Marnie (Post It class assignment, first steps in Strategic Personal Planning)

BENEFITING FROM THE TENSION AND ACHIEVING BALANCE IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Acknowledge the EMOTIONAL side of doing art and research	**RISK**	These items require a shift in my perspective (emotional as much as intellectual)	Practiced and played more (stopped expecting perfection)
			Identified my art as part of physical/mental health
			Gave away (& sold) some old work
			Kept list of outrageous ideas
			Broadened my perspective (definitions)
			Expanded into other media
			Began seeing my own perspective as legitimate and worthy
	CONNECT	These are relationship building and taking myself out of isolation	Attended more gallery shows
			Involved myself with artists in my community
			Began reviewing work of other artists as an exercise
			Read more
Stay focused on CONCRETE, MEASURABLE steps to achieving goals	**DISCIPLINE**	These are necessary pieces to completing research and art and moving to next/other work and pieces (get out of stagnancy)	Established several sources for feedback (took myself out of isolation)
			Force myself to do weekly assessment of progress in goals/tasks and develop next steps
			Had more output/work…CREATED
			Developed test/feedback models for finished work (different than feedback as it is developing)
			Looked for opportunities to share work
			Journaled in art journal with regularity
			Maintained contact list
			Invested in a digital camera to document & honor my work
	ORGANIZE	These are practical ways to accomplish class work and art	Reiterated verbally or on paper to ensure I understand ideas/assignments/concepts/questions.
			Used timeline for concrete goals
			Created *sacred* time/space for art
			Developed good system for note taking
			Created idea/materials "drop box" for art journal (to not lose ides)
			Used structured assignments to get myself *doing*

Personal Strategic Planning Process

From the post-its, I have come to 4 verbs, risk, organize, connect, discipline

I know I have done this exercise honestly as there are all things that I do struggle with, though I can do each well if I make the effort. So now these are to become a part of my Strategic Personal Planning Process.

I have gotten a little lost at this point because I don't see my project in this as clearly as I believe I should. I really did envision that I had already completed the class and accomplished my goals and so the post-its were written in the past tense. Then I grouped them easily….as I felt there were clear distinctions, yet some overlap.

RISK

Some had to do with a shift in my perspective (that is required in order to complete this project). One is to give away and sell some old work. This is not directly related, but I hold onto what I have done tightly and in some ways it prevents me from moving forward with new work, and sometimes it keeps me from doing different work. Another was seeing my own perspective as legitimate and worthy. This goes right to the heart of my frustration in not finding articles about my topic. My tendency of thought is that if there are no articles on this, then I must be wrong or I must abandon this project. I need to shift my thinking to accommodate the possibility that I may be asking completely new questions and/or bringing new insight to the existence conversation and research on interactive art. I categorized these two and several others (keep a list of outrageous ideas, expand into other media, stop expecting perfect pieces and play more, see the connection between my physical and mental health and my art) under the verb RISK. I need to take more risks, and letting go of protective, tight ways of thinking is one of the highest risks.

ORGANIZE

This verb came from post-its such as "create sacred time and space for art", "reiterate verbally on paper to ensure I understand ideas/assignments/concepts/questions", "create idea/materials 'drop-box' for later use with art journal". I saw these all as practical ways to accomplish class work on the project as well as art work, art work which feels like a necessary corollary to the research. My questions are generated through work and possibly some may get answered this way. These are ways for me to not lose thoughts because I do multitask and I do have a lot of pieces moving at one time in my life right now. It is also important because this is where I am intentional. For example, if I identify that my studio space layout can be a barrier to my work, and then make choices for a desired outcome, then test the use of my space reorganized, then makes further adjustments, this is choice accompanied with thought. I need to do the same thing with the pieces I create, and with my project as I proceed.

CONNECT

The connecting post-its are all about relationship building and taking myself out of isolation. My isolation is part intentional, but largely it is about self-doubt and fear. I wrote "read more". How will this help me? I do not believe that my research and my evolution as an artist, an interactive artist, a student, a person or anything will happen by reading obviously related material alone. It is the connecting of seemingly disparate ideas that generates creativity. Kristen has told me that I need to read Venus and Adonis. She believes it will help my project. Reading is a way of connecting to the larger world of ideas and culture and so this is key. I also wrote "attend more gallery shows of current artists", "involve myself with artists in my community", and "begin reviewing the work of other artists as an exercise". The ladder ties to one of Peter's directions from today's meeting, that I consider reviewing several interactive works. I have been a little lax about connecting to people as I need for this project because I have always felt "less" in the art community and my old lack of confidence rushes to the surface. Frankly I feel ignorant and almost like I don't have any right or place even asking these questions. Connecting, forcing myself to connect, will enable me to practice comfort and eventually see what I know (intellectually) to be true, which is that I have no more or less right to be asking these questions….AND ANSWERING THEM…than anybody else.

DISCIPLINE

Some post-its in this category overlapped with relationship building (CONNECT). For example, "look for opportunities to share work", maintain list of artists for possible collaboration", and "establish sources (people) for feedback". But I put these under discipline rather than connect because the others are more reflective and social while these are concrete steps in propelling my work. In this category I also had, "force myself to do weekly assessment of what I have done and what I need to still do", "journal in art journal with regularity", "develop models/means of feedback for finished work (different than feedback as it is developing)", "invest in a digital camera to document and honor work (in progress and final work)", and "output more". I can readily apply many of these to both creating my art and proceeding with my research project. And "output more" really came remembering that creativity and critical thinking requires an initial flood of unedited ideas. I can always select later. This is in a way what I am doing now. Everything in the discipline category are necessary pieces to generating, completing and moving on, and so avoiding stagnancy.

And I still am unsure if I did this assignment right so far, but I think the post-its do have meaning and use or they would not have been generated by my thinking.

MOVING ONWARD BY BUILDING STRUCTUREDNESS WITH FEELING

Build scaffolding for doing while putting components in position	Getting things done has multiple components	Sharing for less of a burden	Advance preparation		
		Current chores & burdens			
		Future travel agents kind of chores	necess-ary Lubric-ation	Clear structure for my develop-ing work	
		Human connect-ions w/ colleagues & students			
Strands of feeling to be woven into my future	Productive acknowledgement of tension b/w dominant story & emergent	Outward & onward disposition	Present myself well	Work towards future vision	
			Notice resistance to others' Voices	Don't operate on top of emotional unclarity	Restory-ing (towards recogni tion)
		Acknowledge emotional baggage in the present			

Strategic Personal Planning

The theme of all of my strategic personal planning is to more effectively narrow my attention to the realistic achievements within my research for the next few months. Generally, I have felt that my research has often expanded rather than contracted, so I have at times become lost in the breadth and depth of research material and have found it rewarding to explore that even though I have also needed time to manage my research process. At this point, a main theme of my continued research is to be satisfied with my accomplishment so far and also be dedicated to the concrete tasks that need to be finished for my final paper/project.

Current status:

1. class assignments A-E completed, meaning that I now have a clear research bibliography that I am using to focus my exploration

2. developed a clear notetaking system for my research materials; I have defined a set of subtopics of my research that help me to organize my broad ideas, so now it has become easier to focus my attention on the research, since many of the resources are lengthy books rather than articles. I have spent much time reading but have experienced slow progress because the volume of possible reading is very high. My system of organization is allowing me to selectively choose reading in a more efficient way.

3. I have done some significant work regarding interviewing/visiting relevant to my project. This has included three phone interviews so far and a visit to a theater-based education program. There are two more visits/conversations pending regarding other use of applied theater in social change education. I have come to realize more that this process of finding "allies" and organizations in my search for applications of theater in education toward social change is simply an ongoing process of all of my future work, so I will need to start to consider this more outside of the construct of the Research and Engagement course. In a way, I feel like the expansion of my own involvement in the greater community is itself a ultimate outcome that I have needed from the course. I still need to complete my write-up of the interactions mentioned above.

Areas of greatest priority for upcoming months:

1. Shift from spending time reading, interviewing, and reflecting to writing instead. Because I have so many different ideas and thoughts about ways of thinking about my research, it is vitally

important to continue to fill out the outline of my research paper with more and more detail and finish my first draft within the next few weeks.

2. Find ways to engage with the other members of the class to work out the remaining questions and challenges to my assumptions. After our upcoming discussion of peer support, I hope to establish at least one "partner" in class with which to share work and offer encouragement.

3. Share my current progress with others in a more regular way. One of my goals for myself was to find ways to include others more in my work, and I've found that I need to return to a more basic level of interaction that can move away from the "weight" of research that I've done. One way to do this is to talk about the enjoyment of learning with the adults in my workplace and hear more personal stories about what makes learning fun for them. Also, I will plan to speak more with those in my improv. class about rewarding parts of the class.

Obstacles to moving forward:

1. <u>Obstacle</u>: As I have continued researching, I have found additional resources that seem relevant, but it is too easy to become involved in their depths, and this takes time. The underlying obstacle is that I feel the need to explore every resource even though there really is not enough time to do so. This seems related to my enthusiasm to learn more and more, which involves some difficult feelings because I realize that I can't spend all of my time in that way.

   • <u>Way to address this</u>: I have now formed a revised bibliography, so now I feel that I must remain within that and trust that my resources are highly sufficient even if not globally representative of all of the ideas that I would like to explore. Also equally importantly, I have found that my interactions with others who engage in theater, education, and social change have been extremely fulfilling and have given me a practical view of this area that encourages me to move beyond the written research.

2. <u>Obstacle</u>: I find myself with limited time in terms of my classwork, day job, work as a graduate assistant, and other professional interests. In each of these cases, there is designated time to be physically present in each situation, but the nature of each also encourages some thought before and after. In my "in-between" times, there is competition between my attention to each of these areas, and it can be a struggle to focus on one at a time.

   • <u>Way to address this</u>: I have decided to define a literal schedule of my free time in terms of which of these areas can be reasonably addressed within that time. For example, I have set my time of Saturday morning between 10:00am-12:00noon for reading and note-taking for

one of my classes, and I have designated the times for other activities as well. This has allowed me to discipline myself to confine my thoughts to certain areas and be less distracted.

3. Obstacle: I had some multiple/redundant note-taking systems that were taking too much time to manage.

   - Way to address this: I have now consolidated my note-taking system and now organize all of my work electronically. Originally, I felt that by writing everything by hand first and then transferring it to the computer, I was giving myself an opportunity for revision and reflection during that task and therefore would find new meaning in my notes/writing/planning. Now, I have established single computer files for each kind of related idea and enter new writings here directly (when possible). Even though I still benefit from hand-written notes as needed, I have had computer experience far long enough to most naturally find organization with computer files and still allow myself the flexibility of revision. For example, typing my weekly class journal in a single file actually makes it much each to review entries from previous weeks and make sense of my current reflections, so the whole process is much more clear and does not feel disjointed, which is what I experienced when taking notes first by hand all of the time.

Clear steps and tasks to continue my work (to be completed no later than the week of Thanksgiving):

1. complete my remaining phone discussions with those involved in adult ed. using theater principles.
2. review web sites of my list of relevant local organizations that integrate theater, education, and attention to social issues.
3. seek a workshop or class for future attendance regarding directing theater
4. review my notes/documentation from my previous CCT classes and include core ideas in my electronic notes
5. write out at least 3 examples of my own ideas for activities that involve using theater in a classroom setting to teach a social change concept, as a foundation for further experimentation, dialogue, and discussion (for possible inclusion in final paper)
6. develop a basic outline for a teacher education workshop which introduces the idea of theater activities into the adult education environment and specifies timing, goals, and suggested flow of the workshop.

Research Design
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Audience
Teachers and individuals involved with curriculum design in schools, and creativity theorists.

Thesis
Education should focus on the developmental cognitive elements of creativity to have the greatest impact on adult creativity.

Components
1. Establish what the components of creative development are.
2. Show that these elements are substantiated by, and augment, the existing theories of creativity.
3. Establish when these elements develop.
4. Discuss how to encourage and promote the elements development in education.

Research Completed
1. A preliminary list of elements, based on existing theories and Piaget.(applies to components 1,2 and 3)
2. Review of most prominent theories of creativity (applies to component 2)
3. Gathering of other developmental theories of creativity (Gowan and Greenwald) (applies to 1,3 and 4)
4. Initial collection of curriculum theories and education of creativity. (applies to step 4)

Research to Be Done
1. Continued collection of curriculum material and creativity education material. To be completed by Dec. 1

Tasks to Be Done
1. Review of elements list by creativity experts and developmental experts. To be completed by Nov. 22
2. Further reading and understanding of Piaget and the theories relation to creative development. To be completed by Nov. 20
3. Writing. Draft completed by Dec. 6