
10-1-2000

Multilayered Representation in Research

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Recommended APA Citation

DeLawter, K., Sosin, A., & Mabey, J. (2000). Multilayered Representation in Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 5(3), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2000.1949>

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Keywords

qualitative research

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Exploring Multi-Layered Representations in Research by Kathryn De Lawter, Adrienne "Andi" Sosin, and Julie Mabey[±]

The Qualitative Report, Volume 5, Numbers 3 & 4, October, 2000

Abstract

This paper describes a multi-layered qualitative action research study presented at the Twelfth Annual Conference on Ethnographic and Qualitative Research. "The Aesthetics of Ethnography: A Moving Triangle," was an interactive installation that demonstrated the aesthetics of ethnography for education. Participants were invited to share their own constructions of meaning when engaged in activities related to multicultural calendar artifacts. The research methodology of this study is collective reflection, developed by the researchers in the process of interpreting teacher education student's multicultural calendar artifacts as texts. The article highlights one of the multicultural calendar artifacts displayed in the installation, through hyperlinks to images of the multicultural calendar artifact itself. Our discussion of multiple representations gives insight into how we, as teacher educators, generate language in curriculum development for multicultural teacher education.

*Now the journey is ending
the wind is losing heart
Into your hands it's falling,
a rickety house of cards.*

*The cards are backed with pictures
displaying all the world.
You've stacked up all the images
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*And how profound the playing
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The Aesthetics of Ethnography: A Moving Triangle

At the Twelfth Annual Conference on Ethnographic and Qualitative Research in Education (EQRE), at Albany, New York, we invited participants into an interactive installation about

teacher education students' representations of multicultural curriculum. The installation, "The Aesthetics of Ethnography: A Moving Triangle," was designed to elicit spontaneous responses and critical reflections on multicultural curriculum and teaching, and our qualitative research in teacher education. Our "moving triangle," offered three possible areas for experiencing the aesthetics of ethnography for education. The three stations of the installation engaged participants in imagining, interpreting, and viewing to construct their own visualized calendars, to have hands-on explorations of student-made calendars, and to view video clips of students' presentations of their calendar artifacts. This experiential installation was a representation of both our pedagogical approach and of our research study about teacher education students' conceptions of multicultural curriculum.

We were inspired to create our installation by our visit to an installation created for the Arts in Education Special Interest Group at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting in 1999 (Cole, Brown, Buttignol, & Knowles, [1999](#)). Experiencing that group's exhibit energized us to prepare our own interactive installation to communicate about our multi-layered, longitudinal, qualitative action research study. At the EQRE conference, participants were invited to explore our emerging themes with us.

The calendar artifacts displayed in *The Aesthetics of Ethnography: A Moving Triangle* were made by our students, enrolled in a Master of Science in Teaching program at Pace University in New York City. We seek to understand our students' meanings, constructed in a process of global perspectives development. We create conditions for them to become conscious of their conceptions of culture through a problematic assignment of constructing a representation of their personal meanings for multicultural curriculum in a calendar format. Through a process we call collective reflection, we are creating language to express generative and emergent themes that inform multicultural teaching and curriculum design. In this article, we focus on one student's multicultural calendar artifact. "[Julie's Calendar](#)" is illustrative of the challenges our students face when contemplating teaching, and is included in this article as hyperlinked images and text.

Pedagogical Grounding for Action Research

In the course, titled Global Perspectives, students meet each other in activities designed to prepare them to teach in multicultural elementary and secondary classrooms. Global Perspectives affords students with opportunities to incorporate world concerns (Gore, [1993](#); Saign, [1994](#); United Nations, [1989](#)) and understandings of cultural stereotypes in teaching (Ayers & Ford, [1996](#); Banks, [1991](#); Banks & Banks, [1996](#), Meier, [1995](#); Sleeter & Grant, [1994](#)). Students do not just develop an awareness of their stereotyping in everyday life, they come to envision themselves teaching in a multicultural environment. They practice shaping multicultural curriculum, attempt in-depth inclusion of world concerns within school subjects, and think about how knowledge connects to action (Giroux, [1981](#)). By enabling students to understand the relationship between knowledge and action with respect to world concerns, students are empowered to pursue their own purposefulness in teaching and grow in their civic and global consciousness. Students are encouraged to critically and collectively self-reflect (Schatz, [1993](#)) to recognize their own perspectives and to understand that their perspectives will influence their future teaching practices.

The Multicultural Calendar Project

Each Global Perspectives student individually creates and presents to the class a major project that must be recognizable as a multicultural calendar for his/her future classroom. The calendar assignment is ambiguously defined in the course syllabus as a student invented multicultural artifact, which can be recognized and used in a classroom as a calendar. It poses a problematic (Giroux, [1983](#)) curriculum task that moves pre-service teacher education students to act as teachers.

The multicultural calendar project calls upon students to imagine time organized differently than is common or culturally prescribed. Although people in different cultures may take for granted what constitutes a calendar, we ask students to envision and make a multicultural calendar that can structure events in a classroom. The assignment challenges students to look into time and culture with self-interest. They must take into account their experiences and recognize the influences of time and culture in shaping human interaction. Even if starting is difficult and many false starts are made, each student is supported by the instructor and their classmates to take risks. Those students who are aware of the logic and arbitrariness of how time has been ordered in various cultures and historical periods are often the ones who are willing to explore organizing time in more personal and creative ways. We encourage all students to reach into themselves and be open to alternative ways of conceiving their relationships to time, culture and others. Most students experience some level of discomfort with the open invitation to create the calendar, but are concerned enough about their course grades and their progress towards teaching to engage and persist in constructing the artifact.

In conceptualizing their calendars, students interpret eight holistic criteria: Unique/Original, Personal Connectedness, Eye Catching/Surprising, Cross-Cultural, Interactive, Educative/Usefulness, Relatable to subject matter, Relatable to viewer. This holistic evaluation rubric and procedure (De Lawter, [1986/1990](#)), developed with students, is a method that not only provides an evaluation of student work on the multicultural calendar project, but poses a format for student self-evaluation, practice in interpreting a rubric, and experience in implementing an holistic process. The tension of investing oneself in a representation, being responsive to others' questions, and engaging in holistic evaluation contributes to each student's actualization.

Calendars are presented late in the semester in order to maximize the time students have to prepare them. Each presentation is an experience of authentic teaching and holistic evaluation. The students have had opportunities to work with holistic criteria earlier in the semester. Each student's self and peer evaluations are combined with professorial criticism to reach a composite score. Students' interpretations of the holistic criteria display their tacit and focal understandings. Our process of collective reflection encourages self-reflection and openness, and affirms expressions of respect.

For many students, recognition of their achievements by self and from other classmates results in an emerging sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, [1986](#)). They acknowledge what they have learned from each other and that they have become more knowledgeable and aware of theoretical constructs about diversity and culturally responsive teaching practices (Hollins, [1995](#); Leck,

[1990](#); Nel, [1995](#)). The thought of entering their own classrooms becomes conceivable, and they express confidence and eagerness to be with their own students in their own classrooms.

A Multicultural Calendar fair highlights the end of the term. Students often cite the calendar project in their course evaluations as their most significant accomplishment in the teacher education program. Likewise, we value the rich significance of the calendar artifacts, as representations of students' conceptions of multicultural curriculum. The interpretation of these teacher education students' calendars through multiple qualitative research methodologies leads to important explorations and insights for teaching.

Action Research That Informs Pedagogy

As faculty colleagues, we began sharing our reflections on teaching the course Global Perspectives. Our conversations on pedagogy led to our collaboration in research. We began developing an action research study. Acknowledging that our research methodologies are grounded in the context of teacher education, we pursued self-study as well as other qualitative modes of inquiry. Self-study is the purposeful reflection upon one's own work, and is an important movement in teacher education (Zeichner, [1999](#)). In our focused efforts to understand the meanings students bring, the interpretation of multicultural calendar artifacts as texts, already in progress as a pedagogical methodology, became critical to our research. Both our pedagogical and our research interests converged.

Our multi-layered qualitative action research extends an interpersonal approach to teaching praxis to include the interpretation of texts (Ricoeur, [1976](#)). The interpretation of artifacts as texts is a methodology (De Lawter, [1982](#)) that attends to meaning construction with texts and extends the meanings expressed in social interaction. This methodology builds on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, [1967](#)), a branch of sociology that is concerned with understanding the meanings of research subjects and the explicit expression of research assumptions by researchers. Our study explores the focal and tacit dimensions (Polanyi, [1967](#)) of our Global Perspectives students' representations of multicultural curriculum in the form of calendar artifacts.

We agreed that our methodology of interpreting multicultural calendar artifacts as texts is pivotal to our understanding of how students construct their ideas about multicultural curriculum in a teacher education context. We also drew upon Feldman's ([1999](#)) understanding of the importance of conversation in action research. Through the self study of our praxis in teaching (Friere, [1970/1998](#)), a view of teaching in which action and reflection are in dialectical relation, we experienced a vital impetus to express our understandings in a shared language. As we worked together doing research, we identified our interpersonal discourse as a responsive process of negotiating meaning, which we call collective reflection.

Collective Reflection

Collective reflection is the term we use to describe a social relationship and use of language. It is an interpersonal process and a commitment to interpreting another person's artifact. Collective reflection is a complex way of being together in conversation with "the other" and their text that

honors perspectives and builds trust. Collective reflection (De Lawter & Sosin, [2000](#)) integrates social interactions with artifacts interpreted as texts. The contribution of the method is that participants create a shared language for expressing meanings in both research and pedagogy.

Collective reflection in our teaching is grounded in our constructivist pedagogical outlook. In the classroom we model pedagogy for understanding the meanings students bring and how they think about new or different ideas. We design activities for Global Perspectives that intentionally create experiences of collective reflection. Students read, discuss, and collaborate. They also respond to each other and the instructor in dialogue journals about their lives, the course texts, and their concepts of teaching, curriculum, and multicultural education. They create and participate in activities that incorporate world concerns or cultural stereotypes to expand their global perspectives (Diaz, Massilas & Xanthopoulos, [1999](#)). Some students elect to engage in service learning with homeless children and youth through a community organization (Kroloff, [1993](#); Levison, [1986](#); Rafferty, [1998](#); Schultz, [1987](#)). Throughout the semester, we foster collective reflection as students construct and present their multicultural calendar artifacts.

The importance of collective reflection is that it means engagement with others' artifacts that are expressive of the knowledge that they bring. We named our process collective reflection prior to encountering Schratz ([1993](#)), who articulates a concept of collective self-reflection in exploring the influences of researchers' interpersonal relationships. We are concerned with how power, authority, and control are expressed between students and teachers, and between researchers. Our view of collective reflection values relationships that create language for expressing shared meanings - in our case, with each other, with students, and with their artifacts interpreted as texts. The students inform us of their orientations through their work. We communicate with the students that we highly value their constructions, as demonstrative of their intentions and aspirations for their prospective teaching careers. Our collective reflection with them and with each other challenges them to question their taken-for-granted presuppositions and to critically perceive others' points of view.

Representations in Research and Teaching

Calendar artifacts are representations of meaning. These representations are emblematic of personal knowledge (Polanyi, [1964](#), [1967](#)), a process of knowing by which persons interweave objectivity and subjectivity in universal meanings. Our students' personal knowledge is recognizable in the form of qualities and values that they express in the process of creating their artifacts. Their representations are indicative of who they are and what multicultural curriculum means to them.

As teacher/researchers, our process of collective reflection led to the question, "What do we mean by the term, representation, in this research?" We responded to this question by defining representation as:

1. symbolic, tangible manifestations of meanings students formulate in response to course assignments, and
2. forms of meaning that result from researchers' decisions and the choice of methodologies.

We view representations as externalizations of meaning. Understandings that are externalized reveal meaning constructions and are evidence of how humans shape and are shaped by the world (Berger & Luckmann, [1967](#)). Therefore, we define representation as material evidence of students' and our meanings in the form of data sources. The multicultural calendar artifacts are the primary representations in our research. Other data sources are videotapes of students' presentations in class, and instructor's and student audience's holistic scoring of the calendars. Recorded student talk and writing in their journals about their own cultural backgrounds, and how their backgrounds influence the process of calendar creation are also considered data. Audiotapes of conversations and post-presentation comments made in class about calendars also provide instances of collective reflection.

Some Questions Related to Representations

The following questions were shaped as we interpreted our students' representations:

- What representations have been elicited by our pedagogical and research methodologies?
- What representations are displayed in the artifacts themselves? What makes an artifact recognizable as a calendar?
- What is focal and tacit in the calendar presentation as an interpersonal representation?
- What generative and emerging themes are evident in the representations?
- How do representations inform other layers of this research?

These questions cross over from pedagogy to research, and back again to pedagogy, highlighting a dialectical relationship between our pedagogical and research methodologies. The questions are vital to our ability to make contributions to an understanding of teaching praxis, both generally and for our own growth. We include "[Julie's Calendar](#)," as an illustration of a multicultural calendar artifact to which we address our questions. We focus on her meanings by displaying her artifact and her retrospective description of her experience.

Representations in a Multicultural Calendar Artifact: [Julie's Calendar](#)

Julie Mabey, a former student, helped us prepare our interactive installation for EQRE. Julie's calendar was displayed and participants had the opportunity to interact with it and other calendar artifacts. Julie responded to questions about her calendar and about the process of making the calendar. Julie originally created the calendar while enrolled in Global Perspectives in 1993. We have included Julie's calendar as illustrative of several qualities found in the representations exhibited in our students' multicultural calendars.

Julie's calendar artifact is a transformation of a deck of cards into a multicultural calendar. The image on the back of the calendar represents her sense of the circular motion of time (see [Figure 1](#)).

Figure 1: Back of Calendar



The Jokers symbolize the sun (see [Figure 2](#)) and the moon (see [Figure 3](#)) in their representations by Native American cultures. The suits represent the seasons. The pictures on the fronts of the cards are the works of artists from four different ethnic groups, each depicting a character from their culture.

Figure 2: Moon Shield Joker



Figure 3: Red Sun Mask Joker



Julie's calendar is distinctive in its personal connectedness, and how it organizes time and represents culture. What is evident in her introductory material is that she recognizes that in being human, she has the power to shape time differently. She says that, "Calendars were created because human beings have a need to measure time. Time is often thought of as a line or as continually going forward. I like to think of a calendar as marking time in a circle or spiral that keeps returning to the same events and traditions that I choose to highlight each year." In this statement she expresses her social and cultural awareness of how humans make sense of their experience.

Julie compares life to a shuffled deck of cards. Each week, represented by a card, is a metaphor for life's organization "This shuffled deck of cards mixes up the calendar and puts unexpected days and weeks next to each other. It reminds me that life is not always predictable." For Julie, playing solitaire is how she describes her interaction with the calendar. In her prefatory material she says, "Like a solitaire player, I am determined to sort the calendar into its proper order. And like the solitaire player who is compelled to keep playing, I am also eager to challenge the calendar to another year every time."

The calendar, in Julie's hands, provides a way to reflect on events of the year, and on significant traditions of which she is a part. She states, "A calendar marks my habits and keeps track of my memories because it is comforting to me to anticipate recurring events each year. The calendar also marks unexpected events, cancellations, surprises and changes." The richness of Julie's understanding of calendar-making is well expressed in her purposefulness in designing the multicultural dimensions of her calendar.

Julie's Explanations for her Representations

Included within a red leather card case that holds the transformed card deck is a booklet in which Julie explains how she selected images. She describes her choices for the pictures on the fronts and backs of the cards and the jokers in terms of their importance to their ethnic heritage and how they depict the passing of time. Julie selected a representation of the Aztec calendar for the card backs (see [Figure 4](#)), and describes her rationale, " as a tribute to both the circular motion of time that a calendar suggests to me and to our Mexican neighbors to the south."

Figure 4: Aztec Calendar Back



The Jokers were chosen to, "pay tribute to two of the many groups of people who are native to North America. The red sun mask is from a Northwest Coast Indian tribe (see [Figure 3](#)). The moon shield is from a Plains Indian tribe, possibly Apache (see [Figure 2](#))."

Julie chose images to represent the four different seasons to correspond to the four suits in a deck of cards. She relates the pictures to her own life experience with different cultures. "I have altered some of the symbols on the deck to reflect just a few of the groups of people that I see around me in New York City." She explains why she chose the artwork, and how her choice of images honors global cultural perspectives. "The artwork I selected was created by people who worked in their own country and made it a point of their work to capture and broadcast elements of their own culture." Julie is definitive about why she selected images of people. "I have chosen human figures to represent the four suits in the deck because physical appearance is one way people associate themselves with a culture." Julie is concerned that the images she has selected will relate to her prospective students. She states that, "These artworks come from different periods of time and yet contain elements that are still found in each culture today."

In Julie's calendar, each season is a different suit of thirteen cards, each with a week's worth of days. On each suit there is a different, deliberately selected picture. For Spades and the Spring season, Julie chose a picture of a Chinese woman (see [Figure 5](#)). She writes,

In honor of 1993 being the year of the rooster for the Chinese calendar, I chose this drawing of a woman feeding chickens and roosters. It is from a series of peasant drawings made in the 1970's to promote socialism and proletarian politics in China. The drawing comes from the Shensi province, which is located near the Great Wall in north central China. The artists of these pictures were fellow peasant workers who drew in their spare time. I noticed that the tin bowl the woman is carrying is similar to those I have found in Chinatown.

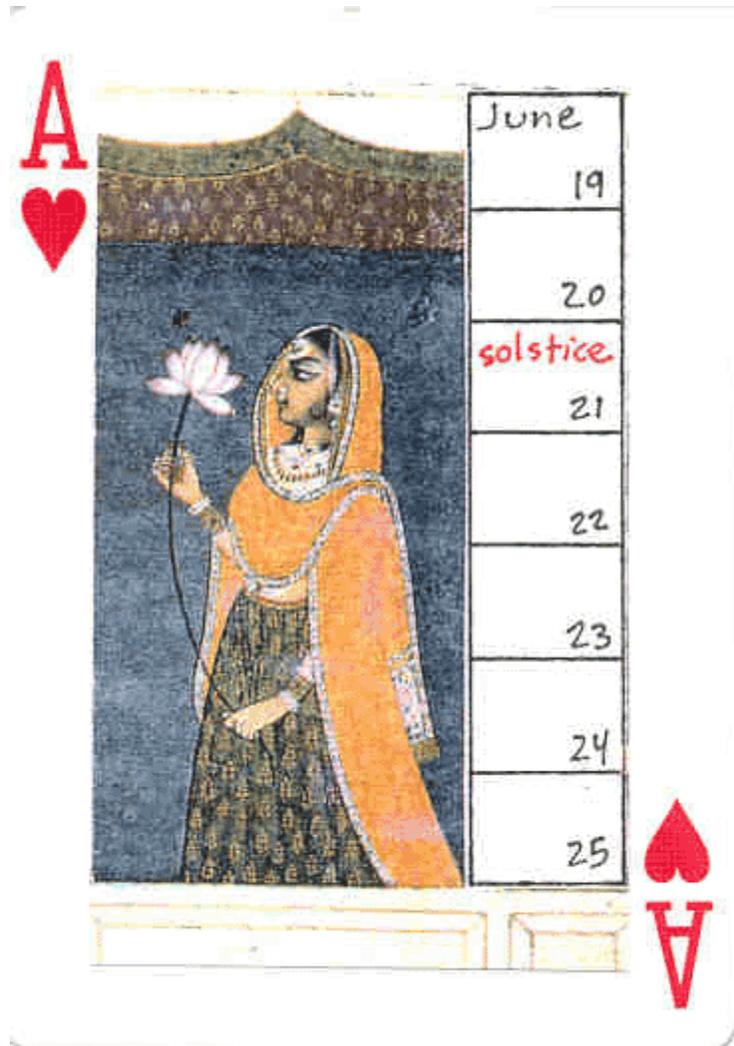
Figure 5: Chinese Woman Card



For Hearts, Julie chose to represent summer with a picture of an Indian woman (see [Figure 6](#)).

This is a painting from the 19th century and comes from the Jaipur region of India which is south of New Delhi. The woman is holding a lotus flower which in this painting symbolizes purity. For me, the lotus represents one of the many fragrant herbs and spices I associate with Indian culture. I see Indian women dressed in similar beautiful cotton and silk saris everyday in New York City.

Figure 6: Indian Woman Card



For Clubs, and the autumn, Julie selected an image of a South African man (see [Figure 7](#)).

This statue is of a businessman from Venda, an independent ethnic group which is located in the northeastern tip of South Africa. The statue was made in 1986 by a South African woman who is struggling to hang on to traditional art methods in her changing country. She is also trying to bring beauty to her ravaged community. The sculpture is made of clay from the river banks and fired in a traditional straw oven.

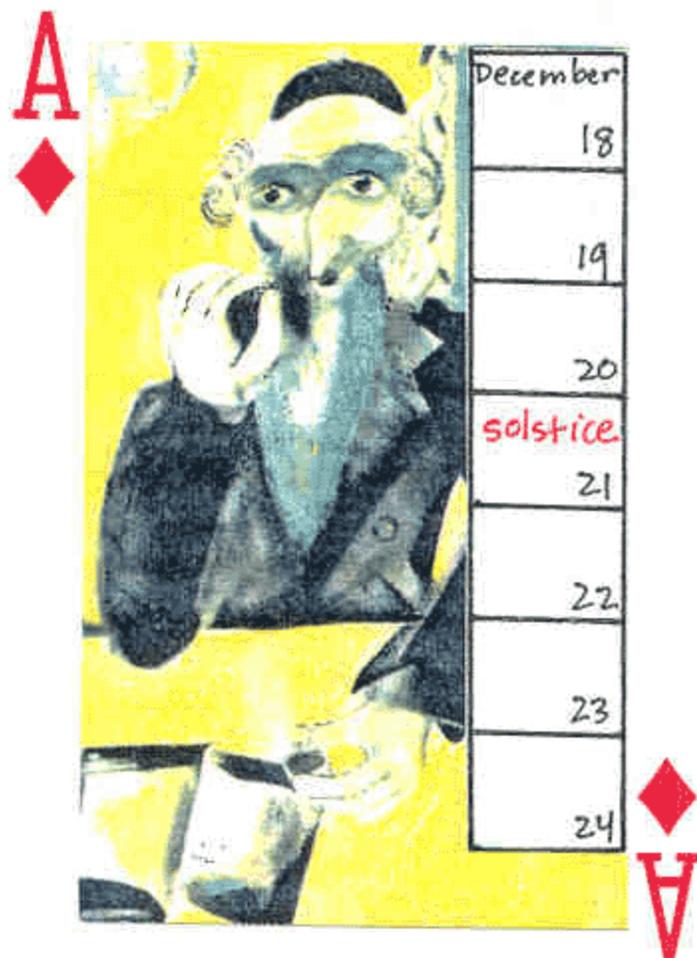
Figure 7: South African Man Card



The fourth suit is Diamonds, linked with winter and the image of a Jewish man (see [Figure 8](#)).

This is a watercolor from one of my favorite painters, Marc Chagall. It was painted in the 1920's when Chagall was in the process of struggling to leave his home near St. Petersburg for Europe. Chagall was a Russian Jew who celebrated his religious and geographical heritage even long after he escaped from his oppressive country. The man's clothing is a reminder that the dress of the Orthodox Jews has remained the same for several decades.

Figure 8: Jewish Man Card



With the exception of the South African man, Julie relates each of the images she selects to her own life, either in her travels in New York, or in her heritage, explicitly demonstrating the quality of personal connectedness. Julie was a student in Global Perspectives prior to our research work together. Therefore, we do not have video to document the presentation, and so have omitted our questions that discuss the video or interpersonal representations. The questions we can ask about Julie's calendar are:

- What representations have been elicited by our pedagogical and research methodologies?

Many of the representations that appear in Julie's calendar are cultural icons. We see these images as the way the student can communicate her intentions. Julie brings in both time and culture into her calendar in a very sophisticated construction. She alters a deck of cards, showing that she understands that the cards represent weeks of the year, and she places on the cards representations of multiculturalism. Her chosen representations are individual selections. While some of the representations, like the Aztec calendar, are also selected by other students because they so clearly fit the criteria, her choices of the artwork on the front of the cards is unique. We

believe that there is a factor in our teaching methods, particularly the collective reflection we encourage in class, that elicits this type of work from many students.

- What representations are displayed in the artifacts themselves? What makes an artifact recognizable as a calendar?

The representations Julie has selected and the form she has placed them in are inherently recognizable as a calendar. As we interpret Julie's calendar, we note that by including a booklet cut down to fit into the leather case, Julie has effectively provided an explanation of the calendar as an integral part. It is an eye-catching and surprising calendar. Even if someone else had adopted the card deck metaphor, Julie's calendar would stand out as unique and original. This is partially due to the painstaking effort that went into its construction, and partially due to the striking symbolic representations she selected. Her images of ethnic characters represent her desire to make the calendar meet the multicultural criteria as well as meet other criteria of personal connectedness, but they do more than that. The representations of time serve as icons. One could, without the explanatory booklet, perceive that this deck of cards is a calendar. It has been transformed.

- What is focal and tacit in the calendar presentation as an interpersonal representation?

Julie takes a stance toward the passing of time. We note that she has not altered physical time, but has used the 52 weeks of the year metaphorically. Her discussion of the disquiet she feels when time is mixed up, like a shuffled deck of cards, acknowledges that she needs the structure an inflexible calendar would bring, yet she also desires excitement.

- What generative and emerging themes are evident in the representations?

In the research we have conducted, we have begun to name two types of themes. Generative themes are those that organize our work. The three generative themes that have emerged thus far are praxis in teaching, collective reflection, and calendar artifacts as texts. Within these themes we have searched many calendar artifacts, video presentations, and interpersonal presentations for specific themes that provide constant comparisons - we have found that many students label their calendars with universal icons as a means of non-verbal communication. These representations reflect understandings that show a continuum of the taken-for-granted to critically perceived.

Julie's selection of the images for her calendar demonstrates her attention to the criteria of the holistic assessment tool used by the class in the critically perceived part of the continuum. The criteria ask students to be conscious of the multicultural aspects of their calendars, and also to attend to personal connectedness as an attribute of calendar-making. She is sympathetic to the condition of South Africans, calling it a "ravaged community," as she honors the work of the statue's sculptress. It is clear from her calendar that Julie sees the complexity of addressing global issues.

We have only highlighted here some of our thinking about Julie's calendar and its meaningfulness in looking at teacher education students' representations of multicultural curriculum.

Julie's Insights as a Practicing Teacher

When Julie graduated from the teacher education program, she began her teaching career at a troubled public school in Harlem. Her teaching stories were both heart-breaking and hopeful, as she and the school's staff struggled to meet the needs of children. In the following recollection she wrote in response to our request to discuss her calendar at the University of Pennsylvania Ethnography Forum she tells the reader about how she translated the experience of making a calendar into her actions in teaching.

In preparation for the 1999 Ethnography Forum, Julie wrote the following retrospective reflection with her insights as a practicing teacher:

The task of creating a multicultural calendar remains a powerful experience that has led me to believe in the importance of people telling their own stories. I guess I choose to interpret multicultural not so much as something that is taught as a part of the planned curriculum, but what happens every day in a classroom when people from different backgrounds and experiences come together. How we approach, interpret and engage ourselves with the materials and each other, creates a multicultural environment.

In order to be the facilitator and guide in this journey, I need to be clear with myself about my own history. Creating my calendar led me to discover elements of myself that I didn't even realize I had. My calendar tells my story. For instance, when I look at the red leather cover, I see my grandmother. Like me, she was an avid card player and this case belonged to her. Like me, she was a New York City Public School teacher and worked with a variety of children and families.

The calendar has helped me focus on where I turn when confronted with a project that has open-ended guidelines. It has become a model for projects that I create with my students. I often launch into some project and I'm not clear on how we are going to get to the end or how or what materials we will use to get there. But, this much I do know, the children are invited to share their expertise and ideas, they know they are as much of the design process as the implementation. They also know that we will process and share the experience through holistic criteria and discussion.

The children in my classroom are really no different than anyone else in the world. They seek what we all seek. They want to have a sense of community. To belong to something. To feel worthwhile and a part of something bigger than themselves. They want to give support and get it back. They also want to come to a place everyday where they know they are safe from criticism and abuse. A place where they are accepted and cherished. They also want to know who they are and where they fit in.

Julie's description above reveals something about her caring relationships with her students. As she discussed how her grandmother's love of cards influenced her design for her calendar, she remembered her experience of making connections and saw that what she does with her students

is to create space for their representations of meaning in the same way the calendar project engaged her. She smiled, knowing that it takes a step into the imagination to see her artifact as a calendar, not as a deck of cards.

In reviewing Julie's calendar, we come to our question,

- How do representations inform other layers of this research?

We note that it often takes imagination to interpret the calendars constructed by students who play with the ideas of time and how to shape it. We have seen Julie and other students appreciate that an underlying purpose of the multicultural calendar project is to recognize how calendars are a part of the human story. The multicultural calendar project is an opportunity to be in the role of the teacher developing multicultural knowledge and awareness with children in creative ways, not solely through informational ethnic studies. For these reasons, the calendar project is a key instrument for developing culturally responsive teachers.

Our attention to the knowledge/action dialectic points to a generative theme that has emerged from our study of artifacts as texts, the theme of praxis in teaching. Our pedagogical methods support students' risk-taking in making representations that voice their consciousness of time and culture. The dialectical relationship of action and reflection experienced in class moves students to identify the taken-for-granted understandings they bring. It places the responsibility for confronting meanings, culture, and multicultural curriculum, with the student.

How can teacher educators be encouraged to reflect on their student's meanings? Asking the above questions about representations leads to collective reflection on the ways students' meanings are constructed. It is research into representation that may open the way for teacher educators to give voice to their own and their students' meanings.

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This paper was presented originally at the [Twelfth Annual Conference on Ethnographic and Qualitative Research in Education](#), State University of New York at Albany, June 9-10, 2000.