DIGITAL COMMONS
@ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

University of South Florida
Digital Commons @ University of South Florida

USF St. Petersburg campus Faculty Publications

USF Faculty Publications

2013

Teaching the power of the word

Charles Vanover
University of South Florida, vanover@usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fac_publications

Recommended Citation

Charles Vanover (2014) Teaching the power of the word, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 27:7, 922-942, DOI: 10.1080/09518398.2013.820859

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the USF Faculty Publications at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in USF St. Petersburg campus Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Teaching the Power of the Word

Charles Vanover

Abstract

This ethnodrama communicates the lived experience of an outstanding teacher of English who worked in the Chicago Public Schools for more than 20 years. Excerpts from three semi-structured interviews have been constructed into a one-woman show that uses music, dance, and the art of theater to convey the spiritual beauty of ambitious, urban teaching and to challenge and enlighten researchers, teachers, and the public-at-large "in a manner that cannot be dismissed." Lessons, relationships, and the joy and suffering of schoolwork come to life on stage. The script is accompanied by a poem by Ruth Nicole Brown that discusses the ethnodrama in relation to culturally responsive pedagogy.

Keywords: English education; culturally responsive pedagogy; ethnodrama; spirituality in urban education; Chicago Public School teachers and students

Vanover, C. (2014). Teaching the power of the word. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 27*(7), 922-942.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09518398.2013.820859

Teaching the Power of the Word

Teaching the Power of the Word

Introduction

"Teaching the Power of the Word" is a love song to urban teachers and the students they care for. The script is composed from three narrative interviews I conducted with Anise Arcova, a high school English teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. I interviewed Anise as part of the pilot interviews for my dissertation, and her narrative became an exemplar for ambitious, urban teaching.

I found Anise by asking veteran teachers in the Chicago Public Schools to nominate educators they admired. My focus group said that Anise reminded them of the teachers they looked up to when they began teaching in the city's public schools in the 1960's and 1970's. Anise's students were said to score high in all the system's exams, but the strength of her practice was relationships. Depending on the time of the school year, students might love her or hate her, but they did not ignore her. Anise got into kids' heads; she worked to change young people's lives.

I arranged to interview Anise Arcova in a coffee shop near her home. Anise came early and was already drinking a large cup of coffee when I arrived. She wore a pressed, olive blazer and a yellow, buttoned blouse. Anise read the IRB form carefully and frowned when she signed it. She told me the only reason she was willing to participate was her friends had recommended me. As the interview progressed, almost despite herself, she fell deep into her practice and enjoyed talking about her work.

Anise told me most of her students were immigrants. They were 17, 18, or 19 years old and had come to Chicago from Mexico, South America, Africa, Russia, and

China. Her classes were organized around a set of notebooks Anise kept in her room. Every morning when the bell rang her students sat at their desks and they wrote. They wrote about books they read. They wrote about hopes and dreams. They wrote about their struggles to survive in an immigrant's city that had changed little from the world described by Algren (1961) and Herrick (1971). They wrote about the place Rodriguez (1991, 1993, 2001) mapped out in his poems and memoirs. Anise told me stories about her efforts to love these young people and to heal and inspire them. She described the emotional cost of connecting with their suffering.

I began the first interview by asking Anise a question adapted from Benner and colleagues' (1996) ethnographic work on expertise in critical care nursing—"Describe a student or group of students for whom you made a difference." I asked follow-up questions to encourage Anise to expand on her answers in a manner similar to Weiss (1995). The transcript shows I didn't listen to Anise as carefully as I should have, and I wasted interview time talking about my own experiences. Despite, or perhaps because of, my failings as an interviewer, Anise made sure she told the story of her teaching far better than I could ask her to tell it. When we met for our second interview, Anise brought a suitcase filled with letters, papers, pictures, plaques, and awards from the class she talked about in her first interview. She said this was a small portion of the materials she saved, and a tiny fraction of the words students had written during the school year.

I transcribed Anise's interviews verbatim and read through the texts many times to get to know the data (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Feldman, 1995). I then started cutting and organizing the material to create a show I hoped might communicate the essence of Anise's labor and speak to others as a work of art. The script was constructed

by, as Saldaña (2002) recommends, cutting the uninteresting stories out of Anise's transcripts and then eliminating many of the most important narratives as well. Anise's long description of how she meditated with one of her students before school began each day was, for instance, cut from the final script. My goal was to communicate the heart of Anise' experience and, to use Feldman's (2005) term, "expand the data" to produce a show that moved as fast as Anise's lessons and crackled with the energy roused by her words. This portrait is intended to function as a work of theatre and create a common, shared experience that builds community and connection (Kalb, 2001; Styan, 1992; Turner, 1992) As such, the work does not provide direct access to the day-to-day workings of Anise's classroom. Similar to Halquist and Musanti (2010), the ethnodrama is a mediation on Anise's stories, and was created, in their words, through "an intersection [of the] constant dialogue between the data, myself and different theoretical lenses used to discover and better comprehend the meanings data were producing" (p. 456-457). When I built the script for "Teaching the Power of the Word" this inner dialogue was shaped by two critical experiences. The first was the work of writing and producing a one-man show with Johnny Saldaña about my life as a beginning teacher in the Chicago Public Schools (Vanover & Saldaña, 2005). The second experience was the labor of conducting the first part of my dissertation. "Teaching the Power of the Word" was written and performed during the months when I began my fieldwork, conducted interviews with a different group of Chicago teachers, and transcribed and analyzed this new set of stories. The playbuilding process that produced "Teaching the Power of the Word" was thus guided by knowledge gained from working in the Chicago system and studying the work of its professionals as well as by my efforts to share this knowledge

with others through talk and performance.

The first half of the script includes stories Anise shared in the first interview. The second half contains narratives shared in her second session. The material spoken in the tapes that begin and end the show comes from follow-up questions I asked her in the third interview session. Dance music and visual effects are used to draw the audience into the teacher's world. The result is a post-modern ethnographic report, or in the words of Denzin (2001) and Tyler (1986), "poetry".

All I know about the events Anise discussed are the words she spoke, the student letters and classroom artifacts she shared during her second interview, and the testimony of the veteran Chicago teachers who recommended her. The challenges of expanding this data and using it to communicate the poetry of Anise's experience have been extensively documented in this journal and other venues (e. g. Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995; Dutton, 2003; Larson, 1997; Lincoln, 2000; Lipman, 2006; Pirreto, 2002; Saldaña, 2011). I believe, however, the benefits of bringing Anise's world to life outweigh the perils. To use Hatch's (2006) word, Anise's stories are "powerful; they speak in a way that cannot be dismissed."

From an artistic perspective, however, I would like to acknowledge an important limitation of the playscript. Theatre artists and audience members outside the field of education may find the long sections in the first half of the show where Anise shares practical details of her work and discusses how she teaches writing, grades her students' papers, and organizes her classroom somewhat difficult to enter into imaginatively. My intent in these sections is to help the audience get to know Anise in the way her students got to know her and bring her classroom to life. Songs from Bajofoundo's compact disc,

Tango Club, are played throughout these parts of the performance to communicate the isolation of Anise's labor (Biklen, 1995; Steedman, 1992) and to give her schoolwork an emotional center. Ethnodrama must function research as well as theatre (Denzin, 2003; Feldman, 2005), and I believe this slow buildup adds depth to the student stories Anise shares in the second act.

"Teaching the Power of the Word" is more than an entertainment; it is an inquiry into how an outstanding teacher of English choreographs a crowded classroom into a transformative, liminal space (D. F. Brown, 2003; R. Brown, 2008; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Turner, 1992). Ethnodramatic performance pieces should not be divorced from the ethnographic concerns that first brought the data to light. Anise's stories about her teaching matter both because they help the audience understand her world and because we need more teachers such as Anise everywhere. While I can imagine, and do not prohibit, productions that cut Anise's descriptions of her schoolwork and attempt to show, rather than tell, how she prepares for her lessons, maintains order in her classroom, and teaches *Faust* and Asian philosophy, I believe the challenges of performing this material are part of the unavoidable tensions of research informed theatre (e. g. Eisner, 2007; Goldstein, 2012; Kazubowski-Houston, 2010; Norris, 2009). In the script that follows, stage directions have been minimized to encourage actors and directors to produce alternative, but respectful, dramatizations (see Bagley (2008) and Snyder-Young (2010)).

"Teaching the Power of the Word" brings a teacher's work to life and describes Anise's efforts to create a engaging and inclusive learning environment for children living in poverty (Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Payne, 2005). The show describes

how she helps them use writing and other forms of inquiry to build on their experience and understand the world in a new way (Banks & Banks, 1993; Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Anise loves the students she serves. Her efforts to care for them, heal them, and connect with their emotions humanize her pedagogy. She inspires young people to use words to ponder, question, heal, lift up, and, above all, imagine a future where they too lead.

Anise's practice as a culturally responsive educator is discussed more deeply in a poem by Ruth Nicole Brown presented after this article. I would like to conclude this introduction by recognizing the complexity of Anise's stories as spiritual teachings voiced with courage to young people exposed to high levels of violence. Similar to other narrative studies (e. g. Biklen, 1995; Hankins, 1998; Kelchtermans, 2005; Kleinfeld, 1992; Vanover, 2009), Anise understands teaching as a skilled forms of emotional labor performed in a hostile space. The lessons she choreographs open her students' hearts. They are intended to awaken young people's love of the living world. Anise works in city where the poor have always been cheated and young people are disposable (Giroux, 2006; Lipman, 2002; Rodriguez, 2001; Wacquant, 2007; Wilson, 1996). Her teaching is intended to help her students make sense of this world and find a place inside of it (Greene, 1973). Anise speaks to her students as a fellow seeker, and she shares what she has learned from a full life. Her Chicago, like Algren's (1961), is woman with two faces:

> One for the open-eyed children of a thousand windowed office buildings.
>
> And one for the shuttered hours.
>
> One for the sunlight traffic's noontime bustle. And one for midnight

> subway watches when stations swing past like Ferris wheels of light, yet
> leave the moving window wet with rain or tears…(p. 15).

Anise asks her students to muse about that city. The nature of the wisdom she demands her students seek, the costs required to obtain and share it, and the benefits this knowledge conveys are, in my opinion, the central questions of her narrative.

Like a mother, Anise is determined her students will thrive in an unjust world, and like a mother, she understands caring comes at a high price.

Complete Play-Script

Main Character

Mrs. Anise Arcova: a Russian high school English teacher. Anise works at Flanagan High School in Chicago, Illinois in an immaculate classroom on the school's 4th floor. Anise is in her early 50's and is very petite. She immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1970's and speaks with a distinct Russian accent. Her family had been wealthy before the revolution and, perhaps as a result, she dresses very elegantly. In Act 1, Anise wears a colorful fall outfit with matching bag, belt and high-heeledshoes. In Act 2, she wears a black dress with fashionable, red shoes.

Music

Most of the background music comes from remixes found on Bajofoundo's compact disc, *Tango Club*. Other sources include two songs from Mike Glasso's score for the motion picture *In the Mood for Love* as well as two jazz songs by Angelo Badalamenti and one by Antonio Carlos Jobim.

(The audience enters Mrs. Arcova's classroom: the rooms is filled with plants and old books; upstage left: a chalkboard; upstage right: a teacher's desk and a chair; on one

half of the teacher's desk is a metal basket with folders;

on the other is a stone Buddha that holds a small candle.)

(Stage lights out; music up; Campo's 'En Mi' from Tango Club. Mrs. Arcova walks on stage and lights the candle on the Buddha. She pulls out a mat from under her desk and begins to meditate. A screen comes down center-stage above Mrs. Arcova's desk and a slide of Mrs. Arcova's high school is projected; the first slide shows the school's windows and doorways a few minutes before dawn; the second slide shows Flanagan High School's main entrance; the photos move past her school's front entrance and travel down two dark hallways, up four flights of stairs, and down a long corridor until they focus on a classroom door.)

(Music off; sound up; a tape from one of Mrs. Arcova's interviews plays;)

'Room is… Could be very beautiful. Has wooden floors, real wooden floors. It's been painted a zillion times with the same ugly, pukey colors that the Board uses. Green and blue and peach and occasional ugly, dirty yellow. The room is fairly large. Has lots of windows—six of them as a matter of fact. Sometimes I point to the windows to tell them that there is a way of exit for them—if they don't like what I am doing… It's got two doors. We've blocked the backdoor because things get stolen out of our room.

(The slides show Mrs. Arcova's room, and then they zoom to a set of metal baskets filled with notebooks stacked next to Mrs. Arcova's desk; every notebook has a student's name written in the youngster's hand; some notebooks are covered with graffiti; others are spotless; five baskets of notebooks are graded;

light fills the classroom; the school day begins;)

'I think the room is quite beautiful. It has potential; I imagine it. I have kids of

every nationality imaginable. I don't assign seats because they're seniors. You figure they know how to sit. A lot of Vietnamese. A lot of Hispanics. A couple of Russians here and there. Almost every nationality. Indians and Chinese from every province, even Tibetans. They're all big, the chairs are small, and they are not comfortable. And the chairs are attached to the desks which move about which I don't like. I'm from the old school—you nail it down to the floor. I like order. I like order. And I am very organized, and I'm very structured, and there is a routine. And the kids kind of follow along.

'They are cool kids—very cool. And they are fashionable. They come with the unusual outfits. They wear trendy clothes—very trendy clothes. They have these very hot colors right now: pinks and oranges and shocking tops that are very tight. Every year there are a couple of girls who really are very, very fashionable with short skirts and slits on the side, and when they cross their legs all the boys' tongues hang out. You know, that kind of thing. They put all kinds of sparkly stuff on their faces, like it's makeup. There's sparkles in their hair. You have to wear glasses to look at them. They are interesting kids, very sweet by far to me, most of them are, really. They have an innate sweetness.

'I like talking to them. I don't know, because they're, they're not… Just as much as they are jaded because they have been around and they live in the city, there's a certain innocence that they have, and I like that. They are very open to be loved by people, and I'm like a real… Yeah, I get into things.'

(Tape off; lights down; slides off; screen up; Mrs. Arcova gets up, moves the mat under her desk, and sits at her desk facing the audience;

the candle on the Buddha on her desk continues to burn.)

(Lights up; silence; Mrs. Arcova speaks;)

Well, for starters, I was trying to figure it out before I got here, and it might be the 23rd year. I chose the public schools even though I lived in the suburbs—was raised in Russia. I chose Chicago for a very particular reason and that is because I like the diversity, and I really do. To be a teacher to me, I can't imagine doing anything else. I just feel that it's one of the most noble occupations. I know the word has been used a lot, but it is a noble thing—sort of like priesthood. You have a calling—it's what defines me. This is what I am. I don't want to retire, ever. I'm thinking they'll have to kick me out. The money part never interested me. I applied to law school when I was young. Got in, did very well everywhere—not interested. I get satisfaction and a personal I can't explain—a fuzzy feeling. I want to fix everything. This is perfect for me—very suitable. I was going to be Mother Theresa, but she occupied that post.

This is my bragging part. I love my kids. I get 'em very low in AP classes. Twenty-seven percent, thirty six percent reading. Some can't even read out loud. Last week, the scores came back, and I had 17 that got a passing grade, but not exceptional. Seventeen got a three on the AP, and that's amazing for Flanagan! They've never had it before. And three got a four. We've never had fours. Never, ever, ever. How did I do it? I'm nuts. That's how I do it.

This year, I wanted to start them off with something big. We did Anna Karenina. And they can't read. They are overwhelmed. They complain. It's one of my favorite novels. Our librarian and I are often discuss it. We are old timers. We like this mush.

(Music up; 'Yumeji's Theme' from In the Mood for Love;)

We do Anna Karenina. We dissect it. They love the torrid love affair, and they hate her, and they feel sorry for her, and it's like this whole big thing. They get really involved.

One of the things the kids have never done is they've never sat on the floor and discussed things. So I tell 'em, 'Bring a pillow.' Because the floors are awfully hard and dirty at Flanagan. 'We just not going to do anything for grades, because in the end they don't matter. We're just going to discuss. If you want to sit on a chair, go ahead. If you want to sit at the ledge of the window and jump out, go right ahead.'

And I have no rules. That's the thing. I have the most attention. In fact, I'm known as the perfect bitch of the school. The kids are good in spite of the rules. The more rules you make; the more they tend to break them. The kids know. They come to me and saying, "So and so told me you're really a bitch."

I say, 'That's correct.' I intend to live up to their expectations. I don't let them get away with anything. 'I... I'm… It's my room. It's my domain.' I tell 'em very clearly. I'm a thug, basically. I can out do them in every practical thing, ever, ever. If I have a problem—I have immediately a discussion with them. I pull 'em out of the room and into the hall. 'This is not the way it's going to go. In my class, we're civilized. I'm civilized to you. You are civilized to me. I am the boss in this domain. That's it. I'm the boss—forever. I raise my own son.' My son is 21. 'I raise him without any rules. Just a certain—responsibility and honor. And if I break my word to you or something then you have every cause to distrust me. But if I say I am going to do something… You better damn well do it too!'

And I'm very firm about these things. And I know that it's hard to believe, but a lot of them like discipline and like structure. Even if it's nutsystructure—like I'm insane sometimes. I'm a maniac. I'm a cleaning maniac. I clean my room forever. They notice about me right away.

(Music fades out;)

I'm kind of a rebel. I was raised as a rebel by my parents. I rebelled against every single rule. I would imagine my parents did to. So, somehow we understand each other. They figure me out, and I figure them out. I have a fantastic memory. What I do in the very first day they come to my class. After they do all the formalities and crap, and I might call it that, 'Crap'. I give 'em my criteria I expect from them. We sign a contract.

(Opens the center desk drawer; takes out a contract; stands and begins to teach; music up; Orquesta del Plata's 'Montserrat' from Tango Club;)

'This contract does not say that you agree with me—because I don't want that. I would actually prefer that you disagree with me at all times. But the contract states you understand what I want. This just says that you read this. So, in the end, when you walk in acting like a jerk—and I have mentioned in our rules that you shouldn't act like a jerk—perchance you should check your contract which you will always finded with me. And then a letter of introduction. I expect that from you. I don't want to see that you have blue eyes, green hair, whatever it is that you have. I want to know, 'What is it that you are so special? Where are you… from? What are your family members like? What is it that you like to do? What is it that tics you off? What is it that you have read up until now? Have you read any books?'

Because I've got some in AP English who have not read a single book—ever—ever. I have my letters to show you what's from them. I cry every time I read them. It's amazing how, how little some teachers teach.

But on the first day of school, I go home. I read their letters of introduction. I write a letter back to each one: A hundred and fifty of them. A personalized letter of how

much I'm thrilled to meet them. How much I'm willing to accommodate them—if they're civil. Even the worst kids, when you deal with them on this kind of basis, they come along. They're naughty, but in a different kind of naughty. I don't want them to be mean to each other or to me. I don't want them to swear in my class. That's up to me. I'm the one who does the swearing, and I do. I have wonderful rapport with my students. When they leave, it's particularly hard.

(Sits at her desk; music out;)

This summer I met several of them—a lot of them. They called me when they got their scores. Because everyone told them there's no way they're going to get a score in AP. They did not know mythology. They had no clue from the Old Testament—the Bible. No allusions—no references—nothing. We were, for instance, doing *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Kobe. Very similar to *Anna Karenina* but from Africa. Different continent; same situation. A woman leaves her husband to go with this other guy. Well, as soon as we did *Things Fall Apart*, Yeats' "The Second Coming" was the most becoming thing.

(Music up; 'Yumeji's Theme' from In the Mood for Love;)

'That's where the title comes from. Things fall apart. The center cannot hold.' We started to take the poem. They have the most difficult time analyzing it. 'Ah, too bad. We're going to analyze it. Find three, four sources that have analyzed this work, then read it again. What does it mean, the second coming? What's Anti-Christ? Just sit there, quietly, and muse about what we are reading. Musing and pondering is okay. It's not a waste of time. But, at the end, you have to come up with something worthy to say. You're not going to muse about your girlfriend—your boyfriend. I could care.'

And, you know something, they start musing. They don't know what the word is, but after while, "We'll have to muse about this," they'll say. "Let's ponder this," because that's how I talk. And so, we did that.

We did *Faust*. The most fabulous thing I've ever done with my kids. They know the devil is bad, and God is good. But, in this particular book by Goethe, the devil appears incredibly smart. And when God and him have those philosophical discussions. The kids are in awe of how insignificant we are. How the devil is saying "Ahhh, you know… What's the point? People are stupid anyways." And God and him go on and on. And the kids love this. They were actually reading the books in the halls. In class, they would take the parts. "I want to be Mephisto today!" They even call him by his nickname, Mephista.

We started out in the beginning, 'What is your perception of God? How about the devil? What do you think about these things? What do you think about the choirs of angels? How did these things come about? You know, who was Satan before we say he was the devil? And why does he have such a bad relationship with God?'

And we move along. We did Socrates. We did philosophy, the Chinese philosophy. We started with *Tao-Te Ching*, and then we went… Because they have never heard of this. They know the Yin and the Yang, because they've seen it. But they do not know what that is. 'All of a sudden the idea of balance. Things fall apart, but there's no balance. Do you need balance? Yes, let's think about this. Anna Karenina—did she kill herself? Why? Why did Socrates die? Why? Causes are very different. But what goes on here? Is there like a human spirit that desires to feel everything?'

(Music out;)

Whatever. This is my AP class. I'm most proud of my regular students. I actually try to teach 'em the same material. As a matter of fact, I would have bet my life that some of them would have done better than my AP kids. They only got two's. But that's okay. My regular classes are filled by the time they are seniors… They weed them out—you know how that works. My classes were filled with Latin Kings.

(Music up; Antonio Carlos Jobim's version of 'Insensatez';)

My homeroom is filled with the upper echelon of the Latin Kings. They are big in the Kings. They're lieutenants, or whatever they're called.

I like 'em. I like them a lot. My thing is… 'That they right now don't want 'em stupid in the gangs.' I bank on this. 'The mentality has changed. Now you need to count money. And be able to do a lot of business dealings. You have to be very clever in the way you do everything. Being stupid doesn't even get you into the Latin Kings. Therefore, I have to train you so you can rise in those ranks.' They get real upset when I do this in the beginning. Then we have a talk. It's like, 'I don't care what your affiliation is on the street, in here, you're gonna do what I want.'

They don't want to be kicked out. Now, even the gangs expect them to stay in school and get smart. Never mind their business is so good at Flanagan High School. They tell me they are very fortunate that there is only one gang in the neighborhood so they have no competitions. Their business with the drugs, I imagine, is very good. None of them want to be kicked out, or business would die.

I get 'em and we start with *Gilgamesh*. I compare it with... I take the Mesopotamian creation of the world. They hate it with a passion in the beginning. And we got rid of it. They hated it—whatever. And we move along. We come to our creation:

the Garden of Eden described verbatim practically as this garden that Gilgamesh has to go to.

‘Oh, let’s think about it. The serpent—the flower—the Garden of Eden—the woman. Who's responsible for this? Is it Eve? Is it Adam? Would you blame the serpent?’ They say, “No.” They wouldn't blame the serpent. ‘Let’s think about this because later on it’s going to come up again.’

So, we move along. We move along.

(Music out; sits on top of her desk;)

What I do is I like them to take notes to rehearse. I write it on the board because it is very easy to give a hand out, but I don't want that. That's why they can't write. We have one day a week where we do our introduction to a piece of thing, and I give a lot of notes with background—historical cultural, literary background. They have fantastic notes that they keep in one notebook, and then the loose things in another notebook. I grade it, and I comment on it. I make my corrections. I'm an old fashioned teachers; I correct everything. So, they keep it in there. We discuss as we go along. ‘How are these ideas going to help us when we do our piece of literature?’

They like the idea of Zen—Zen Buddhism. If you would see their notebooks, you would not believe.

Oh, *Antigone*! My Latin Kings did the best presentation of *Antigone* that I have ever seen!! They died to be Creon! One of them memorized the part of Creon. They loved *Antigone* the most. They took parts. We did the whole play in May because they were so passionate about *Antigone* when they read it in October.

The book itself is not so great. It’s an old translation. But some of the speeches

are outstanding. They love it because she dies for a principle. And the idea of rebelling appeals to them to no end. ‘This is a woman. She's like 14, maybe15. She's rebelling against the King. She's doomed from the start, because she is the daughter of Oedipus.’

We had the play from beginning to end for three classes this May. It was like something so special. And when they did the Creon part, one of the high Latin Kings, Henri, acted it out. My friend Henri, bright as can be, evil to the utmost. He could go and stab someone in the hall and walk away laughing—brilliant—very sharp. He'd call me on the carpet for every single thing if I made a mistake anywhere, and it was so nice. I'd misread something; it’s like not what it is—my spellings and the board—my mind is racing, and I'm trying to do things, and—‘UHHHHH! Henri, now. I'm perfect—you really can't. We're dealing with perfection here.’

Henri memorized the part of Creon. All of it—he didn’t look at the book. The kids in class—they were just like in awe. He was Creon, for a moment, when he delivered his edict. “When anybody who crosses me.” They can talk like this in their gang I can imagine. Here, I have the speech. I saved it.

(Acts out the following speech;

music up; Angelo Badalamenti’s ‘Fred & Renee Make Love’;)

“It is impossible to learn any man’s spirit, wit, and judgment, until he be put to the test. Whoever steers the city, and does not look toward the best advice, but from fear keeps his mouth shut is the most vile man. Whoever considers his friend more important than his own fatherland, I say he is nowhere. Let Zeus who sees all always know I would neither be silent if I saw ruin approaching, nor ever make a man my friend if he were hostile to my country. I know my country is the one who keeps me safe.

"With such customs I am making this city great. Now I proclaim, concerning the children of Oedipus: that Eteocles, who perished fighting on behalf of this city as he was dominating our enemies with the spear, we bury in a tomb, and perform all the rites which go to the best of the dead below; but that his brother, who as an exile, wanted to burn our city to the ground, and wanted to drink the blood he shared and cast our people into slavery, no one will bury that brother with honors or lament him. They will leave his body unburied and behold it as a thing to be ravaged by birds and dogs."

Henri would go on.

(Music out; sits on top of her desk;)

When I told them in the beginning, "Nnmmmmmnnmmn!" they don't want to do it. But then I started with the myth of Oedipus. We talk about these disgusting things. They love the idea of the curse. 'Let's talk about the Kennedys. What do you think? Is there such a thing as destiny? Fate? Curses? Think of how they killed the president, and then his brother, Bobby. What do you think? And remember how the son died in a plane crash with his wife? Let's think about *Romeo and Juliet*, now. What is fate? What did Shakespeare say about destiny?'

And the girls are, "Aw yes, that's how it is. For love…"

'Do you see how authors can borrow from each other? Do you see this? How powerful words are?'

(Music up; The Centurions' 'Bullwinkle Part II';)

That's my spiel, 'The power of the word.' The power of the word is: 'Whether you are in the Latin Kings or you're Jesus Christ, if you cannot speak nobody will listen to you. "Fuck" can only be interesting for about three times, after that it's damn old. But

if you use big words.' I cannot remember which word we used. I have to think because it sounded really bad. It was from *Don Quixote*. Pusillanimous. They've never heard. Neither have I. 'Pusillanimous…What does this mean? Are you pusillanimous?' And then they started talking about this word. So, the power of the word, 'kay. 'Let's talk about Jesus. Why is he still mentioned? If he went, "Uhhuhhoouuhh!" would people have listened to him? I'm thinking not. 'Kay. Now how's this? Hitler used it for evil things. People listened. Why? Because he knew how to use words. Latin Kings, how do you deal with these things? You can say 'Fuck' and people might be laughing at you and thinking you're cute, but if you can use words you are a leader. You're not a follower in this case.'

In the end they quote me. "Power of the word! Remember the power of the word!" They love it.

(Music out;)

'And then what value is this literary? What do they think? What do they contribute to us? Would the world be better… had they not? Is it better because they had? If I say to you, you're nothing but a whole big dreamer. If you didn't know *Don Quixote*. If I tell you to go tilt at windmills, yeah, if you didn't know this, would you be richer for it, or not? Aren't you glad you can use this in a different way? Pusillanimous. Don Quixote. Was he insane? Was he just a dreamer? Is it good to dream the impossible dream? Or, are you a mad man if you dare? To start going against everything in spite of death. Why do we still talk about it if it's not important? What is a moral in this case? Stones—monuments—gone. Right?' I tell them. 'Is that correct?'

"Yes."

'What's left? Words!' Voilá!

(Lights out; a few seconds of silence; the candle on the Buddha continues to burn. ; Music up; Campo's 'En Mi' from Tango Club; the screen comes down; a photo collogue of Mrs. Arcova's morning routine is played; we see pictures of Mrs. Arcova's teddy bear and her alarm clock; we see her dresser, cosmetics, ironing board, kitchen sink, and coffee pot; we see her blouses, skirts, dresses and, especially, shoes.)

(Slides off; screen up; music out; lights up; Mrs. Arcova sits on her desk; she is wearing a black dress with red, high-heeled shoes;)

Because I have a passion for shoes and every day I wear a different pair of shoes even though I am not a fancy person at all. I can't help myself. I'm Imelda Marcos of the West, as my son used to call me. I like shoes a lot, and I like to wear them to school. And every single day my students are looking at my feet, and we discuss my shoes for a couple of minutes—where I get them—how come that particular color that particular day. Most of the girls love shoes. They love shoes! They tell me maybe I should shop in the store that they work in. And sometimes I do…

I have several pairs that I keep at school. I change shoes during the day—because I like it. They're there in my classroom closet—different shoes, depending on the mood. When my feet get tired, I change to something else. I like green shoes. I like pink shoes. I like things that stand out. Like if I were to wear a black outfit, I would probably put some green shoes on. I match my belts to my shoes. They notice these things. I have shoes in the trunk of my car—because I like shoes. Lately, I'm catching myself wearing more and more black. I don't exactly know why. But the kids notice that and say, "Why are you wearing black all the time?"

'Because I like it. It feels comfortable.'

"You know, are you depressed?"

‘No, as a matter of fact I am doing very well.’

Because most people think, "Wear black when they are depressed." Only, I don't get depressed. The kids notice these things. They have a fashion sense. And I think I—not that I have a fashion sense, but I like to look a certain way. They say I have a look.

(Music up; Campo’s ‘En Mi’ From Tango Club; Mrs. Arcova paces in time to the music without talking; speaks when sufficiently angry;)

This is fine. I'm just in a trance because I am amazed at everything. I'm in a foul mood. Did I say that? I feel like this whole system is against us. I really do. I… Honest to God I don't wake up in the morning like this. I'm a real positive person. They just work me. The minute…

For me, Flanagan has the most fantastic kids and the most awful administration, and I want that to go down for posterity. They don't know what they are doing. They don't care what they are doing. They don't care about the kids. They bicker among themselves. The rosters are a mess. I have over 36 kids in each class. Thirty-six in each class! I have only 30 chairs. So…

(Moves into yoga posture; breathes; music out; a moment of silence; picks up a box from the floor and places it on her desk;)

I didn't sort things through. Okay, this is my 2002 year—2003 class. Not all of them because they would come with a suitcase. I just kind of brought some of the things they written me at the end of the year. This is the only reason I do this. At this point in my life I'm actually thinking of quitting because of the administration. But then last night I went through some things, and I thought, ‘I can't.’

Okay, where to start? I hate doing this because it's going to sound like I'm bragging. But it's not. This is a monument for my students.

(Picks up a plaque that has pictures of 3 students; the words, "To Mrs. Arcova, Teacher, Mother, Friend." are inscribed in brass;)

These are the kids that I was toughest on—toughest. They hated my guts. I was mean. In fact, I want you to read the letter from this one.

(Points to one of the student pictures on the plaque;)

What this one, Juan, said to me at the beginning of the year. And this is what they gave me in June because I was so nasty to them. They hated my guts.

(Music up; 'Yumeji's Theme' from In the Mood for Love;)

"First and foremost, I want you to know that whatever I told you before and whatever I'm about to tell you are all true. I did not like you or the class at all in the beginning of the year. It's a matter of fact."

Dr. Carlos. Juan went to Dr. Carlos, the principal. Juan was a Panamanian boy, the number one student in his class, the top student, who went to Carlos on the first day of school and said, "I want out of the woman's class. I can't stand her. She's prejudiced against Panamanians."

She's prejudiced against Panamanians!! Can you?? I know. Even Carlos didn't believe. I hate everybody equally. I am an equal opportunity bitch.

"I was close to hating you."

He wasn't close.

"Well, something happened. I don't know how you did it. But you made me open my eyes. You made me look around. You made me think. And made me a better person. I

truly think that if you could have seen the big effect in me you would know that it is working. I've said it many, many times before and I'll say it again. I love you very much. Thanks, Juan."

These kids... Protected by the parents. They did not let Juan leave the house. He could not even go outside. He was like the number one student. Juan was the valedictorian. Parents very strict—Panamanian. He could not leave the house. An altar boy—hooked up with a girl that had two children, and, at one point, he cut school. The number one student went to go to her house so they can fool around. And, of course, he gets caught.

(Acts out the following scenes; music continues softly;)

Now, Juan comes back. This is an altar boy who has a conscience that's bothering him to the max. He can't concentrate in class, and I'm noticing this. I mean, I'm a mom. I know these things. He's thinking, "Well, she has two kids, what if she got pregnant?"

An altar boy—the number one student. He's quiet. I see him crying, and I kinda of figured what's going on. I pulled him outside, and I hug him. 'Honey, there's nothing wrong with making mistakes. I'm glad you made your mistake, that's fine. Does your mom know?'

"No."

'Don't tell her. You shouldn't tell her these things. Some things are best kept to yourself.'

Then when we get to *Faust*, and Faust wants to experience all the physical things, and all the kids in class are reading, and they all are like, "Stop," they said. "That's Juan. He's like Faust. He wants to experience... He wants to experience the physical pleasures."

The kid was just dying. His face was bright red. We had such a riot. It was just a special class. And there were lots of days like this.

(Music out; takes another letter;)

Here's my little Cecilia who joined the Navy because—her mother married, remarried, and Cecilia didn't have a place in her mom's new house. She joined the Navy. The most sensitive of all children—Cecilia Santini. I told her, 'I like your name. Cecilia Santini, you're a poem.' She loved me from that day on. She is a poem.

(Reads;)

"I really don't want to say good bye because it hurts too much. So, this is just a thank you note. I thank you for being the great person you are. For the inspiration you are to me. And for being the pushy teacher that I once hated. I feel an indescribable connection to you that makes me love you the way I do."

She wasn't sure about her life. Why am I crying? I just liked her so much. I—one day I said that I liked daffodils. To me, they were the most beautiful flowers because I like the Wordsworth poem. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud."

The kids didn't know what a daffodil was. I said, 'God, you have… This you know… My very favorite flower!'

One day she comes in with a flower, a daffodil, and she had stole it from somebody's yard. I said, 'Good for you!'

No, I didn't.

Yes, I did. I put the daffodil in my book. And it pressed. When she came the second year—I didn't know I was going to have her the second year—we were reading poems, and I opened it.

'Cecilia, I saved this.'

Well, after she hated me her whole junior year, I think she grew to like me a little bit more. I still have the flower, actually.

They hated me because I was very pushy. I guess I wanted them to do the right thing. I wanted them to do more than they were willing to do. I wanted them to be creative, and like poetry, and like literature. I don't care that they are doing math. I don't care that they are doing everything else. 'This is what makes us human! This is humanity that we are doing here. Literature is not just reading books, because that's silly.'

So, I'm calling for my Cecilia. She's in the military now. They say she's in Texas.

(Reads from letter;)

"One of the most valuable ones was to let my feeling show. Through your class I was able to find myself in so many ways. I discovered the person that I am in capacity. And the heart that never thought I had. Thanks for that and millions more."

This is my Cecilia that I loved so dearly. She and her classmates wrote me very beautiful letters, and this is what I take to my grave with me—I have nothing else.

(Sits on top of her desk; music up; Campo's 'En Mi' from Tango Club;)

No, honestly, I have nothing. Last year, when I went through my moment, and I thought that I didn't need anything, I gave away all my shoes—to o the Purple Hearts and some cancer thing. I don't know where—my son called some places. I kept twenty pairs of shoes, and I gave away three hundred and twenty. I gave away all my belongings. I had nothing. I had no furniture, not even a mattress. I was going through a catharsis of sorts—personal problems.

(Music fades out;)

The clothes I don’t care about, but the shoes… I'm kind of sorry I did it. So, now, I'm on this... I promised myself I would not buy anymore shoes, and I find myself going shopping and coming home with two or three pairs of shoes that I really don't need. Because I don't need green shoes or pink shoes. I never wear them anyway. I line them up in the closet. So, I'm nuts, okay?

(Music up; Orquesta Del Plata’s ‘Montserrat’ from Tango Club;)

Oh, Monday there was an accident—on Cicero. No, on North Avenue and Western. I came home from work. I'm sitting on my swing in my yard. I'm reading in the paper, and I see the name Raul Santiago. I thought that there could not be two Rauls. Now, Raul Santiago, two years ago, was my student, and last year also, but they kicked him out. The sweetest Latin King you have ever met—trouble to the maximum. Was raised by very religious parents. Went the other way, totally. Joined the Latin Kings, and he became really high up in the ranks of the Latin Kings. Was shot three times. Raul Santiago—he was shot three times, but didn't die.

And Jefferson brings him to my class and said, “You have to put him in the middle. You can't put him by a window. You can't put him by a door—because they are out to get him.” The rival gangs.

I said, ‘What should I do, put him in the middle and we will all get shot? Is that what you want? Because it ain't going to work!’

I called him, ‘Mr. Jeffershit!’ Pardon my terrible thing to say because he was Mr. BS.

(Sits at her desk;)

So now, I'm sitting at my desk, in my room reading, and Raul came to me. I was

alone in my room. He walked in the door and showed me his bullet wounds. I never seen bullet wounds. I said, ‘What is that? Like a rash? What is that?’

He said, "No, no, no. Those are bullet wounds." And he took a great liking to me. I loved him to pieces—trouble to the maximum. I loved him. He gave me the—a quarter with a bullet wound.

He says, "You keep this quarter because I'm not going to make my twentieth birthday." Here it is.

(Music out;)

So, I'm at my house. I’m sitting in my swing reading the paper. Raul was driving his car with six guys inside—five guys and him. The car crashed at 2:15 in the morning on North Avenue and Western going 90 miles an hour. Raul hit a parked truck. He was driving. His brother Jose was killed. Jean La Salle was killed—one of our kids. As a matter of fact, all the names I read there I recognize as being from Flanagan. But they are like older. I read that Raul Santiago is in Cook County Hospital.

I thought, ‘I have to see if this is my Raul. Or, if this is another Raul Santiago.’

(Music up; Orquesta Del Plata’s ‘Montserrat’ from Tango Club;)

I call Cook County Hospital. And they connected me to his room and a police man answers the phone. ‘Why are you answering the phone? I want to speak to Raul!’

He says, "You can't."

‘Why not?’

“He's under arrest."

‘For what?’

"Three counts of manslaughter—vehicular manslaughter."

Whatever that means. I said, ‘Well, I'd like to speak with him.’

"You can't. He can't even see anybody."

‘So, what about his family?’

"Nobody's here."

And I knew that his family had disowned him because of the drug dealing. I mean, he was a mess. He was a mess. I said, ‘Did you ever have a teacher that you cared for in your life or that helped you in any way?’

"Yes, I did."

‘You have to do me a very big favor. I know that the rule says that I am not allowed to speak with him, and I understand the rule, and I don't want to break the rule.’ Although, I'm tempted to. ‘But I would like for you to go ask Raul and ask him if he remembers Mrs. Arcova. Tell him that I have called, and I wanted him to know that, no matter what, I still think that I care a little bit. Tell him I'd like to talk him.’

The policeman is kinda thinking, he says, "Okay, because you are a teacher. I honor teachers. I'm going to talk to Raul."

And he went. And a little time passed. I'm waiting and waiting.

"You know what? He does remember you, and he cried because no one had called him. Nobody—not even his parents. Nobody wants anything to do with him.”

I know that he is guilty. I know that he is a Latin King. He's a drug dealer. He was high on marijuana. He was drinking the night before. He's a mess. But if nobody wants you. Even a criminal has to have someone who cares for them. I know that this is not right to talk like this. And I know that I was in trouble many times in my life, but someone always was there. Imagine not having anyone. Even if you are the worst

criminal in the world. Can you imagine being twenty years old, messed up on drugs, messed up on alcohol, your family has nothing to do with you, because you did go the wrong path. And I always told him, 'What you are doing is totally a mess!! But there's always going to be someone who cares and that would be me.'

And that's the story. Yesterday, I read in the paper that the fourth passenger died. So now, it's four counts of manslaughter.

'What's going to happen to him?' I asked the cop.

"He's going straight to jail until he sees the judge. He's not officially been charged."

(Sits on top of desk; music out;)

Could you believe nothing happened to him? Nothing. People from that area said they heard the noise from blocks away. That's how fast he was going and how hard he hit the parked truck. Ninety miles an hour, under the influence of alcohol and marijuana. And the fool—actually, no, I'm glad he did. He admit it that he did that. Which I, you know, I respect the fact that he, at least, admitted he did this.

Another one of our kids, Jim Augustino, got shot last weekend—from a gang-related. And he was a big gang-banger. I didn't have him, but I when I read in the paper I recognized the name. And this is how I find out about a lot of these kids—never good news.

Okay. Move along. So, what else? Just a few more questions.

(Looks down at the table and glances at her watch;
music up softly; Angelo Badalmenti's 'Haunting And Heartbreaking';)

How do I teach Chinese philosophy? I don't know. I try to—first of all, I start out

with Phil Jackson. I call him the Zen master. I think that they like the idea that there is no heaven or hell in them. Zen is a philosophy. It's not a religion. I mention that constantly. 'And the fact that you have to be in harmony. And that you are at peace with yourself. You wait for things—just let things happen.' They like that. Because they don't have to take action in a way. It's just kind of leave things, and things happen to you.

I personally like that philosophy. And I am calling it a philosophy. Because you know, I know you might not believe it, but I am religious in my own way. But philosophically I agree more with Chinese and the Indians than with the Russians. The kids like that.

I don't know why they like that. For instance, they like the fact when we do the *Tao Te Ching* and the way that nature is just too perfect. 'Everything is just too perfect. Leave it alone. Don't ruin it. The idea of balance—' They like that very much the idea of balance—the Yin and the Yang. 'There's a seed of good in everyone, but there is also a seed of bad in everyone. That's the bad part. The good part is that we need both of those.' And, they like that.

(Leaves desk and begins to teach; music out;)

'You are not totally bad. You are not totally good. Even when you are bad you're okay. Because it's the potential. Not necessarily that you have to act on that potential. But it's there, and that's a good thing, because you are human.' And I talk about nonsense like this, and I think that captures what they feel.

"Okay, so I have a little bit of bad. I broke a few rules. That's okay. I'm still okay."

'Whatever you do, if it's not irreversible, but its balance, it's okay. You learn

from it. So, you did drugs one time. I mean, I'm not condoning it. So what? Now we should shun you for the rest of your life? You've seen what it is. It's a bad thing. Move along. And even if you've done the worst things. You always have the good in you. And that one is necessary for the other to exist.'

They like the idea of a circle—that you have another chance. 'Fall or winter is not necessarily a bad thing. It's a very good thing. And maybe death is not a bad thing, because then you get to, you know.' And maybe some of their fears are allayed. I don't know. But they like that.

(Stands in front of chalkboard; music up, loudly;

Orquesta Del Plata's 'Montserrat' from Tango Club;)

'Okay, it's now June. We've covered 4,000 years of literature and philosophy and history and whatever. We've studied the Sumerians. We've studied the Christians. We've studied the Greeks with many gods. We've studied the Hindus and the *Rig Veda*. We've studied the *Tao Te Ching*. We've studied Eugene O'Neil. And Ionesco—*Rhinoceros*—my total absurdism—everything. Choose one, as your—this is your exam. Choose one, discuss it thoroughly, and tell me why you liked it so much. Which one could you relate to the most. This is your exam. I'm not going to do "False", "True", "False". I don't believe in that kind of crappy American test. Take a topic. Discuss it at length. You may use your notes from the class. But tell me why.'

(Lights out; silence; the candle on the Buddha continues to burn. Mrs. Arcova takes out the mat from behind the desk and begins to meditate. The screen comes down. Slides of Lake Michigan before dawn are shown; it is winter and the water is filled with ice and slush; the slides move across Lawrence Avenue Beach to the park's long, concrete pier

as dawn touches the ice and water; after twenty seconds,

a tape from Mrs. Arcova's interview begins to play;)

'Well, I get there at quarter-to-seven—seven. Nobody's in the building except the librarian and I and a couple of the janitors. But I'm an early riser. That's when I get my work done. Because I don't start until 7:45. Which is when the first class starts. It's pretty quiet. Actually, it's very, very quiet. And it's an eerie kind of thing because we turn on the lights and in the wintertime it's still dark outside. And that building is clean in the morning.

'It's a good feeling. I like the feeling of chalk in the morning. I like the feeling of an old room with books in it and papers. I like the smell of old books. By the time I open the windows, I get to smell that a little bit. I water my plants. I do my lessons. I grade papers. I've gotten it to a system where I can pretty much do what I have to do. I just grade papers in the morning from what I collected the day before. I rarely take things at home anymore. I read their notebooks. I make my corrections. I am interested in what they thought about a piece of literature—if it reminded them of something else. If they can find some other theme that we have discussed in it. Or, what feelings they had when they read the poem. Or, what inspired them, or didn't inspire them, or the images that they see.

'Things like that. That's what I do.'

(The last slides show the sun rising above Lake Michigan; chunks of ice bob in the water; clouds glow red and cold; gulls fly; light reflects on the concrete slabs built between the water and the shore; the camera moves from the lake to a hill in a park in Chicago's Montrose Harbor; the grass is frozen; there are no people;

the sun is obscured by clouds.)

(Sound out; slides and lights off; Mrs. Arcova meditates;

the candle on the Buddha continues to burn.)

(*Post-show music:*

Adriana Varela's 'Perfume', with Luciano Supervielle, from Tango Club.)

References

Algren, N. (1961). *Chicago: city on the make* (3rd ed.). Oakland, Calif.: Angel Island Pub. Inc.

Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2000). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Bagley, C. (2008). Educational ethnography as performance art: Towards a sensuous feeling and knowing. *Qualitative Research, 8*(1), 53-72. doi:10.1177/1468794107085296

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.). (1993). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Benner, P. E., Tanner, C. A., & Chelsea, C. (1996). *Expertise in nursing practice: Caring, clinical judgment, and ethics*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Biklen, S. K. (1995). *Schoolwork: Gender and the cultural construction of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Brown, D. F. (2003). Urban teachers use of culturally responsive management startegies. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 277-282.

Brown, R. (2008). *Black girlhood celebration: A hip hop feminist pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang.

Cushner, K. S., McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (2006). *Human diversity in education: An integrative approach* (5th Edition ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Denzin, N. (2001). The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research, 1*(1), 23-46.

Denzin, N. (2003). *Performance ethnography: Critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Donmoyer, R., & Yennie-Donmoyer, J. (1995). Data as drama: Reflections on the use of reader's theater as a mode of qualitative data display. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(4), 402-428.

Dutton, J. E. (2003). Breathing life into organizational studies. *Journal of Management Studies, 12*(1), 5-19.

Eisner, E. (2007). Persistent tensions in arts-based research. In M. Cahnmann-Talor; & R. Siegesmund (Eds.), *Arts-Based Research in Education: Foundations for Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Feldman, M. S. (1995). *Strategies for interpreting qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Feldman, M. S. (2005). *Why ethnodrama, and why not?: Keynote address to the*

University of Michigan Narrative Institute, 2005. Paper presented at the University of Michigan Narrative Institute, Ann Arbor.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2006). *Youth in a suspect society: Democracy or disposability?* . New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goldstein, T. (2012). *Stageing Harriet's house: Writing and producing research-informed theatre*. New York: Peter Lang.

Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger: Educational philosophy in a new age*. New York: John Wiley.

Halquist, D., & Musanti, S. I. (2010). Critical incidents and reflection: Turning points that challenge the researcher and create opportunities for knowing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 23*(4), 449-461.

Hankins, K. H. (1998). Cacophony to symphony: Memoirs in teacher research. *Harvard Educational Review, 68*(1), 80-95.

Hatch, A. (2006). Qualitative studies in the era of scientifically-based research: Musings of a former QSE editor. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 19*(4), 403-407.

Herrick, M. J. (1971). *The Chicago schools: A social and political history*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE

Irvine, J. J., & Armento, B. J. (2001). *Culturally responsive teaching: Lesson planning for elementary and middle grades*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Kalb, J. (2001). Documentary solo performance: The politics of the mirrored self. *Theater, 31*(3), 12-29.

Kazubowski-Houston, M. (2010). *Staging strife: Lessons from performing ethnography with polish Roma women*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Kelchtermans, G. (2005). Teachers' emotions in educational reforms: Self-understanding, vulnerable commitment and micropolitical literacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(21), 995-1006.

Kleinfeld, J. (1992). Learning to think like a teacher: The study of cases. In J. H. Shulman (Ed.), *Case methods in teacher education*. New York: Teachers College.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*: Jossey-Bass.

Larson, C. L. (1997). Re-presenting the subject: Problems in personal narrative inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE) 10*(4), 455-470.

Lincoln, Y. (2000). Narrative authority vs. perjured testimony: Courage, vulnerability and truth. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 12*(2), 131-138.

Lipman, P. (2002). Making the global city, making inequality: The political economy and cultural politics of Chicago school policy. *American Educational Research Journal, 39*(2), 379-419.

Lipman, P. (2006). Educational ethnography and the politics of globalization, war, and resistance. *Anthropology in Education Quarterly, 36*(4), 315-328.

Norris, J. (2009). *Playbuilding as qualitative research: A participatory arts-based approach*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Payne, R. K. (2005). *A framework for understanding poverty* (4th ed.). Highlands, TX:

aha! Process Inc.

Pirreto, J. (2002). The question of quality and qualifications: Writing inferior poems as qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 15*(4), 431-445.

Rodriguez, L. J. (1991). *The concrete river*. East Haven, CT: Curbstone.

Rodriguez, L. J. (1993). *Always running: La vida loca, gang days in L. A.* East Haven, CT: Curbstone.

Rodriguez, L. J. (2001). *Hearts and hands: creating community in violent times*. New York: Seven Stories.

Saldaña, J. (2002). Dramatizing data: A primer. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9*(2), 218-236.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast.

Snyder-Young, D. (2010). Beyond "an aesthetic of objectivity": Performance ethnography, performance texts, and theatre. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 883-893.

Steedman, C. (1992). Prisonhouses. In *Past tenses: Essays on writing autobiography and history* (pp. 51-61). London: Rivers Oram Press.

Styan, J. L. (1992). The mystery of the play experience. In M. Issachoroff & R. F. Jones (Eds.), *Performing Texts*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Turner, V. W. (1992). *The anthropology of performance*. New York: PAJ Publications.

Tyler, S. A. (1986). Post-modern ethnography: From document of the occult to occult document. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 122-140). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vanover, C. (2009). *The expertise in urban teaching project: A theory-based study.* (dissertation). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Retrieved from http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/62224

Vanover, C., & Saldaña, J. (2005). Chalkboard concerto: Growing up as a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. In J. Saldaña (Ed.), *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre*. Retrieved from https://digital.usfsp.edu/fac_publications/2866/

Wacquant, L. (2007). *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Cambridge: Polity.

Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: Free Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House Inc.