



Learning through a separation process:

An embodied a/r/tographic inquiry

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Abstract

In this article, I present an embodied a/r/tographical inquiry of my bodily and emotional responses experienced while going through a separation process, and a description of what I learned as part of this process that has implications for how I intend to teach and develop student teachers' relational competence. By invoking the context of emergence, currere, the in-between and living inquiry, and in dialogue with the concepts of embodied affectivity and embodied interaffectivity, I observe the unfolding of themes such as *activation of bodily resonance*, *the sharing of embodied experiences* and *embodied meaning-making*, coming together to reveal an insight into relational competence as an embodied phenomenon. I have also revealed an awareness of my bodily inquiry and the merging of moving and writing. The implications of this study for teacher education may well include encouraging student teachers to consider their own relational competence by nurturing and enriching their own bodily awareness of a capacity to engage in meaningful and compassionate ways both with themselves and their pupils, not least when faced with unexpected and provocative situations in their practicum. Applying embodied a/r/tography as a

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method for developing student teachers' relational competence may offer opportunities for including student teachers' wonderings, feelings, reflections and meta-reflections as a means of knowing on their path to becoming teachers.

Keywords: a/r/tography, embodiment, choreography, relational competence, body inquiry, teacher education

Entering the in-between

Dizzy.
Restless.
Nauseous and tense.
I notice that the floor disappears beneath me.
The roof descends.
The walls press against my body.
In front of me – my separation papers.
The ink is not yet dry.
I'm unexpectedly alone.
About all choices.
From now on.
I try to gather my thoughts, be structured, and do everything that I have to do to
organise my future.
Finances, a place to live, parental responsibilities.
My life.
But I can't.
Everything flows.
I have only one need: to move.
With no-one watching. No music. No costumes or lighting.
Only me – exploring my own movements.
And writing.

The words above were written in the moment when I received, and then signed, my separation papers in October 2010. In response to this life-changing situation, I decided to use the opportunity to live through an embodied a/r/tographic inquiry (Irwin & Springgay, 2018; Springgay et al., 2005) with the aim of experiencing what would emerge, and what would enlighten, awaken and encourage me as I underwent my separation process. This provocative situation demanded that I navigate a complex process that was altogether reflective, reflexive, recursive, responsive and embodied, and which required new modes both of questioning and questing (Irwin,

2014). Moving from the familiar and stable state of marriage into an existence of questioning who I was, had been, and who I might become, forced me into the space of in-between (Le Blanc & Irwin, 2019), dominated by questioning and questing my life. According to Le Blanc and Irwin (2019), such in-between spaces may offer generative possibilities, and both Ellsworth (2005) and Grosz (2001) argue for the pedagogical value of the 'in-between' as a space for movement and transformation.

As a choreographer within the dance theatre tradition, a researcher in the field of embodied education, and a teacher educator in pedagogy with an emphasis on developing student teachers' relational competence, I wanted to delve into the implications that my separation process may have for my practice of choreography, research, and teaching. These desires are in line with Pinar (1975) and Pinar and Grumet (1976) who, by invoking the concept of *currere*, encouraged educators to reflect upon their lived-through life experiences and to consider the implications that these experiences have for their teaching practice. In this article, I will present a self-study (Springgay et al., 2008) of my own learning process during a living inquiry, exploring bodily and emotional experiences during my separation process (Irwin & Ricketts, 2013).

A living inquiry of bodily and emotional experiences during a separation process

The concept of *living inquiry* refers to the nature of a/r/tography as a living practice of the personal, political, and professional aspects of one's life (Springgay et al., 2005), in which the researcher makes sense and creates meaning out of difficult and complex questions that cannot be answered through traditional research methodologies (Rasberry, 2001). A living inquiry involves a fluid orientation that establishes its rigor by means of continuous reflexivity and analysis (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 903). The issues involved may permeate a life and engage emotional, intuitive, personal and embodied ways of knowing (Springgay & Irwin, 2004). Further, "part of the process of living inquiry is to live a life engaged in creative works and to recognize the of art to transform" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 903). According to Le Blanc and Irwin (2019), the inquirer is guided by their own personal and/or professional interest, questioning what they know and how they know, while at the same time accepting knowledge as fluid, complicated, performative and experimental. Moreover, they explore the potentialities of a/r/tography by invoking the context of emergence, *currere*, the in-between and living inquiry as a means of

demonstrating that a/r/tography is a “generative mode of inquiry concerned with the ways in which art making, researching, teaching, and learning fold and unfold in and through practice and in and through time” (Le Blanc & Irwin, 2019, p. 1).

In order to capture the bodily and emotional responses experienced during my separation process, I apply the phenomenological concepts of *embodied affectivity* and *embodied interaffectivity*. As humans, we are constantly involved in a state that the German philosopher Fuchs (2016a) describes as mutual incorporation, in which bodies both create affects and are created in affective encounters. For Fuchs (2016a), the emotional impression of being in a situation triggers a specific bodily resonance, which both creates affects and prepares the body for movement. These are the *affective* and *emotive* components of emotions. Fuchs uses the concept of *embodied affectivity* to describe the type of circular emotional interaction in which a subject engages with his or her environment (Fuchs, 2016a, p. 197). Another form of circular emotional interaction takes place when subjects meet. Fuchs (2016a, p. 198) applied Merleau-Ponty’s concepts of intersubjectivity and intercorporeality to describes this interaction as *embodied interaffectivity*. This type of intercorporeal interaction takes place quickly, and humans are unable to control it cognitively or rationally. In this way, our emotions act as media that serve to channel our affective and emotive involvement in a given relationship. This is in line with Szanto (2020), who demonstrates that our emotions are embodied phenomena, constantly navigating between those things that matter to us personally, what matters to others, and what matters within a given social group.

As part of my own living inquiry process, I have combined my knowledge as a choreographer, researcher and teacher educator “to force understanding to evolve through acts of deep engagement” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 904). The study incorporates a wide diversity of source data, written across the boundaries of language and my bodily experience, and serving to integrate the living inquiry processes of knowing, doing, and making.

The data I acquired was then reviewed as the basis for an ongoing analytical process involving a search for expressions of my bodily and emotional experiences during my separation process, in the form of what Winther (2019b) describes as ‘meaningful moments’. These are moments that occurred during events that I had planned for, but which did not transpire as I had intended, or situations that changed my way of knowing, thinking or moving. I also included my affective and emotive experiences on

reading the data material as part of the analytical process (Ørbæk, 2022; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019, 2022). This type of emotional coding involved paying close attention to the things I became aware of, not only in situations during the process, but also when reading about these situations some time afterwards (Ørbæk, 2022). As part of these emotional meta-reflections (Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2022), I alternated between sensing my affective and emotive experiences and writing metaphors and metonyms that served to connect and create meaning.

In the next phase of the analysis, I compiled a 60-page chronological record of the meaningful moments that I had identified in the data material. The document contained descriptions of movements, exercises, rehearsals, references to video material, individual words, drawings, poems, short and long sentences, longer paragraphs, blank pages, reflective notes and transcribed interviews. During this phase, my embodied affective and interaffective experiences of the various phases of my separation process became re-activated. This enabled me to use my body memory as an analytical tool to re-connect with my bodily and emotional responses experienced in the various meaningful moments (Fuchs, 2017). According to Fuchs (2016a, 2017), this type of bodily awareness, combined with writing, can help to reveal latent motives and meanings as part of what he describes as unfolding the implicit, or the 'not-yet-conscious' – essentially a form of the embodied development of language. Moreover, the time taken (13 years) for me to carry out the rewriting process as part of this embodied analytical approach (Chadwick, 2017) proved to be invaluable in terms of creating for me both an analytical distance from the process and an analytical proximity to the data material (Ørbæk, 2022). The final phase of the analysis involved drawing up a chronological record of what I define as the three 'units of meaning' (so-called *descriptemes*), which cover the three most meaningful moments that emerged from the data material (Petitmengin et al., 2018).

The descriptemes are presented in the form of words, poems and scenic descriptions inspired by the ethnopoetic transcription approach of O'Dell and Willim (2013) and Pink (2015), and which serve to sketch out the meaningful moments derived from the analytical process (Berg, 2018; Chadwick, 2017). The scenic descriptions express my, and/or other dancers', experiences of sensing, moving, and writing, as well as the reflections and questions that emerged through our bodily and emotional experiences in given situations. At the end of each descripteme, I link the bodily and emotional experiences of the situations to relevant theoretical concepts. For each descripteme, I have chosen individual words, text structures, sentence lengths,

indentations and rhythms, which I hope will resonate with, and create a bodily resonance for, the reader in the form of a sensory experience (Berg, 2018; Chadwick, 2017; Fuchs, 2016a; Springgay et al., 2005).

Activation of bodily resonance

The first phase begins when I receive and sign my separation papers. The data accumulated during this phase includes reflective notes, words, metaphors and drawings that describe my movement exploration (Fuchs, 2016b). I let my body move in response to its own needs. I explore, examine, listen, stop, sense and respond to the movements and the words that emerge. This way of *being-in-movement* and *thinking-in-movement*, as Sheets-Johnstone (2009) describes it, enables me to create movements that trigger further thoughts and which in turn generate new movements. The movements have their own time, rhythm and expression. I feel the need to put the meaningful movements that I experience together, and the order is significant:

1. Leaning up slowly while breathing in
2. Leaning down quickly while breathing out
3. Swinging my head calmly to the left
4. My right arm limply extended
5. My left arm limply extended
6. Sinking down like the air being expelled from a balloon
7. Pretending to play the piano in the air in front of me – as fast as I can
8. Standing up hesitantly
9. “Playing piano” softly, across my own back
10. Standing faltering on tiptoe while cold sand runs through my wet fingers
11. Raising my head – prepared for an attack
12. Lowering my guard
13. Looking down in despair
14. Both arms reaching up and drawing a large circle as I twist unwillingly to the right
15. Walking backwards to create a distance
16. Arms down calmly, trying to find peace
17. Stumbling to the right before moving my left elbow up towards the ceiling, trying to find something to cling on to.
18. Both hands above my head, restlessly searching for something
19. Anxiously looking up

Repeating these movements causes many words to emerge. I sit down. I write descriptively and narratively. Words of wondering that in some way feel connected to each other:

holding on/letting go

locked/movable

small/big rooms

introvert/extrovert

anger/relaxation

vulnerable/invincible

imbalance/balance

captivity/proximity

structuring/intuitive

I alternate between moving and writing. I don't understand what is happening, but something "not yet conscious" as Fuchs (2016a) describes it, tells me that this is important. I decide to trust it.

The moment I received my separation papers, my bodily resonance (Fuchs, 2016a) created affects that I expressed by moving and writing, as part of what Fuchs (2016a) describes as the embodied affective experience of entering a life crisis. I felt that I needed to escape from who I had been in the marriage and explore new ways of being in the world. Who was I without him? Who could I become? My hope was that by creating new ways of moving and writing, I would discover the interrelatedness between the two and develop new ways of thinking and being in the world. The words functioned as both metaphors and metonymies of my embodied experience (Springgay et al., 2005), and guided me onto a path of further exploration.

This process of becoming by means of writing and moving revealed both my fears and hopes and served as a first step towards re-imagining myself into being. The contiguity (Springgay et al., 2005) that I experienced between moving, sensing, writing and reflecting can be regarded as what Fuchs (2016b) describes as an embodied basis of language production and comprehension. According to Fuchs

(2016b), there is “no fundamental separation between sensorimotor and symbolic interactions of an agent with its environment” (Fuchs, 2017, p. 107). As a result, writing from within and through the body – a form of writing of excess, as expressed by Springgay et al. (2005) – enabled me to enter into an embodied meaning-making process during which I did not write or move to illustrate the experience I was living through, but instead arrived at a method of creating what Leggo and Irwin (2013) describe as *enhanced meanings*.

By reflecting on my selected words in pairs, I recognized that they expressed a tension between my present feelings and the future identity that I was seeking. A feeling of holding on to the past, of being locked in a situation and moving only in restricted ‘small’ rooms; of feeling introvert, vulnerable and full of anger. All this generated an imbalance that cried out to me to establish a robust structure in my life situation. I felt as if I was in captivity, longing for closeness with others and for emotional balance. I longed to be able to relax so I that I could progress towards a more intuitive way of living. I wanted to experience a sense of being invincible.

After this initial phase, I felt an urge to share these movements and writings with someone I trusted. The second descripteme, called ‘*Sharing embodied experiences*’, reveals my experiences from explorations in moving and writing together with another female dancer. I have named her Oda.

Sharing embodied experiences

The second phase began in January 2011 when I invited Oda, with whom I had been working for 20 years, to the dance studio for a rehearsal. She was also going through a separation process. The data accumulated during this phase includes descriptions of movements, written words and sentences, and reflection notes that we produced alone, and together, in the same rehearsal space at the same time. In this way, the material evolves from our embodied interaffective relationship (Fuchs, 2016a) in a shared time and space.

When I arrived at the dance studio, my intention was to teach Oda the dance that I had created, but my body resisted. I was numb and paralyzed, and simply unable to move. Instead, I choose to share my bodily and emotional experiences of being in a separation process and invited her to participate in the exploration of movement that I had started alone. My experiences resonated with hers.

We started our exploration by improvising with movements that resonated to the emotions we felt and wanted to express, using words that could interrelate and propel our movement exploration. We moved simultaneously in the same room, exploring expressions of our bodily sensations with different movements. At the end of the rehearsal, we stopped moving and writing individually, and shared our movements, words, sentences and reflections. The words that we shared that day are as follows:

Firstly, from my own reflective notes:

Frustration

Tension

Tenderness

sore muscles

stiff muscles

on tiptoe

landing

shaking off

holding back

putting a lid on a volcano

f

a

l

l

i

n

g

faltering

irritated

distancing

stoneface

straight-backed
foetal position

circle to step out of

apathy

And, secondly, from Oda's reflective notes:

This circularity makes me spin mentally and physically around an axis. It is very high-risk. My balance is unreliable, I fall, I pick myself up, I fall again, try to catch me, I fall, I don't believe that I can pick myself up, I fall again, I no longer care whether I bring myself in or not. My skeleton is stacked like scaffolding, one bar above another, I find stability if I want to, and I can fall without being afraid of falling. I'm no longer nauseous. I give myself over to a feeling of being finished. I feel that I can get the taste what it will be like – finished, free and calm – and strong enough in myself.

Then I ask myself. Why are we doing this now? Why do we have this overwhelming need to move, talk and write, individually and together, in the same room?

When Oda and I moved and wrote in the same room, exploring our affective and emotive experiences of being in the separation process, we also sensed a mutual awareness of each other. In this embodied interaffective relationship (Fuchs, 2016a), Oda encounters me in my reality and acts as an 'other' in relation to me, and vice versa. Oda and I are not simply moving as subjects in the same room, but are also experiencing 'being-in-the-world' with each other. We are becoming part of an ongoing, trusting intercorporeal relationship that creates an opening (Springgay et al., 2005) which encourages us to be attentive to what is seen and known, and to the things that lie beneath the surface of our exploration. We uncover meaning in what we observe the other is expressing, which in some instances is not known to the mover herself.

After this second phase, both Oda and I wanted to further explore our bodily and emotional experiences of the separation process, and also to include someone who would represent a critical stance to our explorations and be able to perform these experiences in a dance theatre. We invited a male dancer, whom I name Jens and with whom we had given several performances during the past 20 years. The third, and last descripteme, which I call '*Embodied meaning-making*', illustrates experiences from a rehearsal situation, where the dancers explored the experience of touching and being touched by each other. This descripteme also illuminates the knowledge that evolved when we later reflected on our movements performed during the exercise.

Embodied meaning-making

The third phase began in August 2011. The three of us developed movements based not only on our bodily and emotional experiences of being in a separation process (which applied to Jens as well), but also on our bodily memories of the various phases of our separations (Fuchs, 2016a, 2017). The material from this phase includes movement exercises, produced movement material, reflection notes and a video documentary of the project that includes extracts from exercises, rehearsals with and without audiences, our final performance and interviews with each of the dancers.

During this phase, as a part of the creative process involved in developing the dance theatre performance, I took a step back from my own movement and writing explorations and started to create exercises and frameworks for Oda and Jens. One of the exercises I created involved the dancers touching each other's bodies ten times, on various body parts, and combining the ten touches in a movement phrase, or 'touch path', which they could perform without the presence of the other's body.

From my reflection notes:

I start the video. The dancers start to move. Jens rests on one knee, with his other leg at 90 degrees to the floor. Both his arms are fully extended on both sides, just like a Russian cossack dancer. He looks up and around him. Oda explores Jens' body with her hands. The dancers tune in to each other. They create their own universe. "Remember the order of the movements", I say carefully. Oda repeats the 'touch path' on Jens' body until she remembers the movements sequentially. Then I ask her to perform the same movements without

touching Jens' body. Oda moves away from him and adjusts her path in order to create a dance of her own. Then they switch roles. Oda stands in an open position with her right hand behind her head, her left hand on her hip. She adopts a flirtatious gaze. Jens touches her ten times with his hands, and then adjusts his movements to create a movement phrase that is independent of the presence of Oda's body.

Afterwards, while watching the video recording of this exercise, Jens mumbles: "This is weird, that's exactly how I feel in my life right now – open and ready for new opportunities". Oda says: "... and I want to flirt!" Watching each other's dances enables both Oda and Jens to recognise that their movements and poses reveal something about exactly where they are in their lives in the present moment.

That same evening, I wrote the following:

I'm sitting on my bed. My body is restless. It's late and I can't sleep. I feel that there is something that I need to work out. 'Something' is pushing my body forward, but I can't get a grip on it. I focus my thoughts, through my body, on different areas of my life that I perceive as competing for my attention. My strongest bodily reaction occurs in response to the movement phrase I had created with Oda and Jens earlier that day. I start to tremble and am breathing heavily. I find my mobile phone, open myself up to sensory impressions, and start watching the video of the dancers' exploration of movement. There is 'something' that the duet between Oda and Jens is trying to tell me. The dance is expressing something greater than I was aware of earlier in the studio. But what is it? What is this indefinable 'something'? I look, and continue to look, for a long time. Suddenly my body starts shaking. I start crying. For a long time. I feel exhausted. Empty. It was my loneliness that revealed itself to me. Gradually both my body and my breathing calm down.

Watching the dance, I realized that my body carries a knowledge of hidden aspects of who I am in the present moment. Observing Oda and Jens' movement and explorations had given me access to this knowledge. The insight made me feel naked. My mask had fallen. I put my feet on the floor. They carry me. The walls supported me, and the roof opened up. I was now ready to take new steps on the road to self-understanding.

When I watched and reflected on the exercise with Oda and Jens, my bodily and interbodily memories (Fuchs, 2016) of the exercise were re-activated and expressed by shaking and tears. This 'process of opening' (Springgay et al., 2005) made me aware of my loneliness. The experience of being touched by their movements and words, and of welcoming my own emotions and movements, enabled an unfolding of my implicit knowledge. I had experienced the power of art to transform.

Living through the three phases that I have described; '*Activation of bodily resonance*', '*Sharing embodied experiences*' and '*Embodied meaning-making*' have enabled me to obtain insights that may have implications for my practice in choreography, research and teaching. I will now discuss this further.

Emerging insights

In this article I have, by means of my three descriptemes, illuminated an embodied a/r/tographical inquiry of bodily and emotional experiences that occurred while I was living through a separation process. I will now share some of the insights that emerged as they relate to what I have learned about relationships and inquiry as part of this process.

Relational competence as an embodied phenomenon

My living inquiry process invited me to reflect on the resistant forces, challenges and barriers that I encountered during my separation process. Exploration of my bodily and emotional experiences enabled me to engage in the activation of my bodily resonance, my shared embodied experiences and my exploration of embodied meaning-making. Moving and writing have enabled me to become aware of an opening that allows me to uncover and learn from the emotive and affective experiences I encountered during the various meaningful moments of my separation process. Living, being and sitting through these troubles (Haraway, 2016; Salverson, 2020) have given me emerging insights into relational competence as an embodied phenomenon.

Firstly, when it comes to close relationships, my experience is that we, as humans, develop over time a specific embodied connection to the emotions we experience when we move together in different situations. These embodied emotional experiences create dyadic bodily memories (Fuchs, 2017). In my case, these were incorporated as a part of whom I was, what I did and what I thought I could become.

This form of close embodied relations with my husband had shaped my sense of self, such as Maclaren (2014) describes:

Enduring intimacy is the establishment of a shared life that is equally the institution of a new realization of the world and our identity within it a world and identity that are inseparable from this other in her singular way of being. The experience of intimacy is in large part the experience of this other as a condition of meaning in the world. (Maclaren, 2014, p.16)

When I had signed the separation papers, I had an urge to explore several ways of moving and writing as part of my search for a new identity. As such, my embodied experience from this initial phase can be understood as an insight that emerged as a result of the reciprocal interdependency between moving, writing and reflecting.

Secondly, when Oda and I were sharing our embodied experiences through movements, metaphors and metonyms, we created simultaneously an analytical distance that enabled us to achieve a greater understanding both of ourselves and each other's perspectives. Conceptualizing each other's movements represented a desire to find out how we appeared to each other – a means of “shedding light upon who we are” (Maclaren, 2014, p. 58). In this process of '*being-for-others*', we discovered a form of closeness that “set up our longing for someone who will reflect us to ourselves and allow us to find ourselves in her reflection” (Maclaren, 2014, p.58). Our deep engagement in this fluid process revealed a self-knowledge that had previously been hidden from us. Openings such as this (Springgay et al., 2005), which Oda and I achieved through shared emotions (Szanto, 2020), reflected the fragility and temporality of the meanings we derived from moving and writing together. This practice of ongoing writing and movement created openings in which our need for control and regulation disappeared. It encouraged us to write from within, and through, the body – a 'writing of excess', as Springgay et al. (2005) describes it. In this space, between interiority and exteriority, we moved and wrote in a continuous process of embodied exploration, developing emerging insights of who we were in the moment when we had 'gone astray' (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). In this way, sharing our embodied experiences can be seen as a participatory and reflexive process that combines choreographic practice and dialogic inquiry (Le Blanc & Irwin, 2019).

Thirdly, Oda and Jens' ten-point exercise involved alternately touching and being touched by each other. According to Maclaren (2014, p. 63), touch allows us "to realize ourselves in profoundly embodied ways as both differentiated embodied beings and as fundamentally intertwined with others". According to Merleau-Ponty (1968, p. 136), touching is both sentient (active) and sensible (passive). It involves an intertwining of 'sensing' and 'being sensible'. Thus, one who actively touches is also, at one and the same time, a passive responder to someone else's touch. By touching and being touched, Oda and Jens both recognized each other's alterity, and in doing so experienced intercorporeal interaction (Fuchs, 2016a). By adjusting their movements in response to each other, their bodies bonded together. When Oda's body is extended across Jens' body, and vice versa, a dynamic sensorimotor and interaffective system is created that connects their bodies by means of reciprocal movements and reactions. Their interbodily resonance (Fuchs, 2016a) generates a sense of '*we-feeling*' in their ongoing embodied interaffective relationship (Fuchs, 2016a). Moreover, when they later observed the exercise, their reverberations (Springgay et al., 2005) excited possible slippages of meaning in which the act of returning itself becomes a performance in which each reverberation both resists and pushes forward towards new understandings of who they were in the present.

Attentive observation of, and listening to, the filmed exercise enabled me to recognise something that I was missing – being in a close relationship with another person. A further embodied emotional coding process had enabled my loneliness to be revealed. In this way, an emerging insight of trusting my bodily and emotional experiences as a sight and a site for developing knowledge, emerged.

These emerging insights are in line with Maclaren (2014), who states that researching how people embody experience, how they fall away from themselves, others and reality, and how they overcome separation, all serve as a means of developing knowledge and close relationships. In order to discuss how I have developed my own knowledge of relationships as an embodied phenomenon, I will now explore the insights that emerged from my living in and through my embodied a/r/tographical inquiry.

Body inquiry

As a choreographer, I have extensive experience of the processes of discovering, questioning, exploring, forming, making and re-making movements as a means of creating a dance performance (Cancienne, 2008; Cancienne & Snowber, 2003). In this living inquiry, I have also asked myself questions *through* my body that have

evoked words, thoughts and 'uncoverings' that extend beyond my cognitive awareness (Snowber, 2012). This form of 'body data', as Snowber (2012) describes it, was created from bodily resonance (Fuchs, 2016a) in response to situations and interactions with co-inquirers during the research process. Instead of reflecting on the movements that occurred, I opened myself to a process of 'deep listening' to my body's knowledge. This enabled me to explore balance and imbalance, gravity and levity, contractions and releases, as well as qualities of movement (soft or hard, quick or slow, etc.). These are choreographic principles that I felt correlated with how I perceived and understood myself during the various phases of my separation process. This 'place of bodily knowing' felt to me like the entrance to what Snowber (2012, p. 57) describes as a 'place of growth', which was entirely new to me.

The insights that have emerged through this form of bodily inquiry are that movements and dance are not simply ways of "illustrating ideas, but a way of grappling more deeply with the complexity of ways /we/ can critically think, sift, perceive, and eventually come to fresh understanding of whatever subject /we/ are studying" (Snowber, 2012, p. 56). On this basis, I will now call attention to the significance of how movements and dance can exist as a 'place for inquiry', and the generative opportunities that exist for deeper understanding as part of my future choreographic and research processes.

Choreography

Choreography as a noun is a Greek term that according to Online Etymology Dictionary (2023) means to write (graphy) about movements and dance (khoreia). In this inquiry, I have embarked upon an ongoing exploration with, in and through movements and words. I have been moving with my words and writing through my body. This choreographic awareness has helped me articulate the implicit or, as Fuchs (2016b) describes it, the 'not-yet-conscious'. The tension that exists between the bodily-felt sense expressed through movement, and the corresponding written word, has allowed me to perceive the world anew, to search for complexity, and to "inhabit fields which previously appeared as opaque and unapproachable" (Fiumara, 1995, p. 21). An embodied process of acquiring knowledge has evolved, involving a reflection on movements and writing processes in which bodily and inter-bodily experiences have been given meaning and value. This inquiry has also enabled me

to experience that reading and re-reading the words, and watching and rewatching the movements developed during the living inquiry process, has activated my body memories (Fuchs, 2017) of the various situations. This awareness has enabled me to use my body memories as a tool in the analytical process, enabling me to trust that these memories could both create resistance and give direction and power to the writing process. In this way, I have gradually developed an awareness of how it is possible for me to write in the present, in the context of the past, while at the same time having proximity to the text and distance from the situations. In this way, insights have emerged as to how moving, writing and reflection combine to develop embodied knowledge through living inquiry. However, it is important to note here that there remain bodily and emotional experiences linked to this study for which I have been unable to find either the movements or words to express. The reverberations (Springgay et al., 2005) caused by the tensions I experience between what I have been able to know, and the challenges I face when attempting to express them, are now acting as a source of new ideas for further research using the a/r/tographical approach.

Implications for teaching and developing student teachers' relational competence in teacher education

I am now awakened to the opportunities that await me as a teacher educator and my students as we encounter and inquire into an embodied phenomenon of the poorly-termed 'relational competence' that is at the heart of teaching and learning. What have I learned during my embodied a/r/tographical inquiry of my separation process that I can share with my student teachers as part of their search for pedagogical knowledge? And how might we together explore the opportunities for learning that arise through my descriptives of 'activation of bodily resonance', 'sharing embodied experiences' and 'embodied meaning-making', when we encounter or reflect on challenging situations?

Firstly, I have to become aware of how I create relationships with my students through my body. Craig et al. (2018, p.329) assert that a teacher's encounter with her students entails a bodily knowledge that is "dwelling in the body and enacted through the body", and that this knowledge is a prerequisite for the development of

pedagogical relationships. Moreover, Macintyre Latta and Buck (2007) and Dixon and Senior (2011) argue that the locus of education lies in the bodily encounter between the teacher and the student, and that such relationships are in their very nature fluid and uncertain, requiring the participation of both parties in order to emerge. A perception of the body as the locus of education conforms to the ideas of Dixon and Senior (2011), Hellesnes (2019) and (Ørbæk, 2022), all of whom demonstrate that the relationships between the teacher and her student are bodily, and that in teaching situations, students and teachers mutually engage in both sensing, seeing and feeling each other using their bodies. Dixon and Senior (2011) describe such relationships as places where a subject "extends past its apparent boundaries" (Dixon & Senior, 2011, p. 482). Andrews (2016), Winther (2019a) and Berg (2018) have shown that a teacher's emotions and bodily presence are key to their pedagogical practice. They have also highlighted how a teacher's relationships with her students evolve through bodily and emotional expression, and that a teachers' understanding of these processes can be supported as part of professional practice (Craig et al., 2018). In my future teaching, I intend to invite my student teachers to consider their own relational competence by means of nurturing and enriching their bodily awareness of their capacity to engage in meaningful and compassionate ways with themselves and their pupils, especially when unexpected or provocative situations arise during their practicum.

Secondly, I will invite my student teachers to explore, through embodied a/r/tographical inquiry, to move, write and reflect in response to the bodily and emotional experiences they encounter in their practicum. According to Mitchell and Reid (2017), reflecting on bodily and emotional experiences can be an effective strategy for managing a teacher's own, and their students', reactions and emotions in teaching situations. Applying embodied a/r/tography as a method for developing student teachers' relational competence may create opportunities for incorporating their wonderings, feelings, reflections and meta-reflections as a means of acquiring knowledge on their path towards becoming teachers. A living inquiry process may also encourage student teachers to be attentive to the sensual, tactile and unspoken aspects of their practicum. The use of moving, writing and reflecting in the context of theoretical concepts may also offer student teachers a way of articulating their implicit or 'not-yet-conscious' knowledge of their practice (Springgay et al., 2005; Fuchs, 2017). This in turn may give them an opportunity to be attentive to what they have sensed and the knowledge they have acquired during their practicum, and to

understand what lies beneath the surface in such situations as their relationships with their own students in unforeseen situations. Moreover, by sharing reflections on their bodily and emotional experiences may serve to activate openings that resonate with each other's experiences. As such, their bodily and emotional experiences may help them, in line with Szanto (2020), to navigate between relationships that matter to them personally, to their careers as future teachers, and to their students.

An embodied a/r/tographer in 'the becoming'

My a/r/tographical inquiry has enabled me to enter on a process of change within the contexts of emergence, *currere*, the in-between and living inquiry. This has revealed to me a new understanding of relationships as an embodied phenomenon while being situated both *in* and *through* a separation process. This form of inquiry has required me to distance myself from the more conventional research methods with which I am most familiar, and has encouraged me to explore a process that accepts insights, imagination and intuition as a basis for developing the new. Instead of *representing* a result from a study in a traditional form, I have applied a/r/tography as a lens through which to present the lived experiences of ending a close relationship as I lived through them. This has created an opportunity for the exploration of bodily and emotional experiences in a more fluid and open-ended way, starting from a given situation, and incorporating methodologies and theoretical concepts along the way.

In this process of emergence, I have embraced the felt sense of 'grasping the uncertain' in my encounters with movements, words, reflections and collaboration with others (Fuchs, 2017; Le Blanc & Irwin, 2019). Delving into this living inquiry triggered my experiences of 'being-in' and 'being-with' the world as opposed to simply reflecting on it. By daring to trust the embodied space between moving, writing and reflection, new insights into body inquiry, embodied writing and a/r/tography emerged.

This *awakening*, as Le Blanc and Irwin (2019) describes it, is not about achieving an understanding of a single, fixed interpretive path, but accepting a willingness to move both in and between disciplinary boundaries and genres, while at the same time being engaged in "relational, dialogical, and collaborative processes" (Boulton-Funke et al., 2016, p. 254). In my future teaching practice, and in line with Pinar (1975) and Pinar and Grumet (1976) who encourage educators to reflect upon how their lived-through life experiences have implications for their teaching practice, I intend to explore further how the merging of choreography, research and teaching continue to

be relevant in response to qualitative changes in my teaching practice and life as a whole. Embodied a/r/tographical inquiry will continue to help me explore new ways of 'becoming' in my field of teacher education.

About the author

Professor Trine Ørbæk is a choreographer, teacher educator, researcher (PhD) and awarded as an Excellent Teaching Practitioner. Ørbæk teaches in teacher education, and her research interests includes studies of bodily learning in teacher education, choreography pedagogy in classroom research, and the body and emotions in learning, teaching and research processes. Since 2013, Ørbæk has published scientific articles in national and international scientific journals, and chapters for anthologies, that are used as core literature in teacher education.

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