Video Please Sign

**No Cameras
Allowed**

To protect participant privacy, confidentiality, and to maintain security of this research data, the taking of pictures or video of any kind is not permitted anywhere on these premises.

Thank you for your understanding.

Appendix R: Original Study Shot List for Photo/Video Walkthrough

Wellness is meant to encompass comprehensive school wellness—defined as a growth-oriented collective effort to improve the student’s well-being, positive impact, and caring school environment. Our research will begin by gathering evidence of best-case and worst-case ideas of what seems to be happening in the present. Here is a quick overview of the [Elements and Principles of Art](#). (linked)

Each group will need to pick at least one focus area that your group shares an interest in exploring. There are some ideas and challenges below to get your mind started, you are encouraged to direct your own aesthetic vision. A minimum expectation is five photos per group member and one vision statement per group member.

Intellectual Wellness Focus. Challenge: Use what you know about the element of LINE to draw attention to positive and negative examples of bulletin boards.

Find two boards that contrast in

- Giving information
- Being attractive
- Celebrating student achievement
- Focus on activity
- Nutrition
- Creativity
- Culture
- Healthy emotions
- Mindfulness

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Include your own two-dimensional line in the found environment (eg - add whiteboard writing or chalk graffiti to draw further attention to your focus)

Social Wellness Focus. Challenge: Use what you know about the element of TEXTURE to draw attention to positive and negative examples of school sound

Find two clips of sounds to attach to two images, and consider

- Loud voices
- Quiet voices
- Conversational
- Excited
- Joyful
- Angry
- Stressed out
- Friendly
- Musical
- Encouraging
- Indicate community support
- Signal school involvement

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Include movement in the image.

Environmental Wellness Focus. Challenge: Use what you know about the element of SPACE to draw attention to positive and negative examples of the school floors.

Find two sections of the floor (hallway or otherwise) that contrast. They could be

- Cluttered
- Littered
- Clean
- Have movement decals

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Frame subject using architecture, archways, bookshelves, windows.

Environmental Wellness Focus. Challenge: Use what you know about the element of SHAPE to draw attention to positive and negative examples of classroom or physical education spaces.

Contrast two classrooms and physical education spaces that are

- Attractive
- Busy
- In full use (or over-full)
- Empty
- Boring
- Interesting
- Set up for group work
- Dirty or cluttered
- Have nice resources
- Welcoming
- Intimidating

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Show formal and informal balance.

Emotional Wellness Focus. Challenge: use what you know about the element of COLOUR to draw attention to positive and negative examples of people displaying emotion.

Contrast two images of people in the school who are:

- Attentive
- Friendly
- Relaxed
- Alert
- Involved
- Bored
- Skipping class
- Stressed out
- Receiving Emotional supports (Zen Room?)
- Employing Stress Busters

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Extended Challenge: Show the same subject each time from 3 different points of view (birds, worm, POV)

Physical Wellness Focus. Challenge: use what you know about the element of FORM to draw attention to positive and negative examples of attention to physical wellness.

Contrast evidence of

- Attention to healthy diets
- Daily physical activity
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
- Celebrations of collective creativity/activity

EXTEND THE AESTHETICS CHALLENGE: Show emphasis by getting in close, closer, closest.

Appendix S: Original Study Arts-based Activity Observation Protocol

Date: _____ Group: _____

Location: _____ Activity: _____

Cofacilitator: _____ Researcher: _____

Research Questions:

- RQ1: In what ways can a participatory approach to arts-based action research, grounded in and through an arts-lab enhance school-wide comprehensive wellness initiatives?
- RQ2: What are the significant areas of school wellness to explore—according to student, teacher, and administrator participants?
- RQ3: What are effective arts-lab activities and processes for building collective and individual awareness regarding improving school-wide comprehensive health—according to the students, teachers, administrators, healthcare professionals and artists participating in the arts-lab?
- RQ4: What potential consequences and successes could this research inform in the participants current school wellness work —according to students, teachers, administrators, parents, artists and healthcare professionals who were research participants and art show audience members?

Activity: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____

Participant Interactions.

Amount of access / types of interactions participants have to/with one another. For each group structure, estimate the % of time participants are organized in that way.

Total % should equal 100.

_____ %	Group work – interacting with two or more other participants
_____ %	Paired work – interacting with one other participant
_____ %	Working independently
_____ %	Instruction from facilitator.
_____ %	Feedback from facilitator

Comments:

Mentorship

For each critique activity, estimate the extent of guidance provided by participants. Total % should equal 100.

____% Guidance given by youth participants
 ____% Guidance given by adult participants
 ____% Guidance given by facilitator

Please note the type and nature of mentorship (mutual or critical?)

Comments:

Nature of discourse. Estimate amount of time participants spent discussing aesthetic matters as contrasted with other topics. Total % should equal 100.

____% Aesthetic Matters
 ____% School Wellness Concerns
 ____% Other topics

Comments:

Arts-Based Processes used to interpret and direct thinking:

____ min Facilitators direction (norms, skills, boundaries)
 ____ min participants developing artistic skills
 ____ min participants creating art.
 ____ min participants critiquing art.

Please list the arts disciplines and aesthetic processes utilized for this activity

Comments:

Appendix T: Original Study Arts-Lab Participant Questions

Prior to participating in the arts-lab youth and adult participants engaged in discussion of the upcoming project to help determine the direction of the research. To establish ourselves as a community of conscience we used this as an opportunity to follow the rules we agreed to in our collective creation working agreement and to practice the safe space and collective norms of decision making. TIP: For a detailed descriptions of the protocols and norms see: <https://neighborhoodanarchists.org/norms>

Important Language:

School Wellness: A growth-oriented collective effort to foster teacher-learner well-being, positive impact, and a caring school environment

Collective Art: Artistic creation that promotes transformative social imagination and fosters a reflective meaningful interconnection between the artist, art, and society.

Arts Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●What arts skills and interests are you currently developing? ●What arts skills and interests are you interested in developing? ●Are there any arts that you are against participating in? ●Are the goals of arts research important to you?
Wellness Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●How do you think the wellness (or school stressors) situation came to be? ●What ought to be taking place regarding school wellness? ●Which school wellness goals are important to you? ●Are they important to others in your community? ●How do you know? ●Are you interested in acting as a leader on this issue? ●What is your leadership focus?
Future Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●What kind of future do you think our research will contribute to? ●Who do you(we) want to become? ●What do you(we) want my(our) schools to become? ●Who/what is included and excluded in this work? ●Who/what is privileged? ●How do I know? ●How do you think participating in a wellness lab could further your wellness goals?
Questions for Equity and Power Sharing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●From whose perspective is the question significant? ●What arts and wellness phenomena are worth studying? ●Who decides?