
3-1-2006

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Recommended APA Citation

Richards, J. C. (2006). Post Modern Image-Based Research: An Innovative Data Collection Method for Illuminating Preservice Teachers' Developing Perceptions in Field-Based Courses. *The Qualitative Report*, 11(1), 37-54. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2006.1683>

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Abstract

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Keywords

Arts-based Techniques, Content Reading, Preservice Teachers' Self-Portraits, and Visual Representations

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Post Modern Image-Based Research: An Innovative Data Collection Method for Illuminating Preservice Teachers' Developing Perceptions in Field-Based Courses¹

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As part of course requirements twenty-eight preservice teachers in a field-based content reading course created a series of self-portraits that illustrated their concerns and perceptions about teaching content reading. They accompanied their drawings with dialogue. Analysis of the portraits indicates that arts-based techniques have the potential to provide insights about preservice teachers' perceived realities and understandings that narrative data alone might not reveal. The preservice teachers experienced high levels of stress as they prepared to teach their first lesson and their anxieties continued past mid-semester. By the end of the course the majority developed confidence in their teaching abilities and they were able to list a wide-range of content reading strategies however, they overlooked the visual and communicative arts. Key Words: Arts-based Techniques, Content Reading, Preservice Teachers' Self-Portraits, and Visual Representations

“Making a picture is a form of thinking” (Ernst da Silva, 2001, p. 4)

“Self portraits have been a method of self-exploration since humans first gazed at their own reflection in a pool of water” (Kelly, 2005, p. 6)

“By using activities from the arts like drawings...individuals may discover new ways of thinking” (Janesick, 2003, p. 157)

In a world dominated by multi media, it is not surprising that scholars increasingly recognize visual representations as valid data. Following post positivist, post-feminist, and postmodernist traditions², social scientists often connect photographs, videos, drawings, paintings, and film with narrative description to help illuminate a society's culture and behaviors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Some educational researchers (e.g., Richards, 1996, 1998), and a number of contemporary authors of qualitative

¹ Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, March 2005, Sarasota, FL.

² Post-positivist and postmodernist traditions, in part, refuse to privilege any one research method, approach, or theory and look to new, unique methods of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Richardson, 1997). To a large extent, feminists have joined post-positivists in questioning traditional research methods (Jansen & Peshkin, 1992).

methods texts also show an expanded interest in adopting visual approaches as foundations for inquiries (e.g., Banks, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2000; Janesick, 2003; Pink, 2001; Prosser, 1997; Rose, 2003; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001). As a theory, and as a method, image interpretation offers an alternative to researchers who wish to study phenomena in new and alternative ways (Pink).

In this qualitative inquiry, I utilized visual representations as primary data. I asked 28 preservice teachers in a field-based, content literacy course to draw a series of self-portraits six times throughout a semester. I also requested that the preservice teachers include dialogue to accompany their portraits. By analyzing the preservice teachers' drawings and the accompanying narratives, I hoped to capture changes over time in their instructional concerns, conceptions, and understandings about teaching content reading instruction that narrative data alone might not reveal. A review of the literature shows that while a few studies have analyzed preservice teachers' experiences teaching content reading lessons in high schools, similar studies in middle schools are lacking. Therefore, I wanted to add to the body of literature. Ultimately, I hoped to improve my own practices by adjusting course content to meet the preservice teachers' individual and group needs.

Turning to the Artistic

Inspired by Judith Green's (1983) statement that "additional work needs to be undertaken to explore ways in which teachers can use strategies for obtaining students' perspectives as instructional resources" (p. 225), I turned to artistic representations as a legitimate and central source of data for a number of reasons.

Visual materials are now often incorporated into "qualitative researchers' array of techniques" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 131). Although the use of visual images as a research tool was considered somewhat controversial from the 1960s to the early 1980s, many contemporary qualitative researchers believe that visual data offer a valid way of understanding an individual's thinking and experiences (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Flick, 2002; Pink, 2001). Visual data normally complements narrative as the dominant mode of research. However, in some cases, visual representations viewed as trustworthy text can be central to or even "more important than the spoken or written word" (Pink, p. 5).

Use of the visual permeates our lives. "Images are everywhere" (Pink, 2001, p. 18). As a society steeped in popular culture, we rely on rapidly changing sensory images that present up-to-date information and instantaneous messages in mass media texts, such as television, magazines, videos, films, digital graphics, newspapers advertisements, cartoons, and comic strips. In fact, we are often told that we now live in a world where knowledge is visually constructed (Rose, 2003). Turning to the artistic as a research tool seemed an appropriate step toward linking what we know, use, and understand as social reality with the reality of learning to teach.

Visual communication is now perceived as a legitimate literacy (Paivio, 1986; Richards & Anderson, 2003; Richards & McKenna, 2003). For example, teachers integrate viewing and visually representing strategies in their curricula to enhance students' skills of observation (Begoray, 2003). In addition, teachers recognize that drawing pictures, photographing, and videotaping events are valuable invention strategies that encourage students to make deeper personal connections with the content of their

writing initiatives (Ernst da Silva, 2001). For many authors “the visual is the most fundamental of all senses” (Fyfe & Law, 1988, p. 2).

Use of the visual offers additional possibilities for obtaining information. As an educational researcher, I am always interested in unique and valid modes of inquiry that have the potential to illuminate preservice teachers’ thinking. I had a hunch that arts-based techniques might provide insights about the preservice teachers’ perceived realities and understandings that narrative data alone might not reveal because qualitative methods are typically dominated by written language.

I was also intrigued with the concept of preservice teachers creating a series of self-portraits as a vehicle for promoting their self-exploration, reflection, and personal discovery. Artisans have created self-portraits since the 15th century as projections of self and as a way to study their own persona (Kelly, 2005). I hoped that the process of drawing a series of portraits coupled with dialogue might enable the preservice teachers to examine and understand facets of their ongoing professional growth that could not be gained by narrative text alone. Drawing often illuminates an individual’s perceptions of reality and “state of mind better than verbal definitions or descriptions” (Diem-Wille, 2001, p. 119).

Literatures Informing the Inquiry

Five literatures from diverse disciplines informed the postmodern visual methods inquiry: (1) visual sociology, visual anthropology, and visual ethnography which maintain that every image tells a story and thus, opens opportunities for new visually inspired qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Harper, 2005); (2) multiple literacies, which consider visual representations (e.g., cartoons, photographs, video, art, drawings, graffiti, film, television) as legitimate text that communicates meaning (Hobbs, 1997; Richards & McKenna, 2003); (3) counseling psychology which encourages individuals to draw self-portraits as a means of encouraging self-exploration (Redekopp, 1995; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001); (4) visual semiotics, the science of signs and meaning, which assumes, in part, that culturally agreed upon symbols, drawings, and images represent reality (Barthes, 1972/1973, 1977/1977; Harste, 2000; Rose, 2003; van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001); and (5) dual coding theory, which connects the symbolic system of cognition with written language and imagery, arguing that this linkage fosters greater communication options (Paivio, 1986; Sadoski & Paivio, 2001).

The Context for the Inquiry and the Program’s Structure and Philosophy

The context for the inquiry was Alexander Middle School (a pseudonym) located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Alexander Middle School had approximately 750 students in grades 6 - 8. The instruction is student-centered, and the climate is relaxed and pleasant. The majority of students come from low socioeconomic homes and the students’ annual standardized reading and language arts test scores fall at or below the 40th percentile.

The 28 preservice teachers reported to Alexander Middle School one morning a week (Friday) for two hours and 30 minutes. They received three semester hours of credit. In the first hour and 15 minutes of the class, I offered demonstration lessons with

the middle school students, lectured, and facilitated seminar discussions. In the second hour and 15 minutes of the class, with my guidance and mentoring, the preservice teachers taught 10 weekly content literacy lessons to small groups of students (the same groups throughout the semester). Three or four preservice teachers worked in a classroom, so that all students in a class were accommodated, and classroom teachers were able to observe the lessons, ask questions, and offer advice.

I encouraged the preservice teachers to link print activities with the visual and communicative arts at every opportunity. For example, they collaborated with their students in creating informal dramatic arts enactments, text-based murals, songs, poetry, and dances. In addition, they helped their students interpret data on computer web sites and CDROM software, and visually represent facts and concepts by creating graphs and charts.

During the semester, as part of course requirements, the preservice teachers authored a teaching case that portrayed their instructional concerns and dilemmas (see, Richards & Gipe, 2000; Richards & McKenna, 2003 for a comprehensive discussion of teaching cases). They also dialogued with me via journal writing weekly, and I observed and documented their content reading lessons. The preservice teachers' cases, journal entries, and my observation notes of their lessons served as secondary collaborating data sources in this research project.

As course instructor, I was invested in the preservice teachers' learning, which included ensuring that they were well prepared to offer weekly content reading lessons to their middle school students. Nurturing collaborative initiatives between public schools and university programs requires that all participants be committed to excellence.

In addition to my role as course instructor, in order to conduct the study reported here, I often assumed the role of qualitative researcher. In my researcher persona it was crucial for me to disconnect myself from my investment in my preservice teachers' learning to concentrate on collecting and analyzing data. This process is similar to the practices of exemplary writers and artists who objectively step back from their work to see with "new eyes what they have created" (Richards & Miller, 2005).

I also took on a third role—that was central to the development of the visually oriented methodology employed in this study. Drawing on my experiences and training as a visual and performing artist, and my credentials as an author of a textbook devoted to multiple literacies and the arts (Richards & McKenna, 2003), I felt comfortable asking the preservice teachers to create self-portraits. In addition, in order to prepare for my interpretations of the portraits I studied image-based research texts (e.g., Pink, 2001; Prosser, 1997; Rose, 2003).

The Inquiry

In the inquiry I sought to answer the following five questions:

1. Will the preservice teachers' self-portraits (i.e., sketches of the self) serve as an enlightening source of data?
2. What themes (i.e., ideas, values, emotions) might be visible in the data that provide a window into the preservice teachers' concerns, conceptions, and understandings about teaching content reading?

3. Will the preservice teachers' instructional concerns, conceptions, and understandings about content reading instruction change over the course of the semester?
4. What difficulties might I encounter when I ask the preservice teachers to create their portraits during class sessions?
5. Will creating a series of self portraits coupled with dialogue provide an appropriate and useful venue for promoting preservice teachers' reflections about their experiences

Research Methodology

After securing permission from my university's Internal Review Board (IRB) and obtaining signed study participation consent forms from the preservice teachers, I asked the preservice teachers to draw their first portrait during the third week of the course, prior to teaching their 6th through 8th grade students. They created their sixth self-portrait immediately after teaching their final content reading lesson. Since the preservice teachers created their self-portraits during class time, I limited data collection to every other week because I did not want to usurp too much instructional time. My directions to the preservice teachers regarding the focus of their self-portraits follow below.

Week three/ Prior to teaching

Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that shows your thoughts and feelings as you begin to prepare your first content reading lesson.

Week five/ Following first teaching experiences

Create compare/contrast portraits and include dialogue that shows your thoughts and feelings prior to and following your initial teaching experience.

Week seven/ After four teaching sessions

Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that shows what questions you have about teaching content literacy lessons.

Week nine/ After six teaching sessions

Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that shows your concerns and confusions about teaching content literacy lessons.

Week eleven/ After eight teaching sessions

Create a self-portrait and include dialogue that depicts what you want to tell me about your teaching experiences thus far.

Week thirteen/ Following the last teaching session

Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that documents your developing understanding and knowledge about content reading, instructional strategies, and the visual and communicative arts.

Main Data Sources for the Inquiry

The preservice teachers' self-portraits (N = 168 self-portraits) proved to be the most valuable data source for the inquiry. All of the drawings were accomplished to the best of the preservice teachers' abilities and adhered to my directions (e.g., week nine: Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that shows your concerns and confusions about teaching content literacy lessons).

I utilized the preservice teachers' dialogue journal entries (see Appendix A for an example of a journal entry) and teaching cases (see Appendix B for an example of a teaching case), and my field notes documenting their lessons (see Appendix C for an example of my field notes) to triangulate the data, a means of reducing ambiguity and the likelihood of misinterpretation, and a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning" (Stake, 2000, p. 443).

Analyzing the Preservice Teachers' Self-Portraits

I wanted to provide a basis for an orderly review of possible changes over time in the preservice teachers' concerns, and potential progressions in their understandings about teaching content reading lessons. Therefore, studying the data as a chronology (i.e., over time) seemed most straightforward and appropriate. First, I collated the self-portraits by week (i.e., Week three, Week five, etc.). Then, I followed tenets of content analysis, which is considered the most appropriate technique for analyzing visual data (Ball & Smith, 1992), and I conducted a careful "line-by-line reading of the text[s]" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780). Regarding the self portraits as legitimate text, I noted the implied messages and ideas conveyed by the particular attributes and characteristics included in each of the preservice teachers' portraits (e.g., hair standing on end; tearing hair out; eyes cast sideways; churning stomachs; grimaces; frowns; smiles; jumping in the air; grins; praying hands; puzzled expressions; hands on hips). I also examined the interplay between the visual and narrative data by reading and rereading the units of ideas that accompanied each self-portrait (i.e., words, phrases, and sentences). I jotted down my assumptions, underlined possible patterns, and compared the emerging content for possible themes and connections (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through this revolutionary arts-based research (Finley, 2005), I was immersed in what Ulmer (1994) calls "heuretics" That is, I crossed the boundaries between art and theory and engaged in the creative process of discovery and invention, employed by arts-based researchers "who have consciously brought the methodologies of the arts to define new practices of human social inquiry" (Finley, 2005, p. 684). For example, I scrutinized a self-portrait in which a preservice teacher depicted herself with a rigid body, down turned mouth raised, eyebrows, worried eyes, and arms and hands inflexibly at her sides. I cross checked my assumptions with the preservice teachers' accompanying text, "concerns: nervous,

confused, being prepared, strategies, time limit in classroom, text analysis,” labeling this portrait as denoting concern and anxiety. I noted the correspondence between the attributes depicted in the self-portrait and the accompanying text, and concluded that the preservice teacher was anxious about four class requirements; being prepared to teach, understanding content reading strategies, dealing with insufficient teaching time, and the final examination that was a content text analysis.

As common themes and connections among the themes became evident, I made additional notes, and highlighted what I considered to be salient information. In order to validate my assumptions, I also asked the preservice teachers to review their self-portraits and my written impressions about their visual representations and accompanying dialogue as a means of crosschecking my work (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Major Themes Emerging from the Inquiry

My analysis of the self-portraits revealed a distinct hierarchical progression in the preservice teachers’ understanding about teaching content reading lessons. Although the self-portraits showed that the preservice teachers initially felt more relaxed after their first teaching session, over the course of the semester they gradually moved from feeling stressed and inexperienced (worried frowns and grimaces with accompanying dialogue such as, “I am nervous, confused.” “Today I am feeling very overwhelmed.”) to feeling excited and comfortable (smiles and shining eyes with accompanying dialogue such as, “Wonderful.” “I feel good.” “I have a more positive outlook now on my future.”). (See Fuller, 1969 for a comprehensive description of the stages of teachers’ concerns). I also discovered that the preservice teachers felt overwhelmed with assignments (“Mural, drama, book, text, my brain can handle no more!” “How do I do all this?”), and they worried about group management issues (“Let’s get this behavior management in control!!!” “What if the children get out of control?”). They were troubled by student absences (“My kids are never here!”), and they were disturbed by the lack of sufficient teaching supplies (“How can I find more resources for this class?” “I do hope we have enough supplies!”). By week thirteen they could list a broad repertoire of content reading instructional strategies (“This is what I know so far - KWL, Semantic Maps, PreP, QAR, SQ3R.” “I know PreP. I know cloze passages. I know KWL. I know INSERT. I feel like I don’t know a lot - but a whole bunch more than I did when I first walked in your classroom!”). However, in response to my directions in week thirteen to “Create your self-portrait and include dialogue that documents your developing understanding and knowledge of content reading instructional strategies and the visual and communicative arts,” only one preservice teacher referred to multiple communication options (“include multiple literacies, visuals”).

Making the Data Visible

The following self-portraits presented as a chronology (i.e., over time) helped to make some of the data visible (see Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002 for a discussion of credibility, verisimilitude, and trustworthiness in qualitative research). Data representation and trustworthiness of data analysis are central to all qualitative methods, including image-based research (Prosser, 1997).

Week Three Portraits: “How Do You Feel as You Prepare Your First Lesson?”

All of the preservice teachers’ portraits constructed during week three depicted self-concerns and anxieties about teaching content reading lessons. Many of the portraits portrayed preservice teachers with frowns, churning stomachs, grimaces, mouths open to suggest screaming, hands pulling hair, and outstretched arms. The accompanying dialogue included statements such as, “I hope the kids like me!” “My brain is overloaded. My heart is pounding.” “Can I be anymore stressed?” “Will I be effective?” “I am overwhelmed. I have so much to do and it feels like I do not have enough time-so many things to remember to do and bring. Ugh! Help!” (See Appendix D for examples of portraits for week three).

Week Five Portraits: “Before and After Teaching First Lesson”

The portraits created during week five showed a dramatic contrast between the preservice teachers’ thoughts and feelings before and after their initial teaching experience. Before teaching portraits displayed frowns, drooping mouths, question marks, and eyes glancing sideways to depict serious thinking and worries. The accompanying dialogue included, “Help me!” “I’m so nervous.” “Pulling my hair out!” “What have I gotten myself into?” “Keep control!” “Are they gonna behave?” “I was tired, tense, tentative, and totally scared.”

After teaching, portraits depicted the preservice teachers with wide grins, and large, happy smiles. The accompanying dialogue included, “I love it!” “Now I can enjoy my weekend and breath.” “Overjoyed.” “It wasn’t so bad after all.” “What a wonderful surprise. I had a wonderful time today.” “Here’s my niche.” “I feel better now.” (See Appendix D for examples of portraits for week five).

Week Seven Portraits: “Show What Questions You Have about Teaching”

The preservice teachers made good use of their opportunity to ask questions in week seven. They posed practical queries that demonstrated their beginning understanding about teaching content reading instruction (e.g., “Are we supposed to do a pre-reading and a post reading strategy for every chapter?” “How can I find more resources for this class?” “When are the books due?” “Am I doing too much in one lesson?”).

During this week, 18 preservice teachers included dialogue with their portraits that depicted ongoing concerns with self (e.g., “Am I talking clearly?” “Am I doing the required work?” “How am I going to get all of this done?” “How do I do all this - Plus homework and four other classes?”). However, for the first time in the semester ten of the preservice teachers asked questions that demonstrated concern for students (“Are they learning?” “Will the students enjoy what I teach?” “Am I on the level with the students?” “Am I giving enough to the students?”).

Six of the preservice teachers drew themselves smiling. Twenty-two continued to portray themselves with worried and solemn expressions (eyes glancing sideways to denote serious thinking and concern; hands on hips; tight mouths; eyebrows slanted

downward; arms outstretched; eyes closed with palms uplifted; mouths open wide as if screaming or yelling) (See Appendix D for examples of portraits for week seven).

Week Nine Portraits: “Show Your Concerns and Confusions”

Twenty preservice teachers depicted themselves with happy faces in week nine. Eight preservice teachers drew themselves with frowns and grimaces. The accompanying dialogue for all of the portraits indicated that the preservice teachers had become more confident about their teaching abilities, and they felt more comfortable about teaching content reading lessons (“I feel pretty confident - little nervous.” “I am very excited right now - maybe a little nervous.” “overjoyed!” “I feel more comfortable. I still feel uncomfortable about how to incorporate drama and music into my lessons.”) However, they also continued to experience concerns (“nervous,” “confused,” “overwhelmed,” “being creative enough.” See Appendix D for examples of portraits for week nine).

Week Eleven Portraits: “Depict What You Want to Tell Me about Your Experiences”

Four preservice teachers drew themselves with serious expressions in week eleven. The accompanying dialogue included statements such as “I do hope we have enough supplies.” “I really don’t know a whole lot about content reading. This is my first reading class.” “I don’t have time to teach using strategies because I have so much else to do.” “My kids are never here. Oh the frustration of never seeing the class and then having projects to do. Oh what to do? Lord, it will take me 25 years to use all of the things I learned.”

The 24 preservice teachers who drew themselves smiling included dialogue such as “I think and know that I am going to make it.” “I have really enjoyed this class.” “I like the hands on experience rather than sitting in a classroom.” “I really have learned a lot.” “I have enjoyed working with the children.” “This course is helping me come up with ideas for future classes.” “This course has made a huge difference in the way I feel about teaching older students.” (See Appendix D for portraits for week eleven.).

Week Thirteen Portraits: “Document Your Understanding about Strategies and the Visual and Communicative Arts”

Following their last teaching session, all 28 of the preservice teachers created self-portraits with happy faces. The accompanying dialogue included “I feel good right now.” “Wonderful.” “Calm.” “There’s a whole lot that I don’t know.” “I hope to learn more.” The preservice teachers listed a wide-array of content reading strategies, such as KWL, PreP, INSERT, Reciprocal Teaching, QAR, SQ3R, cloze passages, semantic maps, and Venn diagrams. Individual preservice teachers also wrote, “Don’t focus so much on the phonics of reading.” “Include multiple literacies, visuals.” “Journal with your students daily.” “Reading to gain knowledge.” “Writing strategies can also be used with content reading.” “Other reading material besides text book.” “Pre-reading - Post-reading.” “Not just reading words.” “It is important to link fiction with nonfiction.” (See Appendix D for examples of portraits for week thirteen).

Limitations of the Inquiry

There are several limitations of the inquiry that must be addressed. First, researcher subjectivity is a central component of the qualitative research process whether the data is visual, narrative, or a combination of both. What I saw in the data was influenced by my experiences, my role as an involved supervisor of the field-based content reading program, who I am as a teacher educator, and my subconsciously held personal and professional biases. Feminist perspectives acknowledge the transactional nature of qualitative work, and the challenges, limitations, and presumptuousness of interpreting others' points of view and realities mediated by one's personal experiences and perceptions (Bahar, 1993; Florio-Ruane & McVee, 2001). Second, my interpretations of the preservice teachers' self-portraits are limited to my constructions of reality. Traditions from hermeneutics "indicate that the same text can be read [and interpreted] in a number of different ways" (Tappan & Brown, 1992, p. 186). Others may draw conclusions that differ from mine. Third, by structuring the content of the preservice teachers' self-portraits, I influenced what they drew and wrote. In all probability, the preservice teachers would have produced different visual representations and accompanying dialogue had I not supplied any directions for the portraits' contents, or directed the preservice teachers to create self-portraits that focused on different pedagogical topics. Finally, generalizations to other preservice teachers and teaching circumstances are not possible. Each teaching context has specific circumstances, relationships, and situations (Stake, 2000).

Reflections and Implications of the Research for Teacher Educators

Despite limitations of the study, the inquiry supports the efficacy of analyzing preservice teachers' self-portraits and the accompanying dialogue as rich sources of data. Schools are a specific cultural context and preservice teachers' self-portraits have the potential to depict their intentions, experiences, lived realities, and understandings within particular cultural domains (Ball & Smith, 1992; Pink, 2001).

The portraits also contribute insights and practical information to teacher educators who supervise preservice teachers in field-based courses. The drawings and accompanying narratives illuminate the preservice teachers' frustrations and high stress levels as they prepared to teach their first lesson. The portraits and dialogue also showed that their anxieties continued well into the second half of the semester. In the future, I need to analyze the content of preservice teachers' drawings week-by-week to determine their immediate concerns, and address particularly bothersome issues that, in this study, included insufficient teaching supplies, group management issues, and the possibility that I required the preservice teachers to complete too many assignments.

The inquiry highlights the progressive development of preservice teachers' professional knowledge in a field-based program. The idea that teachers continue to develop and refine their abilities is not new (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Fuller, 1969; Grossman, Valencia, Evans, & Place, 2000) however, the portraits and accompanying dialogue clearly illuminate the preservice teachers' gradual shift from frustrations, stress, and anxieties to happiness, confidence, and pride. The portraits also

document the preservice teachers' progressions over time in their thinking and perceptions about teaching content reading lessons. The noticeable evolution of the preservice teachers' professional growth strongly supports the value of providing opportunities for preservice teachers to participate in field programs.

An intriguing finding was that the portraits indicated that individual preservice teachers' conceptions about content reading, their confidence levels, and their development of student-centered orientations evolved at different times throughout the semester. Each preservice teacher was unique, and I must recognize that preservice teachers in a field programs need individual attention and mentoring.

Another interesting discovery is that in week thirteen the majority of the preservice teachers listed a substantial number of content reading strategies next to their self-portraits. However, despite what I thought was a program focus on the visual and communicative arts (Richards & McKenna, 2003), only one preservice teacher mentioned specific information about these communication options. In fact, two preservice teachers in week seven and one preservice teacher in week nine referred to this apparent arts and technology disconnect by writing next to their portraits: "I still feel uncomfortable about how to incorporate drama and music into my lessons." "Am I creative enough?" "How can I get these students to enjoy dramatic enactments?" I need to determine if I presented too much course content over the semester and overwhelmed the preservice teachers or if I glossed over techniques for effectively integrating visual art, creative writing, dance, music, and technology with print-based reading instruction.

Time limitations were also a problem. My field notes indicated that drawing self-portraits took some valuable time away from course content. In addition, although one of my objectives for the research was to provide opportunities for the preservice teachers to develop a conscious awareness of their own concerns and understandings, because of time constraints, the preservice teachers did not have an extended opportunity to reflect about their drawings. In the future, I need to structure class time more judiciously.

Finally, the image-based inquiry raises some questions and possibilities for future research. What might I discover if I did not influence the content of the preservice teachers' portraits? What other types of visual data might provide valuable information about preservice teachers' experiences, thinking, and concerns? For example, the preservice teachers might take a series of photographs and compile a portfolio that captures their ten most significant teaching experiences in a semester. Other possibilities include preservice teachers videotaping their teaching experiences, drawing comic strips that portray their most memorable lessons, accompanying their dialogue journal entries with sketches, and creating murals and dioramas with their students that depict meaningful teaching/learning experiences. These types of visual representation activities have the potential to help preservice teachers make deeper connections with their teaching experiences, and offer teacher educators new ways of documenting preservice teachers' perceived realities and perspectives.

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Appendix A

Example of a Preservice Teacher's Journal Entry

Dear Dr. R,

I am nervous about doing the assignments. I don't feel prepared to do this teaching. Do you want the group rules and teaching schedule displayed all of the time we are teaching? I have no room on my table to keep these things displayed in a frame. Also. How many strategies do you want us to use each week? What's the difference between a pre and a during comprehension strategy? I never knew I would have to pay for teaching supplies. I am a poor student. Please write back to me and tell me what to do. Thank you.

Your student

Appendix B

Example of a Preservice Teacher's Teaching Case

I teach content reading to five 6th graders every week. Most of the time things go along pretty well. But, sometimes I have difficulties helping my students understand what we are supposed to be doing. For example, last week, John could not understand how to do the during reading strategy, SQ3R. Maybe he did understand and he didn't want to participate.

Here's what happened. I said, "OK everyone, today we are going to do a repeat of SQ3R. That's when you survey your text, and turn the subheadings, and first sentences of

every paragraph into a question. Then, you read the text and recite the important parts to a friend. The last part is when you review the material by reading it again. So. Let's begin."

I placed a passage on the overhead projector and asked the students to survey the passage for charts, graphs, and the like. John immediately started asking, "What's that mean? What's survey mean?"

He did that for the entire lesson with every part of the SQ3R. I was so annoyed. I know you tell us to reflect about our work and try to come up with some solutions, but I am confused about John's behavior.

Appendix C

Example of My field Notes

Wed, 9:30 AM

Elizabeth appears to be moving along nicely with her students. She is well prepared and she speaks softly. Today she taught the pre-reading strategy, Prep, to her students and she modeled it beautifully before she asked her students to participate.

Appendix D

Examples of the Preservice Teachers' Self-Portraits Portraits for Week Three



Portraits for Week Five



Portraits for Week Seven



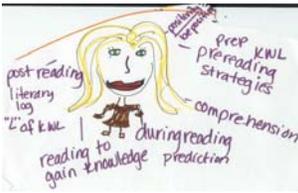
Portraits for Week Nine



Portraits for Week Eleven



Portraits for Week Thirteen



Author Note

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Article Citation

Richards, J. C. (2006). Post modern image-based research: An innovative data collection method for illuminating preservice teachers' developing perceptions in field-based courses. *The Qualitative Report 11*(1), 37-54. Retrieved [Insert date], from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR11-1/richards.pdf>
