

2017

¡Adelante! El Mundo Mágico Creado, The Magical World Created: P-16 US Students Create an International Collage between Cuba and USA

Miwon Choe, *Western Kentucky University*
Juan Silivio Cabrera Albert,, Director

Handbook of Research on the Facilitation of Civic Engagement through Community Art

Leigh Nanney Hersey
University of Louisiana Monroe, USA

Bryna Bobick
University of Memphis, USA

A volume in the Advances in Media,
Entertainment, and the Arts (AMEA) Book Series



www.igi-global.com

Published in the United States of America by

IGI Global
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)
701 E. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey PA, USA 17033
Tel: 717-533-8845
Fax: 717-533-8661
E-mail: cust@igi-global.com
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

Copyright © 2017 by IGI Global. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without written permission from the publisher. Product or company names used in this set are for identification purposes only. Inclusion of the names of the products or companies does not indicate a claim of ownership by IGI Global of the trademark or registered trademark.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

CIP Data Pending

ISBN: 978-1-5225-1727-6

eISBN: 978-1-5225-1728-3

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

For electronic access to this publication, please contact: eresources@igi-global.com.

Chapter 17

¡Adelante! El Mundo Mágico Creado, The Magical World Created:

P-16 US Students Create an International Collage between Cuba and USA

Miwon Choe

Western Kentucky University, USA

Juan Silvio Cabrera Albert

Crearte Project Director, Cuba

ABSTRACT

This chapter illustrates the unique cross-sector visual arts exchange program between Cuba and the U.S. This collaborative project is situated in the Cuban educational perspective of Pedagogía de la Ternura (Pedagogy of Tenderness) and La Clásica Mágica (Magical Class), contextually driven bilingual model for diverse student population in the U.S. The role of art in Cuban context of national and cultural identity is also discussed. The CreArte in Cuba, a voluntary cultural community inspired organization, aims to improve the cultural life and the realities of all the local participants. In the U.S., CreArte project was implemented at a local high school to create a positive learning space for the most disenfranchised local high school students enrolled in a remedial reading program. The juxtaposition of two apparently disparate and contrasting realities formed an amazing collage of hope and trust beyond the visible cognitive, behavioral, and affective literacy outcomes for the students and adults in both countries traveling across 90 miles of troubled water between Cuba and USA.

IN THE BEGINNING: UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

In this chapter, we present *El Mundo Mágico de CreArte: Ilustra un Sueño* (Magical World of Create: Illustrate a dream) situated in multi-sector project sites; pre-service art teacher program in the U.S. insti-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1727-6.ch017

tute of higher education, local public high school in the U.S and Cuba, as well as the community cultural project in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. The transcultural (Ortiz, 1995) project setting called for non-conventional and alternative curriculum thinking that presented both challenges and rewards. The instructional methodology implemented has been organic and grounded on transworld pedagogy exemplified by the concept of *La Clase Mágica* (Gutiérrez, 2014). The participating students' socio-cultural context, linguistic lived knowledge and personal narrative were actively sought after and validated as an essence of creative process, be it the literacy of language or visual arts, as an additive rather than a substrative factor or liability for instruction (Valenzuela, 1999). The project philosophy was conceived by collaborating partners in three different sectors of educational institutions; Western Kentucky University Art Education program, participating local high school Art 1 class, and Community Arts Project in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. How all the components of the collage fit together is a complicated story spanning over a decade, juxtaposing materials that might not have been associated with each other. Gradually, ideas began making praxis connections and provided a foundation as well as cultural space for alternative visual arts pedagogy.

In Cuba, *CreArte: Crecer con las Artes (Create: Grow with the Arts)* was founded as a community inspired social development project for the students of six to fourteen years old in Pinar del Rio. *CreArte* aims to:

1. Promote values related to traditions and regional identity;
2. Develop cultural spaces for the spiritual growth of people, and their healthy leisure and aesthetic values;
3. Develop a platform for community network;
4. Advance environmental awareness for food supplies, the use of renewable sources of energy, and love for nature;
5. Advocate research, exchange and cultural entrepreneurship, economic sustainability, and dissemination of results.

CreArte is a non-profit project based on the voluntary contribution of community members. It is coordinated by a steering group of teachers, cultural promoters, community-minded renowned artists, and the representatives of the local government council. From its inception in 2012, the management has been led by Dr. Juan Silvio Cabrera, former Faculty Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Pinar del Rio and Project Specialist of UNEAC¹- CIERIC², Pinar del Río, Cuba with the help of resident artist and writer for children's literature, Néstor Montes de Oca. The historical context of UNEAC is a unique Cuban entity founded in 1961 by the Revolutionary government as a social, cultural and professional organization of writers, musicians, actors, painters, sculptors, and artist of different genres. The UNEAC still supports the professional interests of its members, represents new artistic and literacy values, but most importantly promotes the collective national values of Cuban culture and identity represented in all forms of the arts. This framework of arts and literature as a foundation of their national identity and collective societal values unmistakably underscores the heart of the Cuba and U.S. art exchange program, *El Mundo Mágico de CreArte: Ilustra un sueño* in the past three years. -

From the U.S. side, the foundation of this cross-cultural, cross-sector, and cross-disciplinary project between visual and language arts began as a field-based service learning activity where each pre-service art teacher enrolled in a capstone secondary methods course, and was assigned as a college mentor to individually work with high school student. The studio theme was based on their agreed upon ideas to explore. The project assigned was literature-based, collaborative, and conversational. As their field-based

service learning advanced through the semester, preliminary teaching strategies became increasingly organic and fluid. Both the high school students and college mentors found themselves in an unfamiliar territory crossing the formal context of school structure as Jeffers (2010) put it metaphorically “exploring borderland or border crossing” towards discovering renewed instructional tools, perspectives, and the coordinated space of teaching and learning. In the context of art teacher preparation, this cross-cultural border-crossing interactions and experiences of *CreArte* project inspired a wealth of opportunities for renewed pedagogical tools and values.

Distance over Troubled Water: U.S. and Cuba

Lisandro Otero González, a late Cuban novelist and journalist stated, Cuba is a small country destined to play a role out of proportion for its size. While the popular consciousness of Europe and North America still imagine Cuba as a land of cigars, nightclubs, music, and antique American automobiles, today’s Cuba has its presence beyond the Cuban Revolution in 1959, in the international arena with the borders once again open as a prelude for future possibilities. In August 2015, the eyes of the world, yet again witnessed the historic moment of the U.S. flag rising in front of the previous U.S. Interest Section, now reestablished as the U.S. Embassy alongside the seawall of Malecón in Havana. It is a step in the right direction with a small light beam hitting the hearts of Cubans and Americans alike.

The collective views of multiple authors of *Bridging Enigma: Cubans on Cuba* (1996) effectively illustrate the height and breadth of healthy Cuban cultural phenomenon regardless of the economic difficulties and challenges. The resilience of Cuba’s resistance and struggle, rooted in the revolutionary ideals, remained vibrant even with the severe economic problems brought about by the breakup of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) in 1991. The negative impact of the sustained U.S. economic blockade, surprising to some of us outsiders, did not stop mobilizing Cuban artists and writers for their individual achievement in the international arena, which parallels with Cuban medical and educational systems that rank higher than other Latin American counterparts. Many of the Cuban vanguard artists of modern era prior to the Revolution embraced the realistic credo where their art reflected daily contemporary life of “Here and Now” in a specific Cuban socio-cultural context. As such, Cuban art and literature speaks to the outside world of their national and cultural identity where their expression is rooted on the unique Cuban socio-cultural realities.

Contextualizing El Mundo Mágico de CreArte (Magical World of CreArte)

The *CreArte*³ project occupies a space in between, educationally and physically, the two cultures of the U.S. and Cuba, arts in P-12 schools and community settings, and visual and language arts as a dual modality of communication. With its central ethos of equity and quality, education is one of the most remarkable and fundamental commitments the Cuban Revolution has achieved (Carnoy, Gove, & Marshall, 2007; González & Sabina, 2012; Lutjens, 2007; Martí, L. T., & Céspedes, 2001) for its effectiveness and consistency. The centralized policy of Cuban education system is based on national goals and values where the arts education is situated, yet permits local autonomy bridging theory with praxis at the core of educational culture.

Cubans believe the primary goal of education is to transmit cultural capital of Cuban national identity, *Cubanismo* through the development of a whole human being. Despite the lack of material wealth, the programs in language, music, art, and drama are deemed important to the integral development of the

student and community, and not negotiable. According to UNESCO, Cuba dedicates about 10% of its budget to education (compared with 2% in the U.S.). 2015 UNESCO report ranks Cuba the 3rd in the world for its literacy rate, 99.8% and Cuban students score higher than any other country in Central and South America on standardized tests. In a fascinating research conducted by the Stanford professor and economist, Martin Carnoy (2007), he employed empirical tools of statistical analysis, interviews, and classroom observation to understand how economically impoverished Cuba academically outperforms the rest of Latin America. The study provides useful insights for the social context of Cuban education, which is characterized by long term policy consistency, rigorous teacher training, strong partnership with community and parent, instructional efficiency, and longer relationships of student-teacher. Cuban schools follow the Montessori method, in which students spend four to six years with the same primary school teacher. Promised by the Revolution, education in Cuba is considered a right and a duty, and a responsibility for everyone (*tarea de todos*) (Lutjens, p.165). She continues to explain that the commitment of the Cuban state to social justice and the welfare, well-being, and development of the Cuban people lends to a *caring* state, one that extends its responsibilities to include the physical, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of members of the nation. Despite the economic difficulties Cuba has faced due to the U.S. Embargo, the Cuban revolution has produced some of the happiest kids in the world, a Journalist Corbett (2002) explains. Even during the Special Period after the fall of Soviet in the early 90s, the grade school *pioneros* knew little of such hardship.

CreArte and the Art of Imagination

We believe that the essence of *CreArte* lies in the world of imagination inspired by literary narratives and stories where time and space intersect in a way that the physical world does not permit. The field of education in the U.S. seems to be always in a flux with a list of reform ideas, new standards, and educational policies that primarily focus on cognitive development, leaving far behind the creative, affective, and social development of children and youth. The most important catalyst of the *CreArte* project, both Cuban and U.S. counterparts, was an unconditional dedication to our imaginative narrative. Therefore, art was to be inspired by the beauty of language, poetry, and stories from deep inside soul and humanity. As John Dewey sees it, deeper understanding and awareness must be linked to imagination... as imagination is the gateway through which meanings are derived from past experiences and find their way into the present; it is the conscious adjustment of the new and the old” (1934, p. 272). Steven Hawking⁴, British Physicist and Cosmologist, also explains the metaphysical nature of the imaginative world, “One can think of ordinary real, time as a horizontal line. On the left, one has the past, and on the right, the future. But there’s another kind of time in the vertical direction. This is called imaginary time, because it is not the kind of time we normally experience. But in a sense it is just as real, as what we call real time” (Bryanton, 2011).

Historically, psychologists, educators, and authors (Cabrera, 2003; Egan, 1992; Eisner, 2004; Green, 1995) iterated the significance of designing an educational process and structure engaging imagination not only as a mental tool, but also a pathway towards infinite possibility. Eisner articulates in his emphatic plea to an educational community and stakeholders, “Imagination is not a mere ornament... but the source of new possibilities. We ought to be helping our students discover new seas upon which to sail rather than old ports at which to dock (2008, p.11).” He further discusses flexible purposing, confluence of form and content, multifaceted problem solving, exploration and discovery where a great leap of imagination, surprises, and tacit knowledge take a center stage in place of

uniformity in aims, content, assessment, and even expectation. Kieran Egan, a Canadian psychologist and educator, repeats Eisner's point, stating that imagination is one of the most important cognitive tools to understand the world and the soul of teaching has to do with meaning, not measurement (2005, p. 212).

Pedagogy of Tenderness: Towards an Alternative Education

In addition to imagination as a universal narrative in education, the heart of the *CreArte* community project also connects to a particular Cuban pedagogical thinking, *Pedagogía de la Ternura* (Pedagogy of Tenderness). Lydia Turner Martí, a former director of research in the Ministry of Education and Balbina Pita Céspedes (2001), illustrate multitudes of vignettes to explain that the children are the real protagonists and they take the central space of educational mission. The literature on character and value education for caring towards a civic, socio-cultural context is intimately associated with the pedagogy of tenderness. Such tenderness, referred also as "affective literacy" is a necessary commodity for contemporary society, and children must learn to say "no" to callousness and heartlessness toward each other. Therefore, affective literacy is just as important as the cognitive development because education has to find its way home to one's heart to be humane and civil. Martí and Céspedes reiterate that safeguarding tenderness and affection in education must precede ahead of the scientific rigor of academic achievement. The very word, tenderness may appear tenuous and somewhat unconvincing concept characterizing Cuban education as an outsider looking in. However, this pedagogical approach to character formation and values education as foci of Cuban national identity parallels the teachings of José Martí, the very name invokes in all Cuban children and held in their conscience. José Martí teaches about freedom and education passionately with his poetry writings, "...Every human being carries an ideal person inside, just as each piece of marble contains a raw statue inside to become as beautiful as the Greek sun god, Apollo" (p. 5).⁵

Another Context Matters: *La Clase Mágica* (Magical Classroom)

The romantic view of *Mundo Mágico de CreArte* (Magical World of CreArte) swings the door wide open for the world of fantasy and narrative of imagination. The concept of classroom filled with Magic, *La Clase Mágica* (LCM)⁶ also presented a pedagogical framework for *CreArte*. LCM was first introduced by Vásquez (2002), Associate Professor of Department of Communication, UC San Diego. She conducted a seven year ethnographic study investigating the intersections of literacy, language, and culture for bilingual children in an after school program setting. The research focused on critical early transformation of improved literacy skills. Initial focus on providing culturally responsive educational access to under-represented population gradually shifted into socially conscious pedagogical movement towards an equitable distribution of educational service and resources. Vásquez observed dissatisfaction with conventional methods of schooling that fell alarmingly short of addressing the needs of culturally, linguistically, and academically disenfranchised student population, which prompted an exploration of LCM pedagogy. It is an enhancement of a previously existing program called The Fifth Dimension⁷, which is an educational approach to after school programming used by Boys and Girls Clubs. According to Cole (2006), The Fifth Dimension is an educational activity system that offers school-aged children a specially designed environment in which to explore a variety of game-like educational activities and off-the-shelf computer games during the after-school hours. The children are joined in their activities by

undergraduates from a local college or university who participate as part of a theory and practice. The Fifth Dimension utilized computer technology, role playing games, and one to one interactions with an adult mentor in an afterschool program setting.

LCM pedagogy is an intriguing pedagogical framework that is antithetical to the conventional curriculum emphasis that prescribes concrete outcomes, behavioral objectives, and accountability. Within the LCM framework, learning occurs everywhere directly, indirectly, some unknowingly, and it is essential to value each student's cultural history, language, and identity as an additive capital rather than an at risk liability to educational accountability. LCM pedagogy also incorporates funds of past knowledge, symbols and images, family tradition, and personal stories of each student that allow them to recognize and value their individual identity. This is where the *CreArte* narratives, both Cuba and the U.S. connected to LCM with a striking parallel thinking to the LCM pedagogy, especially working with severely disenfranchised student population. LCM validated much of our instructional intuition needing a space to explore freely without any inhibition and fear. The interactions between university mentors and high school students were conversational, flexible, and open-ended, just as volunteer college students were assisting *CreArte* children in Pinar del Rio. The proponents of LCM acknowledge that it is not a fully matured program, but a process in constant stage of evolution. LCM pedagogy was initiated as a context specific program situated in a bilingual education, yet this pedagogical model presents universal appeal with its portability, adaptability, and transferrability to similar educational and community settings without compromising its core values (Gomez-Eastern and Vásquez, 2014).

Our Story: El Mundo Mágico de *CreArte* in the U. S.

In the Spring 2014, as a semester long service learning project, the art education pre-service teachers at Western Kentucky University spent 12 weeks, twice a week at a local high school. Each WKU art pre-service teacher was partnered with one or two high school student(s) enrolled in an ART 1 class. All 10th and 11th grade students in ART 1 class were tested significantly deficient in their reading and writing competency and assigned to an Art 1 class based on Lexile⁸ Framework for Reading scores. So, Art 1 class was a remedial reading class in disguise. The guidance counselors were aware of the art teacher's approach incorporating content related reading activities into her core instruction, so they believed this would be a quick makeshift solution of teacher shortage. Ironically, this was a gift of opportunity for us to try out the *CreArte* project integrating literacy of visual and language arts. The art education pre-service teachers and high school students created a collaborative studio art project with relevant personal understanding of big ideas from the book they read together. Upon completion of the artwork created together, each student in ART 1 class wrote a letter to a Cuban pen pal friend about their collaborative art making, creative problem solving, and the lessons they learned together with their university mentors. Beyond the task of re-engaging and convincing these reluctant high school students, sending letters to Cuba was just as challenging. With the my subsequent trips to Cuba and the help of colleagues at other universities, the letters and artwork of the high school students were successfully delivered to Cuban counterparts in Pinar del Rio, Cuba to provide consistency in the project.

During my subsequent trip to Cuba, I was able to make a valuable professional networking and assistance from the APC⁹ (Association of Cuban Educators). I was afforded a chance to feature an art education program at WKU, highlighting the repertoire of my service-learning projects with P-12 art communities as an integral part of the art education program. The presentation room was filled with curious Cuban teachers of all subject areas and teaching levels, where I was able to meet Dr. Juan Silvio

Cabrera Albert, then a faculty Dean of Social Science and Humanities, University of Pinar del Rio. Dr. Cabrera came to me after the presentation informing me about the community cultural program, *CreArte*, that his socio-cultural humanities students are also involved as part of their service learning. On my next visit to Pinar del Rio, Cuba during the Spring Break 2013, I had the first hand experience to be a part of *CreArte* program at the *Hermanos Loynaz*¹⁰ community art center in Pinar del Rio, where the children, college students, parents, and Néstor Montes de Oca, the local artist and children's book author, gathered at the museum on Saturday morning.

Upon returning from the Spring Break trip to *CreArte* in Pinar del Rio, I and Ms. Sandra Carter, an art teacher at Warren Central High (WCH) School began brainstorming instructional steps to partner with our Cuban colleagues for the art exchange program. Sandra was a veteran art teacher and started her teaching career as an elementary curriculum coordinator before teaching at WCH. Sandra has always incorporated various levels and kinds of literacy related to visual arts content as a significant portion of her program. Due to the unexpected vacancy of a reading specialist and budget issues combined, Sandra was asked to pick up one of the remedial reading classes for 10th - 11th grade students. They were assigned to an ART 1 class based on their Lexile reading comprehension indicators, the highest 4th grade and lowest 2nd grade levels. It was an unusual circumstance, but the principal and a team of guidance counselors were convinced that Sandra would be able to help improve their reading scores through the visual arts instruction. It was obvious that majority of the students knew why they were placed in ART 1 and exhibited a strong distaste and distrust at the beginning of the semester. Our task was to find a way to get their attention, engage them, and ease the level of their anxiety and unwillingness to cooperate. So, at the onset of *CreArte* project in the Fall 2013, I asked Sandra, "Do you have to follow specific curriculum guidelines prescribed by the district, or can you do whatever means and ways you find appropriate and not get fired?" The answer was resounding, "No, I won't get fired as I am doing them a favor." I responded, "Okay, then we are in business."

Figure 1. CreArte children with resident artist Néstor (standing right), a parent (left) and a socio cultural college student, Ernesto assisting the children



Setting the Stage for Learning: Art Means Work

What are the real life lessons of visual arts learning? How does reading pictures and creating art enhance literacy? How do we bring relevance to readings and art curriculum? What does reading and writing literacy teach us about life and values? We had more questions to think about than actually possessing the knowledge and experience of how to address these questions. My students, Sandra, and I wrestled these big questions at the initial stage of *CreArte* project at WCH. Sandra and I began by conducting a pre-instructional survey of interest inventory to have a better understanding of her students. I gave the same pre-instructional survey to art pre-service teachers. Before I assigned art pre-service teachers to each high school student, Sandra and I decided to offer an orientation to ART 1 students without their college mentors. We presented the idea of *CreArte* project and solicited the heart to heart talk with the students, “We would like for you to give us a little bit of trust, just a little. Then you can decide to give more when you feel like you are ready. I know you have been told many times that did not turn out best for you, so we are not going to lie, but just give it a try this time, save a tiny bit of trust for us, Okay?”¹¹ Students were rather confused why they were in ART 1 class when they knew they should have been in a remedial reading class. Sandra and I explained that art speaks many languages on all levels for everyone. We also told them that we have letters from the students in Pinar del Rio, Cuba and we would like to respond. They would want to know how we are creating art in ART 1 class. Since we could not speak with them in person, the only way we can communicate is to write. The initial reluctance and suspicion was obvious in their facial expression with a moment of silence... but we just had to repeat, “Just give us a little bit of trust... then you can decide”.

The first *CreArte* session was reading together a select children’s trade book. The art education pre-service teachers and high school students took turn to read out loud (sounding out the words) and reviewed the meaning between the lines to share relevant personal understanding of big ideas from the book they read together. The individual attention of a small group structure afforded a far less intimidating learning space than a typical large group classroom structure. From this brainstorming of the story and sharing of their thoughts, studio project ideas developed. Each pre-service teacher prepared the studio process and materials when we returned back to the college campus based on what they discussed with their high school mentees. For several sessions that followed, a team of college mentors and high school student co-created and co-authored the artwork together. Upon completion of the artwork co-created, each high school student in ART 1 wrote a letter to a Cuban pen pal friend. The letter was brief, no more than a paragraph, about their collaborative art making stories, creative problem solving process, and the lessons they learned together with their WKU mentors. We selected picture books with poetic verses with fun and positive message we could relate, *Cat in a hat* by Dr. Seuss and *Life doesn’t frighten me* by Maya Angelo. Some of my students chose to bring a small poster of artwork, *Baby* by Gustav Klimt, utilized the poem written by popular movie director, Tim Burton as an inspiration, and others used a digital camera. For a typography project, the high school student was asked to look for an alphabet letter for the word of their choice around the school.

Several notable themes emerged in their lesson topics with the high school student; use of intuition, personifying the inanimate objects (soap and rag), finding the hidden words in you (typography), overcoming fear (*Cat in a hat*, *Where the wild things are*), and being who you are (*Herb the vegetarian dragon*). The side-by-side small group instructional structure provided an effective and non-intimidating learning space where, both college mentors and ART 1 students began to relax and await each other’s feedback and response. The following are the excerpts of what the students wrote about their experiences.

Figure 2. Brandy reading together “Life doesn’t Frighten Me” written by Maya Angelo



This Project came together very nicely. We read the book “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me,” Then we decided to base our piece on our own personal stories (life stories). Some of the images and words are powerful and have deeper meaning. Our personal stories blend together and wrap around the center of the canvas. The center of the canvas has our title (this is our focal point as well) and the main message of our piece. We have each been through tough times, but no matter what we keep pushing forwards. “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me,” I can make it another day! It was an awesome project to be part of. (Brandy Day, WKU Art Education Pre-service Teacher)

This project was a joy to work on and to complete. If you experience no pain inside, then you cannot grow. (Devon Goodman - WCH Student)

This project was awesome, one of the most amazing things I got to help do. This painting is based on a book called “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me.” and a poem by Maya Angelo. For the painting (portrait of us), we painted words that signify what we enjoy about life and what we didn’t. (Matthew Basham - WCH Student)

The goal of this project was to integrate literacy and the arts. I wanted the student that I work with to see literacy being more than just a book but about overall tool for communication.

I also used intuition as a tool to motivate and engage my students so that they could develop better self-awareness. The project consisted of working intuitively to create a character using various materials and collaboration. So what if it is messy or lines are not straight? This character is based on how we were feeling at the time of its creation or what we felt moved to place on the artwork. Then we wrote about our character in the 1st person perspective; we wrote about the character as if we WERE the character. Overall, this artwork installed confidence and reassurance about the importance of literacy. (Haley Kirtley, WKU Art Education Pre-service Teacher)

One of the college mentors, Hannah Allgeier, is an avid reader and theatre lover. She wanted to use ordinary household materials and then them into something quite extraordinary and personal. Hannah and her two high school students, wrote a poem together about the inspiration behind the grime-fighting trio. Stain Boy was written and illustrated by a famous director, Tim Burton. He directed many popular movies such as Alice in Wonderland, Corpse Bride, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Beetlejuice, and Edward Scissorhands. Together we came up with our own superheroes and their powers.

Title: Stain Boy

*Of all the super heroes,
the strangest one by far,
doesn't have a special power,
or drive a fancy car.
next to Superman and Batman,
I guess he must seem tame.
But to me he is quite special,
and Stain Boy is his name.
He can't fly around tall buildings,
or outrun a speeding train,
the only talent he seems to have
is to leave a nasty stain.
Sometimes I know it bothers him,
that he can't run or swim or fly,
and because of this one ability,
his dry cleaning bill is sky-high.*

The Grime Fighting Trio: Dish Man, Soap Boy and Towel Girl

Dish Man (made of cardboard, wire, pipe cleaners, and wood) is the leader of this grime-fighting trio. He is literally the dishwasher. His sidekick Soap Boy (carved out of Dial soap using ceramic tools), is the soap used to clean the dishes. However, the job is not finished without the drying powers of Towel Girl (made of a towel, glue, wire, pipe cleaners and wood), Dish Man's love interest. Together, these three hold the power to leave no dish unclean and fight the evils of this powerful trio's evil enemies, Grime, Grease and Scum. (Co-authored by Hannah Allgeier, WKU Art Pre-service Teacher, Saliyah Smith and Michaela Helson, Warren Central High Students)

I realize that a semester length is not a sufficient time frame for any conclusive assertions and anticipated outcomes. Nevertheless, reflecting what high school students wrote about their experience, Sandra and I observed some beginning transformation. The students became willing participants and excited to come to the class (therefore not missing the school) to spend time with their college mentors. On many levels, both college mentors and high school students were deeply affected. Brandy was partnered with two high school students, Matthew and Devon. Matthew loves to draw and his cheerful, happy nature was a positive influence for Devon, who is struggling with the issues of abandonment, neglect, and

Figure 3. Art and literacy exhibit at Warren Central High School, Bowling Green, Kentucky



intense anger. Together they decided to illustrate a painting based on the poem by Maya Angelo, Life doesn't frighten me. However, intimate and personable conversational space with them put Brandy in a precarious position as a pre-service teacher, as their stories were too close to her own. So, learning how to remain within the safe and professionally appropriate boundary as a college mentor was an important lesson for her to remember. Towards the end of the *CreArte* project, students anxiously anticipated our return and ready to share more stories of their own. They seemed to have found someone who would listen and hear their voices.

We also observed the changes in their behavior, polite, use of appropriate language to ask thoughtful questions, and willingness to try what was presented to them. The student reflections were enlightening and affirmative. Later in the semester, Sandra informed me that the students were far less afraid of reading out loud the Power Point content. Sandra and I were convinced that the *CreArte* program inspired university mentors as well as the high school students, not only to learn about the content of art, but also moral and affective lessons which we hope to endure beyond their formal education. According to Green (1995), imagination helps to look beyond the boundaries where one road ends and opens another, yet seemingly diminishing in sight. Green recounts Paulo Freire's sense of being "oppressed" (1970) where hopelessness is considered a form of silence and in order to fight it, one has to be moved by hope in an environment of hopelessness (Freire, p.80). The fight for hope is viable when one must be able to imagine something coming out of their hopes. Therefore, Green continues, the mental ability and awareness to imagine towards, away, and for something, enable one with a transformative power and new connections among parts of our experiences fragmented and broken (p.30). We were shooting for the moon as many teachers do with our own imagination. As an ultimate goal, we were hoping that

these students might just learn to realize that they do matter. No matter who they are and what they are made of, they can learn to learn. They are worth fighting for and they can create the world of their own making, if only they can imagine it.

CreArte: Crecer con las Artes (Grow with the Arts)

The stories from the Cuban side juxtapose with ours in its essence and purpose of the project, yet quite different in how they began within the broader context of community setting. With my subsequent trips to Cuba, the letters and art work of Sandra's students were delivered to Cuban counterparts of the community art project, *CreArte: Ilustra un Sueño* (Create: Illustrate a Dream) in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. The city is in the far west of the island with a population of about 140,000 inhabitants and known for its natural beauty of sunken Viñales Valley and the round hills conspicuously rising like another small island referred as mogote. The city is the capital of Pinar del Rio province (one of the 11 provinces of Cuba), and located in a major tobacco growing area as a center of the cigar industry. Natural resources and historic richness instantly endows the city council a social, cultural, historical value and prominence. In November 2012, a group of stakeholders including cultural promoters, professors and students of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Pinar del Rio met with the renowned artist and writer Néstor Montes de Oca, and discussed the idea of creating the community cultural project *CreArte: Crecer con las Artes* in order to help improve the quality of life for the citizens of all ages residing in Pinar del Rio. *CreArte* project emphasizes three areas of development; artistic, socio-cultural, and inclusive of all community members through the workshops and classes of visual arts, literature, and

Figure 4. CreArte poster



dance, music, and theater. All of the key individuals participating in the projects are community volunteers including artists and cultural promoters.

As illustrated previously, Jose Martí's humanistic vision for caring (Pedagogy of Tenderness) sets the complete backdrop of the educational focus of *CreArte*. Consistent with Martí's perspective, Néstor provides literature workshops for children as a way to motivate reading and inspire imagination. As a revered local author and artist, he successfully utilizes animated story telling techniques of dramatic voice inflection, use of puppets and props, frequently acting in a clown suit, personally engaging the children in the story. The children respond with enthusiasm through call and response interactions to stories and songs being delivered with full of life invoking their imagination. In my most recent visit to *CreArte* workshop, Néstor was telling a story based on a Cuban legend, the story of a fish in a pond that was always afraid. One day a little girl came and bent over to look at herself over the water in the pond. She accidentally dropped her jingle bracelet which fell on the head of the fish. Scared even more by the strange object on his head, the fish swam around in the pond trying to shake it off but in vain. Soon, the fish found out that he was making musical rhythm as he was waving around and bumping on the edge of the pond. Strangely, the fish began enjoying the music he was creating and forgot that he was scared. So, the moral of the story was that you don't have to be afraid as long as there is music. Children shouted with happiness and began creating a picture imagined in their mind. Such an intimate and entertaining story delivered by Néstor brought excitement and unlimited encouragement to illustrate their imaginations. Thus, a magical space of creativity is created through imagination.

The participating children also acquire knowledge about color, design, shape, composition in space, lines, shape, and textures. Additionally, the *CreArte* literature and art workshops develop their creative psychomotor skills, learn to enhance the taste, the sense of aesthetics, and the human sensitivity. Juan Silvio believes that all of this experience helps the children become better human beings in all spheres of life. Other venues of the arts education promoted by *CreArte* are literature workshops highlighting Cuban authors and poets. The literature workshop is coordinated by Néstor Montes de Oca and Suarez Lorenzo Crespo, a poet living in Pinar del Rio. The primary objective of this bi-weekly literature workshop is to encourage children the habit of reading, using their imagination, and creating artwork. One of the literature workshops began with the reading of José Martí's poem, *La rosa blanca* (The white rose), a short poem about cultivating white rose as a symbol of kindness emphasizing the value of the spirit of giving and patience. The poem, *La Rosa Blanca* is read by Lorenzo Suárez Crespo, the spirit of poem is translated into artistic activities with the help of resident *CreArte* artist Néstor, and the songwriter, Carlos Piñeiro will sing a song inspired by the poem. In this community effort, children are the center of the event as inspired and rising literacy stars. Frequently, Néstor refers this process as "one of the most popular and universal aspects in the child's life", because they build characters and endless potential for personal enrichment. Such multi-sensory experience, he continues, instills in children a desire to read, listen, see, interpret, and to incorporate the work of many great poets and writers as a valuable artistic heritage. In addition to being a positive and fruitful experience for children in the community, it was evident that the impact of this border crossing interaction has been far reaching beyond the children and youth who participated. The cultural promoters and art instructors, and project leaders themselves have also been transformed in a profound manner. Overall, the *CreArte* community project undoubtedly holds the treasure and magical place mobilizing community for learning and creativity.

CreArte: Ongoing Transworld Partnership

The ART 1 class being scheduled during the first period of 8:00 in the morning presented an unintended gift for the project. This time frame was optimal for the students, according to Sandra, because the class set the tone for the whole day where the experience in the art class made them happy and content. The individual attention gifted for them by college mentors instilled a sense of pride and a feeling that they belong to each other. They were beginning to open up themselves and found art as their common interest and bonding. The students, to our pleasant surprise, presented the best version of themselves in Sandra's class. This is something we, Sandra, I, and the art pre-service teachers all noticed as we gradually establish our weekly instructional routine. Students were respectful, polite, and amiable, where the assistant principal and guidance counselor also recognized as positive outcomes. Sandra feels that inclusive and caring college mentors and student relations calmed them down, and over time resulted in encouraging them make better choices.

The affective and professional growth for art education majors is significant as well. After each session of teaching at WCH, my students and I resumed the class back on campus. In addition to honing the instructional preparation and implementation, all my students related to me during the brainstorming session, that one on one setting with such an intense individual attention was somewhat intimidating as well as helpful. The private conversation occurred while working together helped them bond and build trust for each other, but the story also illuminated much of their painful and sad experiences, disintegrated family structure, sense of abandonment, rejection, alienation, and all added up to form their negative mindset for their education and schooling. We discussed at length about the importance of professional boundaries, while being supportive, caring, and respectful. One of my students is a returning student who overcame substance abuse problems during her formative years. Her education was her refuge and we were her support system. But her memory of suffering was vivid and it was very difficult for her to be their adult instructor of art rather than their best friend. Students longed for a sense of connection to the outside world and acceptance for who they are. Underneath their crusty angry mask they wear on the outside, they still wanted to believe in something good they deserve, deep inside their heart of heart.

Sandra feels that our educational system falls painfully short of instilling in the students a desire to learn more and challenging them to go above and beyond, create, and use imagination. She fears that the current assessment driven educational trend also stifles the students and deprives the opportunity to excel with a personal sense of purpose for their future. The system wants a prescriptive curriculum and outcomes rather than allowing emotional and mental space for students to grow in their own natural way. I'd say that we are cutting the soul of children from the get go by stifling their imagination, yet we expect them to grow to be human beings. When there is a budget cut on the horizon in the U.S. school systems, art is the first to go in many of the P-12 schools, only emphasizing further the burden of accountability for teachers, administrators, and students. These educational policies and regulations primarily focus on cognitive development, leaving far behind the creative, affective, and social development of children and youth. Unfortunately, this unpalatable reality confronts us in the U.S. where we are comparatively well endowed with economic opportunities and abundant resources. On the other hand, despite the deficiencies of resources and materials, Cuba's commitment to arts education is simply admirable, in particular the strong values they choose for a systematic, consistent, and integrated approach to the arts in the schools.

Sandra's students began writing a few sentences as a start. When they received letters back from the *CreArte* children and other high school students in Pinar del Rio, the writing became an exciting adventure. A real life connection was made when the letters and the artwork came back with their name, and they began asking questions how to improve their letter writing. Throughout the 2013-2014 school year, we recognized that students' desire to improve their response for their newly found Cuban pal instilled in them the ownership of their learning. As they found confidence in themselves, they show personal trust in their ability to learn that enhanced overall interpersonal communication skills. Sandra said, "It was like they became the Rosie the Riveter with *I can do it* attitude, before that they did not have any confidence nor wanted to try. Additional arts exchange project such as *CreArte* is needed in the future to better articulate the positive impact of student-centered visual and language arts program in the U.S. We need to continue to make more educational decisions on behalf of the students."¹²

Sample Arts and Letters from USA and Cuba

The letter writing to Cuban students was an added motivation and encouragement to increase student engagement. The initial pack of letters from Cuba was available at the beginning of Fall 2013 when we began *CreArte* project. However, we planned writing after the completion of collaborative studio project anticipating the students would be inspired to say something about their work. A colleague from another university took the letter to Cuba at the end of the semester and brought the responses of the Cuban students back to WCH. The following are some sample letters from Cuba.¹³ I included a few letters from WCH as well.

Figure 5. CreArte Group photo at the Loynaz Community Arts Center in Pinar del Rio, Cuba



¡Adelante! El Mundo Mágico Creado, The Magical World Created

January 4, 2014

Dear Tyler,

Greetings from Cuba! It gave me a great pleasure that you had responded to my letter. We are currently in 9th grade and 14 years old. My favorite thing to do during my free time is to read and draw. You have not told me what state you live in America? I am sending my drawing for you. Although it is not really great but I hope you like it. I would like to meet you in person someday until then, we can write to each other. Please respond to my letter.

From Rocio, Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Hello my friend Craig,

I am so happy to be able to answer your letter and hope to continue communicating with you in the future. What is your school like? Tell me more about yourself and what you like to do in your free time. I am sure you are a very special person. Castle and dragon painting sounds like a lot of fun! I will send you more pictures for you. Pleases write back to me soon!

Your friend Karina, Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Hello James,

We are delighted to send you this letter because you would get to know and share the beauties that we find in our country, Cuba. I hope that one day you can visit us. We are 14 years old and live in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. We like chocolate and vanilla flavored ice cream. Our favorite color is the Green and red. We are very happy to correspond with you. We can get to know each other through letters. We hope that you would respond soon. Bye for now!

Lots of kisses,

Anita and Angelica, Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Dear Mathew:

Here is the letter for you from your Cuban friends, Dalena, Laura, Maria Cristina, Deborah. We appreciate very much that you wrote a nice letter, telling us your tastes and likes. It is good to get to know you through your photo and a letter. Perhaps we could continue to write and get to know each other to be friends. We are almost ready to start the 9th grade. Then, we will have a new teacher. Hopefully one day you can visit Cuba and meet me in person to share our experiences and exchange our hopes and dreams and how we can work to achieve them even though we live in different countries. You will surely see the beauty of our country, Cuba. Something that I would like to know about you is "Is there

something you like to study? I want to study medicine and teaching even though I am not sure if I can achieve my goal. As long as we are friends, we can be together in our solidarity, honesty, respect, and sincerity that will keep us together.

Kisses

Our Friendship forever

Dalena, Laura, Maria Cristina, Deborah, Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Hello Devon,

I am Elizabeth your Cuban friend. I am writing this letter thinking that you would write me back. Through our letters, I would like to write about our stories and adventures of growing up, but for now I first want to wish you a great deal of happiness in your life. I also want to tell you what I am studying. I like medicine and I want to be a great neurologist. I would be so happy if my dream of becoming of neurologist would happen sooner than later. I would love to hear about your story. What are you studying in high school? I would love to meet you but since that is almost impossible for now, I would like to send you something very special for you, my drawing of two very famous animated characters in our country. You say that you never deny who you are and happy with always trying hard, although many people do not say you can do things and that you expect a great future for yourself. Yes, continue on my friend.

I love you with all my affection,

Your Cuban friend Elizabeth, Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Hello Elizabeth,

I am Devon Joseph. I am 16 years old and I am about to be in the Marine Corp. There are people that can help you in anyway they can. Stay strong and push on, push life and hit head on.

Devon Joseph

Warren Central High School, USA

Hello Michaela,

How are you? I am very happy to talk to you too and you are my favorite pen pal! My name is Ana Barbara and I am 14 years old. I am almost finished with the 9th grade. I really liked meeting you and seeing you from the photo and letter. It was very nice to read about what you like and learn a little bit about you. You have a beautiful smile and seem to have a great personality in the photo. It would be great to meet you in person one day when you come to Cuba. Once I finish high school I am going to study medicine. I would love to get to know you better through letters. Please write back to me soon!

Your Cuban friend, Ana Barbara,

From Pinar del Rio, Cuba

Hello Danielle,

My name is Jose Luis, but I like that my friends call me Luisiño. Because I like languages a lot, especially English and Portuguese, in fact I speak to these a little, because some day I would like to visit several countries of the world and know their customs and culture. I am 22 years old and study in the University of Pinar del Rio, I am studying the first years of the careers of Sociocultural Studies, are incredible careers that have to do a lot with me and with my artistic abilities. In my childhood I studied music, specifically saxophone and piano, but at the moment song in a juvenile Choir of fond artists, I dance and write poetry....

I like the current music but I also prefer the music of the time of my parents, I believe that it's fantastic also. At the moment I don't have a favorite artist because I like many. I think that each one of them has their way of being expressed, it is for that reason that we should always accepts the likes of your friends at school and to learn how to not judge them... now, don't worry for that reason... One day you will get up from the bed and you will see life in a different way, then you will realize that you have matured, but until that moment arrives you have a good time with your friends, your family and because it's about fulfilling your big dreams.

I live in a city that is not very big, Pinar del Rio, Cuba but people here are calm, and have good feelings. I feel really happy and proud of living on the earth where the best tobacco in the world is cultivated and one of the most attractive natural beauties in the planet, The Valley of Viñales, exists which is Patrimony of the Humanity, I wait that if some day you decide to visit Cuba... you would want to come to Pinar, I am sure you will like it, because it's a wonderful city of many fields and natural landscapes.

My university is big. I hope you are studying a lot so that some day you can go to a good University and become a great professional and your parents together with your friends will be proud of you. Regretably, already I have to say goodbye Danielle, but not without before to wish you many happiness. You are very intelligent and I am sure you will be a great professional, so you have to put in some effort and learn to trust you, it doesn't matter that you don't have abilities for the music... you take it inside that feel it that you have a good time, never stop to sing, to smile and or being happy. Remembers whenever, " the art enables the spirit", and you, you are already a real artist.

*Greetings and Good Luck,
Luiciño*

This authentic real life connection of arts and literacy facilitated real relationships between children and youth for the purpose of getting to know each other so as to help dispel false and misleading stereotypical views of the other. The friendship experienced in this process encouraged the children and students in both countries to begin asking questions, to become better people and learners, and to gain control of their lives with the personal power infused in the arts and letters that may speak directly to their lives.

And So What? Border Crossing through Transculturation

One of the most important cultural contexts to help understand Cuban art world is the work of Fernando Ortiz who is considered as a second discoverer of Cuba. Ortiz coined the term *Transculturation* in his book, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* that was originally published in Cuba in 1940. In the context of juxtaposing two areas of literacy, visual and language arts between P-12 students in the U.S. and the students in the Cuban community art setting, I believe the world *transculturation* is better equipped to express the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another. *Transculturation* does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English world *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a *deculturation*. In addition, it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called *neoculturation*. In the end, the result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring always has something of both parents but is always different from each of them (Ortiz, p. 103).

In a rapidly changing global society, the world outside and around us is no longer a uniform and isolated space. We work together to build bridges with a transcultural transformation at heart, walk through, and cross over to the other side, so we may find a special kind of hope and understanding. I regard visual and language arts to be interchangeable, symbiotic, and trans-lingual. We become the bridge utilizing the lessons of the two worlds between visual and language learning. Throughout her 30 years of teaching career, Sandra has been passionately implementing art program as an essential learning place for higher order thinking as tools for life. In a contemporary educational culture and trend, the educational establishment regards measurement to be the ultimate achievement than meaning (Eisner, 2008). However, we must not lose sight of the real life benefits of creative learning; disposition of above and beyond the specific given task, ability to infuse knowledge, and incorporate them into other aspects of life. Sandra and I believe unequivocally, art is not, and cannot be a second-class citizen, not a side dish or just a nice looking dessert. One of the reasons this unlike collaboration succeeded, in our view, is the fact Sandra's belief and vision seems to be in line with Cuban perspective of *Pedagogy of Tenderness*, that arts education and education in general, begins from the heart that puts the learner at the center. The broader notion of individual and cultural Identity within the circle of humanity lies at the center of the very basic fundamental human emotion, "Caring Heart".

Trans-Literacy: A Way of the Future Ahead

There is a Peace Park in Havana where a John Lennon statue is sitting on a bench across from an impressive looking Bilbao tree, which was believed to be a symbol of hope and dreams by African slaves when they survived the middle passage arriving in Cuba. There is an inscription on the concrete base of the statue, "*Dicen que soy un soñador pero no soy el único.*" (They say I am a dreamer, but I am not the only one.). If I am a pollyanna, Juan Silvio is a hopeless dreamer. The cup may be half full or half empty depending on which way you look at it. Cuban society and education functions within a framework of a value system predicated on ideals where they aspire to become a good and caring person with an appreciation of the national heritage, strong characters, and solidarity with cultural identity. The U.S. system supports the principle of capitalism ideals by educating the citizens to be good consumers, winners of

competitiveness, a hardworking bottom line seeker as a pursuit of individual happiness. Such dichotomy exists within the educational realm, measurement vs meaning, compartmentalization vs collaboration, and profile vs purpose.

Juan Silvio repeatedly commented, that U.S. embargo is not the root of all the Cuban problems, there is an internal embargo happening from inside Cuba. So, perhaps we might have ourselves to overcome before we look elsewhere towards a resolution. On one of my visits to Pinar del Rio, the most amazing opportunity fell upon to me to be a part of Pinar del Rio community arts festival. The festival was student initiated and planned entirely by Juan Silvio's college students of socio-cultural studies (equivalent of our general humanities education). The magnitude and range of talents and creativity was beyond what I could imagine. There was incredible Cuban music of old and new, dancing, singing, poetry reading, and the visual arts. At the end of the festival, the students awarded Juan Silvio a surprise gift; A certificate of creative achievement. I felt quite privileged to witness such a moment and I was moved by the potent message of hope and dream captured in their statement. The certificate reads: "This diploma is awarded to Juan Silvio Cabrera Albert who is our Don Quiote of these times, as the architect of our dreams for the *CreArte* programs, to inspire us for the love of creating a poetry of life, to feed our spirit and help us grow as individuals, as the leading soul of our minds, and the most sane of the insane."

CONCLUSION: LA CLASE MÁGICA INTO EL MUNDO MÁGICO

This chapter aims to illustrate the stories, images, and transcultural synergy between the U.S. and Cuban counterpart in the last three years. In addition to the Cuban thoughts of crossing the line of culture for a creative infusion of a new one, which is profoundly expressed as a Cuban identity by Ortiz (1995), the *CreArte* project experience echoes the perspective of *La Clase Mágica* pedagogical thinking. The emphasis of LCM on connectedness to life-world knowledge, cross-disciplinary learning, and cultural relevance served as a catalyst for personal and social transformation. Within the context of transcultural *La Clase Mágica*, the *CreArte* children in Cuba illustrated a dream through their imaginative heart. The love and appreciation of literature grows with the arts. Juan Silvio once shared his beliefs with me about *CreArte*, "When we do the right thing, we know that it all goes to our soul." The word soul resonated in my head as an essence of life that guides his direction. It is also our shared belief that this border crossing international collage of *CreArte* project helped our shared worldview that unifies us from within.

I conclude this chapter with Jose Marti's poem that expresses the hope for his homeland, Cuba. A white rose, as a symbol of kindness and labor of love, represents unconditional kindness and peace needed to build a common identity, values, and unity amongst people. He speaks earnestly the moral and vision within "*Cultivo Rosa Blanca*" (I cultivate a white rose.) to bring the Cuban solidarity and betterment of society. Like one drop of water that flows into the river one drop at a time, creative community collaborations between the two countries and students are evolving further into the better world they will participate. Although the passage (*El Camino*), we explored together was winding and narrow, the best part of *El Mundo Mágico de CreArte* proved to be the creative bridges we built together with imaginative capacity. The *CreArte* project reached its turning point with a new chapter awaiting us, but the essence remains the same. The path-finding, mysterious, and exciting "magic" belongs to the learner. The *CreArte* project, both in Cuba and the U.S. breathing at the heart of this magical space, *La Clase Mágica*, now expands to *El Mundo Mágico* with real possibilities and promises. ¡Adelante! Shall we embrace our new magical world?

REFERENCES

- Bryanton, R. (2010, January 9). *You are the point* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://imaginingthetenthdimension.blogspot.com/2010/01/you-are-point.html>
- Bryanton, R. (2011, August 24). *Imagining the fifth dimension* [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://imaginingthetenthdimension.blogspot.com/2011/08/imagining-fifth-dimension.html>
- Cabrera, L. (2003). *Lydia Cabrera and the Construction of an Afro-Cuban Cultural Identity (Envisioning Cuba)*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Carnoy, M., Gove, A. K., & Marshall, J. H. (2007). *Cuba's academic advantage: Why students in Cuba do better in school*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Choe, M., & Jones, A. (2014). International collage - WKU and Cuba. *Arts & Letters: The Magazine of Potter College at Western Kentucky University*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/10171701/International_Collage_-_WKU_and_Cuba
- Cole, M. (2006). *The fifth dimension: An after-school program built on diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Cole, M., McDermott, R., Newman, D., Vásquez, O., Brown, K., & Lecusay, R. (2010). *Relocating the Laboratory: 40 Years of Collaborative Research on Culture*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of AERA, Denver, CO.
- Cole, M., Kobelt, E., & Packer, M. (2014). *La metodología de la investigación para una psicología concreta: La investigación con la Quinta Dimensió* [Research Methodology for a Concrete Psychology: The Fifth Dimension Research]. Retrieved on July 24, 2016 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277131988_Research_Methodology_for_a_Concrete_Psychology_The_Fifth_Dimension_Research
- Corbett, B. (2002). *This is Cuba: An outlaw culture survives*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Minton, Balch.
- Egan, K. (1992). *Imagination in teaching and learning: The middle school years*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Egan, K. (1997). *The educated mind: How cognitive tools shape our understanding*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226190402.001.0001
- Egan, K. (2005). *An imaginative approach to teaching*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Eisner, E. W. (2004). What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education? *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 4(5).
- Eisner, E. W. (2008). *What education can learn from the arts*. 2008 MAEA National Convention, New Orleans, LA.
- Flores, B. B., Vásquez, O. A., & Clark, E. R. (2014). *Iluminadas a través de cosmovision: A new age of enlightenment for pedagogía transmundial* (transworld pedagogy). In B. B. Flores, O. A. Vásquez, & E. R. Clark (Eds.), *Generating Transworld Pedagogy: Reimagining La Clase Mágica* (pp. 209–220). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

- Freire, P. (1990). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Gomez-Eastern, B. M., & Vásquez, O. A. (2014). *La Clase Mágica* goes international: Adapting to New Sociocultural Contexts. In B. B. Flores, O. A. Vasquez, & E. R. Clark (Eds.), *Generating Transworld Pedagogy: Reimagining La Clase Magica* (pp. 193–207). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- González, J. C., & Sabina, E. M. (2012). Cuba's education system: A foundation for "The capacity to share". In *The Capacity to Share: A Study of Cuba's International Cooperation in Educational Development* (pp. 53-70). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Green, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Gutiérrez, K. D. (2014). *La Clase Mágica*: An enduring prototype for the new Latina diaspora. In B. B. Flores, O. A. Vásquez, & E. R. Clark (Eds.), *Generating Transworld Pedagogy: Reimagining La Clase Mágica* (pp. vii–xii). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Harvard Family Research Project. (n.d.). *A profile of the evaluation of the 21st century community learning centers—national*. Cambridge, MA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/profile>
- Jeffers, C. (2005). *Spheres of possibilities: Linking service-learning and the visual arts*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.
- Jeffers, C. (2010, Fall). Between School and Community: Situating Service-Learning in University Art Galleries. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 109-116.
- Lutjens, S. (2007). (Re)Reading Cuban educational policy: Schooling and the third revolution. In I. Epstein (Ed.), *Recapturing the personal: Essays on education and embodied knowledge in comparative perspective* (pp. 163–194). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Martínez, J. A. (1994). *Cuban art and national identity: The vanguardia painters, 1927-1959*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Martí, L. T. (2012). The role of the APC (Association of Cuban Educators) in advancing Cuban internationalism in education. In *The Capacity to Share: A Study of Cuba's International Cooperation in Educational Development* (pp. 263-270). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martí, L. T., & Céspedes, B. P. (2001). A pedagogy of tenderness. Caracas, Venezuela: Asociación de Educadores de Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Retrieved from <http://nuevacatedra.com.ar/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Pedagog%C3%ADa-de-la-Ternura.pdf>
- Ortiz, F. (1995). *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (H. de Onís, Trans.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Otero, L. (1997). Utopia Revisited. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 96(1), 17–30.
- Schulz, L. L., & Tiner, K. (2011). Towards pedagogy of tenderness: Reflection on Cuban education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Vásquez, O. A. (2002). *La Clase Mágica: Imagining optimal possibilities in a bilingual community of learners*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (National Union of Artists and Writers), Additional information about UNEAC information may be found at <https://www.facebook.com/UNEAC.online>
- ² Centro de Intercambio y Referencia Iniciativa Comunitaria (Center for Community Exchange Resource and Initiatives), Additional information about Cieric may be found at <https://www.facebook.com/VITallerRegionalIntercambioDeExperiencias>
- ³ We will use *CreArte* as an abbreviated version of the full project title, *El Mundo Mágico de CreArte: Ilustra un sueño* and leave the Spanish spelling as the word include *Art*.
- ⁴ From lecture by Steven Hawking quoted in web blog site, <http://imaginingthetenthdimension.blogspot.com/2011/08/imagining-fifth-dimension.html>
- ⁵ Cada ser humano lleva en sí un hombre ideal, lo mismo que cada trozo de mármol contiene en bruto una estatua tan bella como la que el guiego Praxiteles hizo del dios Apolo. Translated from Spanish text by the author.
- ⁶ LCM reflects the views of mythical ancient cosmology linking interdisciplinary, linguistic, and globally relevant pedagogy to the sacred sciences of pre-Colombian culture. The pedagogical model of LCM program application can be found at <http://www.laclasemagica.com/curriculum.html>
- ⁷ The notion of 5th Dimension comes from a scientific explanation of our human experience based on the relationship of time and space. My interpretation of the fifth dimensional way in the context of pedagogy derives from the following; 1D - a line, 2D - a plane, 3D - a space, 4D - a line of time or duration, 5D - inherently flexible image that flows from their imaginative power.
- ⁸ This student information was available to me by the art teacher, Ms. Sandra Carter, although individual test scores were confidential to be disseminated. According to Ms. Carter, all of the Art 1 students were at or below the 3rd grade level of reading scores.
- ⁹ Founded in 1989, *Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba* is a non-governmental organization of active and retired teachers, researchers, and education al professionals. More information may be found at [http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Asociaci%C3%B3n_de_Pedagogos_de_Cuba_\(Aguada_de_Pasajeros\)](http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Asociaci%C3%B3n_de_Pedagogos_de_Cuba_(Aguada_de_Pasajeros))
- ¹⁰ *Hermanos Loynaz* is a cultural art center named after revered Cuban poet, *Dulce María Loynaz (1902-1997)*. It is located at the center of Pinar del Rio, and the director provides the space for various *CreArte* programs on Saturdays.
- ¹¹ There was no formal recording devise for me to document our conversation. But I remember these words very clearly. This quote is based on what I wrote quickly as an informal field note.
- ¹² Phone conversation I had with Sandra in December 2015 while drafting this manuscript.
- ¹³ The letters were originally written in Spanish and translated by the author.