Making the Invisible Visible:

Reflections of an Artful Scholar and Researcher

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*Collage* – (kə-ˈläzh, kȯ-, kō-), *n.*1. **a:** an artistic composition made of various

materials (as paper, cloth, or wood) glued on a surface; **b:** a creative work that

resembles such a composition in incorporating various materials or elements.

Syn. - jambalaya, mash-up, montage, olio, pastiche.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Introduction

I remember reading through course titles listed in the MU GSEPD *Student and Faculty Handbook* during a session at my first Saturday Doctoral Seminar and feeling both the weight of meeting the forthcoming challenges as well as motivated by the possibilities for new experiences. Participants were guided through steps for planning coursework and selection of an area of emphasis. I felt that my music education experiences in classrooms at different levels would give me a firm foundation for further development of my background and, that future opportunities in the program would result in a diversity of experiences. My short term goal in planning a program of study was to build on past experiences by enhancing knowledge of curriculum and instruction, strengthening research skills, and adding a new area of expertise in support of a longer term goal of future opportunities beyond the music education field.

A review of early entries in my *Learning Journal* provided examples of anticipated challenges that are later transformed into motivational learning experiences. Descriptions of diverse opportunities reveal significant collaborations and individual efforts as the result of a wide range of coursework, readings, research, and projects. It has been important to connect the threads of this assortment of experiences and to fuse past teaching and learning experiences with learning gained in my program of study that will lead to new opportunities. The analogy with collage – an assortment of diverse materials and elements fit seamlessly together to reveal a unique artwork - corresponds with the fusion of diverse opportunities that created a unique and personal collage of professional preparation in the doctoral program.

## Goals as an Educator

Reviewing the Goal Statement in my application to the doctoral program helped remind me of where I began and the goals I had established in planning my doctoral studies. They were to embrace the challenges of doctoral coursework, expand my knowledge of curriculum and instruction, explore new directions in teaching and learning, and strengthen my research and teaching credentials as a potential candidate for academic appointments in higher education. These goals seemed attainable at the time, but I was not sure how my experiences in the program would help me realize them. After many years of part-time teaching in higher education, I understood the requirements of a full-time appointment and the challenges of acquiring credentials required. In practical terms, I aspired to transforming many years of working as a musician and music educator into an attractive set of experiences through doctoral coursework, refreshing foundations in education, and the addition of unique skills.

In retrospect, embracing coursework and using assignments to research new topics produced broader and deeper understandings of educational issues; and in particular, led to greater knowledge of curriculum and instruction that includes theorists and their theories, history of curriculum, models of teaching, and theories of teaching. A background and experiences teaching in public schools and working in teacher education at the university level provided a solid foundation from which to draw comparisons and contrasts. When given options for choosing topics for papers or presentations, those of greater interest and more likely to require additional background reading were selected. This meant that writing was a challenge due to unfamiliarity with common education terminology. Frequently, the best solution was to make terms interchangeable, finding comparable music education language when discussing general education topics and even more specifically, curriculum and instruction. As my writing evolved, it became more scholarly, incorporated more descriptive language, and became an important tool for developing my ideas. Looking back, embracing doctoral coursework grew into more than could have been imagined.

Including the goal of exploring new directions in teaching and learning was inspired by two ideas. The first was to update my education background to reflect changes in the education field, including technology integration, and secondly, in response to daily classroom observations that students are perpetually young as I grow older. Choosing an area of emphasis in Educational Computing was not only a good choice for exploring new directions but has proven to be helpful in strengthening personal teaching approaches and style in a traditional classroom setting. Adding expertise in technology has expanded my education background, built upon what I know, and erased the narrowness in the scope of personal experiences while strengthening skills and expertise in curriculum and instruction.

Ultimately, accomplishing goals described earlier has led to an overall professional goal – acquiring the credentials and knowledge to pursue full-time faculty appointments in higher education. Inclusion of this goal in my application reflected teaching courses similar to those currently taught but as a full-time faculty member. However, experiences in the doctoral program at Marshall University have broadened possible avenues for future employment and greater flexibility for exploring new professional paths.

## Curriculum and Instruction

*Pastiche* – (\pas-ˈtēsh, päs-\), *n.*, a musical, literary, or artistic composition made up of selections from different works

The momentum of my doctoral studies picked up speed within the first week of Fall Semester 2010 - my first semester in the program. During the previous semester, feelings of confidence after completing *Qualitative Research* (EDF 625)prompted a move forward with a plan to undertake the doctoral program. Working on the goal of expanding my knowledge of curriculum and instruction began in the course *Curriculum Change* (CI 707)with revisiting the works of Eisner (2004) and his views on artistry in curriculum and teaching. I was reminded of being previously inspired by the boldness of his ideas while considering them from a different perspective. In my book review’s conclusion and presentation of *The Educational Mind* (Eisner, 2002), key aspects of what education practices in the arts could bring to educational change and ideas for accepting challenges to traditional views of educational practice were highlighted (Appendix A, 1). I began to consider that his theory provided a way to address the wide-spread acceptance of the scientific approach to educational practice and the factory assembly-line mentality within educational organizations that narrows the possibilities for dynamic and sustained change, reduces the scope of innovative thinking, and lessens the likelihood that creative problem solving will occur in classrooms.

These ideas became aspects of efforts to create synthesis between my background as musician and arts educator and broader studies in curriculum and instruction. Additional readings in the course created awareness of other writers who propose ways to bring meaningful problem solving to educational issues. Educators familiar with the dynamic characteristics of change proposed by Fullan and Crévola (2006) as well as the philosophy of organizational change espoused by Senge (1990) will recognize similar themes and compatible views in defining what is artful in teaching and why it is integral to sustaining educational change. Although I gave serious consideration to the viewpoints of several authors, selections from the writings of Eisner, Fullan, Crévola, and Senge became the first group in a *pastiche* of works that have shaped my understanding and knowledge of curriculum and instruction.

Some of my most meaningful learning occurred in researching and writing about broader issues affecting teaching and learning. My final paper and presentation in *Social and Political Determinants of Curriculum Development* (CI 704) examined intrinsic and covert cultural influences that produce attitudes of anti-intellectualism (Appendix A, 2). Specifically addressed were the impact of anti-intellectualism in education, the covert ways in which it appears in American culture, and the potential for influencing future attitudes regarding education and culture. Anti-intellectualism has a long history in the United States but it is Hofstadter’s seminal study from 1963 (in Jacoby, 2008) that introduced the concept. Reading Jacoby’s (2008) ideas on how to identify anti-intellectualism across American history and culture provided greater understanding of how subversive factors have produced and fostered attitudes that have been counterproductive to teaching and learning at all levels of America’s educational system. Research in two core courses –*Curriculum Development* (CI 701)and *Curriculum Theories* (CI 702) *-* produced a *pastiche* of texts critical to developing my understanding of curriculum and instruction. In *Curriculum Development,* knowledge and fundamental concepts developed into broader contexts of education. In *Curriculum Theories,* I was inspired to examine my teaching more deeply, to understand its connections to personal beliefs, and put into practice an updated approach to teaching. Ideas came from Jerome Bruner’s (1968) theory on spiral curriculum, van Manen’s (1991) concepts of teaching in action, and Huebner’s (in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008) philosophy of beauty in education (Appendix A, 3).

The challenge of creating a personal curriculum theory provided motivation to make the leap to a new level of scholarship. Exploring the work of Max van Manen (1983) and phenomenology led to new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. The basic tenets of phenomenology in his work support my philosophy of music education in that it is based on the lived experiences of the individual. van Manen’s emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of life iscentral to other ideas that fit into my own goal of artful teaching. For example, his concepts of tact in teaching, pedagogical thoughtfulness, and teaching’s improvisational moments as valuable have influenced my classroom teaching. In the conclusion of my personal theory, I wrote that the aesthetic and authentic qualities of phenomenological reasoning create powerful ways for thinking about curriculum theory. As I wrote this in my reflection, I was reminded that a core value embedded in phenomenology is truthfulness – to be true to ourselves and respect the truth in others.

In widening the perspective of curriculum theory, the theories of postmodernism and poststructural concepts have been considered. Realizing that the realities of curriculum work cannot be based solely on phenomenology’s idealism, the postmodernist theorists like McLaren (Pinar, et al) address influences of stark social and political realities on American schooling. In addition, the poststructural views of Cherryholmes (Pinar, et al) were also influential in developing my personal curriculum theory (Appendix A, 4). Cherryholmes suggests that shaping of schools needs to be free of external influences and his theory of opening up education to educators seems fundamental to curriculum and schooling. The often overused adage “leave it to the professionals” may be overly simplistic but speaks to my belief that educators aspire to a fair exchange of ideas. Unfortunately, politicians and bureaucrats want instant results not easily achieved in a deconstructed system of multiple voices.

Opportunities to read, analyze, and discuss a number of different works in curriculum and instruction literature helped realize a personal goal of synthesizing a background in music education with wider perspectives of educational practice. New ideas related to educational change, theories of teaching and learning, important contributions of theorists, a variety of teaching models, and history of curriculum development build knowledge and expertise in curriculum and instruction that enhances daily teaching and opens up a future for new opportunities in the education field.

## Area of Emphasis

*Mash-up* – (\ˈmash-ˌəp\), *n.,***:** something created by combining elements from two or more sources: as 1. **a:** a piece of music created by digitally overlaying an instrumental track with a vocal track from a different recording; **b:** a movie or video having characters or situations from other sources; **c:** a Web service or application that integrates data and functionalities from various online sources.

Each course in educational computing provided me with a different set of challenges that in hindsight, became opportunities for combining new learning with past experiences. *Mash-up* provides a fitting analogy that describes this combining of the new with the old. Updating my background in education was at the top of my list of goals while planning doctoral studies. In the beginning, expertise in technology seemed only remotely possible because I had little depth of understanding and only the most cursory of experiences in classroom applications. While educational computing seemed an obvious choice for updating my teaching, it also presented the greatest challenges. Because of the wide array of challenges that became opportunities, completing my area of emphasis has provided the most personal satisfaction. There are too many milestones and significant learning experiences to discuss but a few examples demonstrate the growth in my personal learning and provide ‘aha’ moments worth noting.

Project-based coursework provided individualized learning opportunities to explore issues in technology integration, to use a wide variety of software applications, and to rethink my learning strategies and teaching methods. In *Technology and Curriculum* (CIEC 700), I gained a better understanding of how students in the Net Generation (Tapscott, 2009) approach learning. The potential influences on teaching strategies and methods and other ideas were explored in my group’s presentation, *The Net Generation as Consumers* (Appendix A, 5)*.* By researching and creating a presentation on *The Future of the Book*, I learned how to consider different perspectives on the role of print books, potential changes in their future purposes, and the evolving role of the publishing industry (Appendix A, 6). Designing a media presentation of a research paper *Five Academic Reasons* providedanother example of using technology to update ways to present information (Appendix A, 7).When completing these projects, I realized that presentations can be more dynamic when thinking beyond a sequence of PowerPoint slides to embellishing the presentation with design elements, such as animations, and then converting them to media formats using Windows Movie Maker. Completing these types of assignments gave me confidence in my abilities to integrate technology and to think about how to update course presentations.

Some of the most valuable learning experiences involved using various types of software to produce creative projects. By having the experience and working through the design process, I learned use~~s~~ for software for my work with the potential for teaching it to others. The diversity of software includes social bookmarking with Delicious and its use in research, using Jing to capture digital images, Photoshop Elements for editing images, and creating historically based presentations using a timeline program (Appendix A, 8.).

Online course development has been a significant aspect of learning in my area of emphasis. Online learning promises to offer new opportunities for me in teaching. In *Online Course Development and Delivery* (CIEC 715), I learned the basic elements of online course development and began to realize the potential for using blended course strategies in my teaching. I put my ideas to use in designing my *Final Project* (CIEC 699) by updating a unit inElementary Music Methods and Materials, a course that focuses on the Orff Approach (Appendix A, 9). In past semesters, it was difficult to plan for enough time for students to learn about the Orff Approach and practice its principles during class meetings. Based on the concept that using a blended course design can strengthen student learning experiences in the traditional classroom, I adapted materials that are easily presented online while reserving traditional classroom learning for hands-on experiences with playing instruments, song arranging, and practice. Resources for individual and group projects are now more readily available to students in an online course environment. I anticipate that I will convert other units in the course resulting in maximizing student learning and providing high level learning experiences for pre-service music teachers.

Combining past teaching experiences with new learning helped to realize goals associated with choosing educational computing as my area of emphasis – technology integration, developing proficiency in a variety of software applications, and rethinking of teaching and learning methods. Through individual and group projects, combining elements of old and new skills resulted in greater confidence in using technology and future opportunities for teaching online courses.

## Collaboration

Olio – (\ˈō-lē-ˌō\), *n.*, 1. **a:** a miscellaneous mixture; **b:** a miscellaneous collection (as of literary or musical selections)

One of the strengths of the Curriculum and Instruction program is the emphasis on collaboration. My experiences working with peers, course faculty, and especially members of my committee, have given me important insights into effective communication, nuances of collegiality in diverse situations and thoughtful scholarly discourse and teamwork. Although a miscellaneous mixture may imply an unrelated or weakly related group of elements, the concept provides an appropriate analogy describing my experiences of collaboration throughout the program of study. Valuable learning has occurred and important skills were developed through diversity of projects and collaborations as hands-on experiences.

Skills learned in teamwork will be especially helpful in the future. For example, the group project in the course *Survey Research in Education* (EDF 711), required participants to work in groups based on meeting as a class once a week. The planning and work involved with the initial development of surveys, through the analysis of data, to presenting of the report required efficient time management for discussion during limited time for meetings, reliance on individuals to each complete a portion of the study, and regular communication through electronic means. The satisfaction of meeting the goals of the project that focused on collaboration that occurs outside of familiar day-to-day work spaces and schedules helped me to develop new strategies (Appendix A, 10). As long-standing traditions in education are challenged to adapt to demands for updating and reform, ideas for meeting new challenges are important to educational professionals aspiring to continue work in the field.

A collaboration strategy used in several courses included study and development of a topic by two or three classmates. Each project was different in its use of PowerPoint, design, focus, and new personal learning. For example, in *Theories, Models and Research of Teaching* (CI 703), pairs of students each chose a learning theory for which they were responsible for researching, developing an in-depth class presentation, and facilitating further questions and discussion. My partner and I chose Howard Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (MI) (2011)*.* This was an opportunity for further study to gain deeper understandings and for me to share a theory with which I am familiar. I learned how MI theory is perceived from the viewpoint of someone outside my areas of interest (e.g. music disciplines, K-12 education, and teacher preparation) and through discussions expanded my understanding of how to apply Gardner’s theory (Appendix A, 11). A direct impact of my experiences will be in my ability to discuss MI theory with greater depth of understanding and to make a stronger presentation for its applications in the elementary music methods and graduate music learning theories courses I teach.

In a similar experience in *Curriculum Theories* (CI 702), a new partner and I researched an unfamiliar theory and theorist that newly influenced and shaped my thoughts and beliefs about teaching. Max van Manen (1991) and his method of inquiry Phenomenology opened up new ways of thinking about my own learning, the ways in which I think about teaching, and the act of teaching (Appendix A, 12). Sharing the study and presentation on vanManen and phenomenology created a stronger learning experience and even more importantly, developed an important friendship.

One of the more unique collaborations occurred in *Curriculum Development* (CI 701) in which two classmates and I developed an idea for a company and created a proposal for an educational experience based on course themes of social, economic, and political aspects of reconstructivism. The goals of our company, *LifeWorld Scholars: Constructing Social Justice through Education*, were to provide graduate students with opportunities to apply methods of inquiry and qualitative research to study issues affecting equal access to education in a real-world setting (Appendix A, 13). The collaboration was fun, spurred creative thinking, inspired enthusiastic collaboration, and created more opportunities to develop friendships that continue to sustain us in our work toward completing our degrees. The aspects I most value from my collaborative experiences are the ideas and models for projects that I can adapt for use in my own teaching.

Reflecting on learning through collaboration informs my approach in classroom teaching. Personal experiences influence creating strategies that help students understand the value of group work and ways in which personal learning is strengthened. An important outcome of student collaboration is reducing competitiveness among peers and promoting concepts of shared efforts in achieving successful goals. Developing a network of colleagues provides opportunities for talking through new ideas, seeking advice, sharing skills and knowledge, and encouragement to others in similar circumstances. And collaborations with faculty broaden perspectives, encourage deep thinking, teach professional attitudes, and develop support for academic success.

## Scholarship

Jambalya - ( \ˌjəm-bə-ˈlī-ə), *n.* 1. a mixture of diverse elements

My learning in the curriculum and instruction program has influenced my knowing and doing of curriculum and instruction. Notable program experiences are those that involved writing, technology integration, and content knowledge. In recalling the assortment of courses and the wide variety of learning experiences diversity rather than unity seems emphasized. But as in making *jambalaya,* the result is a mix of individual ingredients that blend well together. In reflecting on my learning, a number of unique experiences have combined to create new knowledge of curriculum and instruction.

Early in *Qualitative Research in Education* (EDF 625) there was a realization that writing well, meticulously, and with style were going to be critical to success in not only the course but throughout my work in the doctoral program. Writing in my courses had to be more than preparation for writing the dissertation. Each opportunity required full attention to the mechanics of writing and communication of ideas. Because I am a musician, I know that expertise requires persistence and practice. But as Coyle (2009) writes, three components are required to build expertise - deep practice, ignition, and master coaching. I knew how to develop deep practice, I was motivated (e.g., ignition), but I needed master coaches. Many of the faculty have served as master coaches. For me, it has been the variety of perspectives experienced through their setting high expectations together with detailed and thorough feedback on assignments, and regular practice that have sharpened my writing skills. In future teaching, the modeling and range of ideas for developing writing skills will be valuable.

The focus on writing in *Writing for Publication* (CI 677) made it possible for me to move more quickly to a higher level of writing. Working with peers on writing assignments and writing a book review for publication were especially helpful. Regular weekly assignments to read and analyze excellent writing as well as practice writing were valuable. One of the biggest challenges in the doctoral program has been in writing a review of Ono’s (2009) *Contemporary Media Culture and the Remnants of a Colonial Past.* In turn, one of the greatest satisfactions was in receiving confirmation of its publication in the journal of the *Humanities Education and Research Association.* The ability to think in language and not just in words rose to a higher level because I learned how to refine and hone my writing throughout the course (Appendix A, 14).

Each course in my area of emphasis, Educational Computing, has challenged me to learn new information and skills, rethink what I teach and how I teach it, and to integrate technology that refreshes teaching and learning in my classes. My use of technology improved from record keeping and word processing to using Windows Movie Maker to create video presentations, adding animation to PowerPoint slideshows, and exploring issues such as understanding the Net Generation, video gaming in education, and the future of books. Because of other hands-on experiences in *Technology and Curriculum*, Deliciouswas introducedto music education graduate students for developing literature reviews and Wordle was demonstrated to elementary music education students. In *Online Course Development and Delivery*, course development activities led to new online resources for teaching psychology of music and ideas for developing student research projects on music learning theory. Many concepts related to syllabus writing and course design have become part of revisions to frequently taught traditional courses.

Coursework in the Curriculum and Instruction series of courses provided valuable opportunities for advanced studies in curriculum theorists and their theories, curriculum models, curriculum development, and research of teaching. Two of my goals were achieved - to broaden my knowledge base and knowledge of education foundations. This resulted in forming background in curriculum and instruction and then weaving it together with teaching experiences from public schools and higher education. For example, in *Curriculum Development*, I thought it was fortunate to be part of a group presentation on Jerome Bruner and his Spiral Curriculum (Culatta, 2011). His ideas are familiar as a framework for curriculum development in school music. When past experiences were merged with a wider reading and study of his works, a deeper understanding of how curriculum theory informs curriculum development based on Bruner’s ideas was realized.

Some of the most complex and sophisticated Curriculum and Instruction concepts based on the ideas in phenomenology and of theorists such as van Manen and Huebner were encountered in *Curriculum Theories* (CI 702). van Manen’s (1991) concepts about curriculum and instruction became important to me as I explored ways for new learning to become integrated with past experiences. His ideas inspired examination of my teaching and to consider how curriculum could be organized to support it. He suggests that the structure of thinking on teaching is different from thinking in teaching and that pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact as mindful skills are central to this approach. As a phenomenologist, he proposes education as investigating how humans experience the world and emphasizes aesthetic aspects of life.

Two provocative ideas also resonate with me: Look for what is in between, obscured from view, and unspoken but understood by the individual (van Manen, 1991) and from Palmer (2007) good teaching comes from the heart. The best teachers move beyond technique toward weaving together their subject and themselves and connecting with students. Musicians aspire to these ideas too. When we can hear and feel the “in between” in music – between the notes, inside the silences and rests, the even pulse behind the uneven rhythmic patterns, and hear pitches before they sound - musical performance moves beyond the mechanical domain and into a higher level of understanding. Making music from the heart connects musicians one to another and then to the listeners.

In retrospect, an accumulation of diverse learning experiences in educational technology, writing, and curriculum and instruction have blended well together. Past expectations for personal reflection, introspection, and assessment revealed weak writing habits, outdated skills, and gaps in knowledge. New learning and opportunities to incorporate past experiences resulted in renewed enthusiasm for teaching, gaining a new community of learners, and expanded career possibilities.

## Research

Montage – (\män-ˈtäzh, mōⁿ(n)-\), *n.*, 1.**a:** a literary, musical, or artistic composite of juxtaposed more or less heterogeneous elements; **b:** a composite picture made by combining several separate pictures; **2.** a heterogeneous mixture

Research projects throughout my program of study represent a diversity of experiences that combine to strengthen my skills as a researcher. Enrolling in *Qualitative Research in Education* EDF 625) provided the ideal launch of my exploration of the Curriculum and Instruction doctoral program. An important connection to past research surfaced as I realized that my interests as a researcher from my master’s work had become an accepted approach to research and that it had a name – qualitative research. My project, *Make a Joyful Noise*, was a case study that began with the question “*Why do adults continue to participate in music making later in life?”*. I honed my research design, interviewing, data coding, data analysis, and writing as a researcher skills throughout the semester (Appendix A, 15). I learned that qualitative research was the key to connecting my music educator focus to doctoral work in curriculum and instruction. But I also learned that my research skills required continued practice if I expected to be prepared to take on my dissertation project; specifically, I needed to learn how to ask well-crafted and probing research questions and to maintain project focus as it unfolds. The challenge for me continues to be balancing broad perspectives of a qualitative researcher with producing focused and meaningful research.

My background in educational statistics was limited and I realized early in my program a need for an improved aptitude for statistics. The best chance to address this goal was in *Statistical Methods* (EDF 517) and once I completed the course, I had acquired the necessary vocabulary, felt greater confidence in using statistics, and improved my abilities to interpret research studies. Previous experiences in *Survey Research in Education* (EDF 711) combined opportunities to incorporate statistics into a research project that helped identify specific weaknesses in my ability to use statistics. When added to the opportunities to practice qualitative research techniques for projects in courses such as *Multicultural Education* (CI 706) and *Program Planning and Evaluation* (CI 627) and with the *Glenwood Project*, I feel ready to take *Mixed Methods* (CI 620) in preparation for dissertation research.

A good example of combining diverse elements in becoming a researcher is a video gaming research project from *Technology and Curriculum* (CIEC 715). I played the video game *Age of Mythology* and wrote about my experiences as an exploration into possible connections between video gaming and learning. My project was part of group presentation at the AACE EdMedia20l2: World Conference on Educational Media and Technology in Denver and the paper was published in the online conference proceedings (Appendix A, 16).

An important element in developing our presentation was the strong network that developed from prior collaborative experiences. Planning for our session “Exploring the Application of Gaming and Gaming Principles in Education” required each of us to create a short presentation that covered the main themes of our research and then coordinate our topics. We also prepared for follow-up questions and audience discussion. Although I have given conference presentations in the past, this one presented unexpected challenges to talk about a new subject outside my familiar field of music education. In retrospect, the success of the group’s presentation was due in part to the trust and camaraderie we shared and our reliance on each other to contribute our best scholarship. I learned the value of engaging in new ideas for research and that the results can be made stronger with the help of others.

As a result of this experience, I was able to take advantage of two recent opportunities for collaboration. I proposed to another classmate that we collaborate on a presentation that was accepted for presentation at the 2013 WV Technology Conference. Our presentation *Team Spirit: Collaborative Learning in the Age of Millennials* focused on strategies for use of technology by students in creating group projects (Appendix A, 17). Working with Dr. Heaton and a group of colleagues produced a new professional development online course, *Social Networking for Teachers and Students,* and gave me valuable experience in teaching an online technology course (Appendix A, 18).

## Conclusions

Pursuing doctoral studies in the Curriculum and Instruction program has been analogous to creating collage. The artfulness of collage focuses on the process of mixing, merging, fusing, and integrating several diverse elements, textures, shapes, and colors. Imagining a collage requires picturing a design that can be subject to alteration, remain centered on an idea, and have potential for continued change even after it is complete. Creating a collage means fitting pieces together of varying connectedness that may be cut or resized to fit and rearranged numerous times. In viewing a completed collage there is a perception of unification while individual elements remain identifiable.

This process of reflection has shown how diversity in my program of study became a cohesive blend of experiences in scholarship, collaboration, and research. As I proceeded through my coursework, the connectedness of learning progressively emerged and grew into a solid body of experiences supportive of exploring future opportunities. In retrospect, I have recalled only a few selected examples of my learning and growth as a doctoral student in the curriculum and instruction program. But I believe they demonstrate the growth of my learning and the potential for future scholarship. And even more importantly, determine that I am prepared to take on the research and writing of my dissertation.

The mix of research projects in the examples above and in others I worked on during my program represents a montage of projects that helped me develop my research interests and skills Practice in several courses in writing research questions helped prepare a dissertation design. I have updated my abilities to use APA style, learned strategies for developing literature reviews, and worked to hone my writing for clarity, focus of content, and flow of ideas, and developed better skills of analysis and synthesis.

Earlier research interests remain focused on interdisciplinary studies in undergraduate curriculum. When opportunities to study topics related to my research interests arose, projects or themes were chosen to build background and knowledge while investigating potential research topics. A recent project in the course *Program Planning and Evaluation* centered on looking at professional development and resources for faculty who will teach in Marshall University’s *First Year Seminar* (FYS) program (Appendix A, 19). I am interested in researching the impact of interdisciplinary studies as curriculum change, its effects on teaching and learning, faculty involvement in undergraduate curriculum development, and commitment of institutional resources. A potential design for the study may involve looking at other higher education institutions for contrasts and similarities for the same factors, look to the literature for what has proven successful or worthwhile, and apply findings in a case study of Marshall’s FYS program that may provide valuable data and information related to Marshall’s recent reforms of undergraduate curriculum and the requirements for an interdisciplinary focus.

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# Appendix A:

**Portfolio Artifacts**

1. Book Review: Eisner, E. (2002). *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*

PowerPoint: Book Review

2. Paper: Anti-intellectualism: How Did it Get Here and How Do We Get Rid of It?

PowerPoint: Paper Presentation

3. Personal Curriculum Theory: A Personal Curriculum Theory: A Synthesis of Meanings and Values

4. Personal Theory Model

5. PowerPoint: Net Generation as Consumers

6. Video: Are Books Headed for a Paperless Future?

Video Informercial: Innovations in Music Performance

7. Video: Article Review - Five Academic Reasons Why State Virtual Schools Are Important to Your State

8. Digital Timeline: Regina Carter, Violinist

Digital Portfolio: CIEC 630 – Authoring Systems and Multimedia

(Socrative, Audacity, Photoshop, Photopeach, Timeline, Screen Capture, Multimedia)

9. PowerPoint: Teaching and Learning with the Orff Approach

10. Survey Research Project: Using Targeted Professional Development in Standards-Based Math to Improve Student Achievement in Grades 6-9 in RESA 4: An Evaluation of the West Virginia RESA 4 Math Professional Development Workshop

11. PowerPoint: Multiple Intelligences Theory – A Theoretical and

Practical Overview

12. PowerPoint: van Manen: Creator of the Phenomenology Movement

13. PowerPoint: LifeWorld Scholars: Creating Social Justice Through Education

14. Book Review: Ono, K. (2009). Contemporary Media Culture and the Remnants of a Colonial Past

15. Research Paper: Make a Joyful Noise

16. Research Paper: Gee’s Semiotic Domain Principle and Gaming: Is There a Connection to Teaching and Learning?

17. PowerPoint: Team Spirit: Collaborative Learning in the Age of Millenials

18. CIEC563 Syllabus: Social Networking for Teachers and Students

19. Papers: Evaluation Plan and Final Report – The Marshall University FYS Faculty Development Institute

# Appendix B:

**Program Artifacts**

1. EdD Application: Program Goals Statement

2. LS703 – Research Proposal

3. Doctoral Seminar Brochures – attended Fall 2010 and Spring 2011, Committee Member Fall 2011, Presenter Fall 2012, Committee Member 2013

4. Final Project in Area of Emphasis (CIEC 699)

5. Research Seminar

6. Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society

7. Book Review Consent

8. AACE/EdMedia 2012 Conference Proposal – Co-authored proposal

AACE/EdMedia 2012 Conference Acceptance – Co-authored presentation at National Conference

AACE/EdMedia 2012 Conference Paper Abstract and Citation

9. A&S600 Syllabus: Film Music: Magical Tunes – Developing a course in collaboration with faculty member

1. Definitions for collage and all synonyms from *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved at http://www.merriam-webster.com/. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)