


Chapter-10

FROM “I AM NOT A CREATIVE PERSON” TO “MAYBE I AM A LITTLE ARTISTIC”: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH, AND ARTS-INFORMED PEDAGOGY IN THE NEOLIBERAL ACADEMY

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ABSTRACT

This collaborative ethnographic study describes what it was like to be members of the class, Creative Approaches to Studying Organizational Culture. We interlace participants' voices with our reflections to describe our experiences and to analyze the ways in which the course met its espoused goals, as well as the tensions that class members experienced as we pursued those goals within a neoliberal university. Specifically, we identify successes and challenges related to studying ethnography through experiential learning, engaging in collaborative research, and practicing arts-based research (ABR). We explore the implications of our findings for teaching experiential collaborative ABR classes in the neoliberal academy.

Keywords: Arts-based Research Pedagogy, Collaborative Ethnography, Experiential Learning, Neoliberal University

INTRODUCTION

This class was not what I thought I was signing up for, and there were some stressful moments. I grew, though. I gained empathy. I used a critical cultural lens. I made friends. I was an ethnographer. For a moment, I was in crisis, and I am better for it.

--Brooke, graduate student

I feel that once you get to a certain point in your degree you just begin to apply things you have learned previously and you aren't learning new things as much anymore--but not with this class. I had never heard of arts-based research before this class and I really enjoyed this new take on research.

--Willow, undergraduate student

Arts-based research was a completely new idea for me as well. When it came time to figure out what we wanted to do for that, we decided to have fun with it. It gave us the opportunity to be creative. I have never had so much fun with a partner working on a

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