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Adult Education and the Arts: A Marriage of Mind, Body, Heart and Soul

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Adult Education and the Arts: A Marriage of Mind, Body, Heart and Soul

Randee Lipson Lawrence, Keith Armstrong, Bette Donoho, Kristin Lems

Steven Noble, Kevin Olsen, Anne McCrary Sullivan

Abstract: *The authors of an upcoming publication on artistic ways of knowing share their findings through poetic expression.*

The arts are an important yet under-valued way of creating and sharing knowledge in adult education. The authors of this paper are collaborators on a book on artistic ways of knowing which discusses the power of music, theatre, photography, autobiography and poetry for teaching and learning. Since we believe that art should speak for itself, we present our research as a series of poems. Each of us has constructed a short poem that represents some dimension of our respective chapters in the book. We invite you, the reader to construct meaning in any way you see fit.

World Gets Well

Acting,
we discover our own
kind of wisdom,
as we gather in a
circle of folks.

Singing,
we turn stories about
the toughest times
into symphonies of
learning from life.

Dancing,
we embody the joy
of two left feet,
negotiating the
music of hope.

BD

Artistic Expression

Extending boundaries
how we know
what we know
indigenous

I do not speak your
language
I cannot read your words
I do not share your
experience
and yet
I feel your rhythms
your colors move me
your spirit touches
my soul

RLL

Playing Strangers

Playing.
On a stage is me
Performing fictions of your
Treatment of powerless others.
Strangers.

SN

Music Works

Before our eyes, tough
Ukrainian mechanic transforms
into a compelling soulful singer

young Chinese woman, shy
covering her mouth as she laughs
stands and sings a Chinese
folk song
with spirit

Polish punk rocker, hair spiked
hauls in a heavy metal
CD collection;
he knows more English
than he has ever let on

music, in its joyful din
welcomes all learners in
talking of music, listening to it,
singing it in a strange new tongue.

Everyone sings, even the teacher
And you learn from your students
And heal yourself in the harmony.

KL

Harmony

"That's not music!"
Growls the man in the tuxedo
Clutching his violin case.
"Bongo drums pounding,
Out of tune singing,
Guitars playing three chords...
Why, I doubt
Anyone in there has stepped
Into a conservatory!"

Old Man,
Have the Mozart and Beethoven
symphonies
Dulled your memories?
Memories of picking up an instrument
For the first time?
Of improvising and creating
Melodies completely your own?
Of singing familiar songs
In a company of strangers
Quickly becoming friends?

KO

Pedagogical Images

Time's on the wind
Blowin' about the aprons of a tidy mind
Awaiting the industry of a busy kitchen
Where some slicin' and dicin' need being done.

In the proverbial kitchens of each upcoming
or outgoing mind, also waiting some slicin'
and dicin', readied for the transformative knife,
time, a blue steel cut at impermanence

captured in photographic stages
stored on paper from mindful attics
expressions foreign yet familiar;
the apron strings untangle,

images set themselves free,
the suspended journey completes.

KA

Dark Pride

Shaken: Not Disturbed.
Closets and "freak" shows,
Shock treatments and pushed pills.
People wonder why we're perturbed.
We do possess strong wills.
Our desire is to find our pride.
Out of the asylums; Not being deterred
Our darkness can now close.

SN

Research

I give them scissors, instruct:
search, select, cut, collect.

They want certainties, an outline,
a set of predetermined steps.

This is your page, I tell them.
The subject of the poem is you.

Dismayed, afraid, they
lay out the fragments

piece together a broken mirror
stare at their own astonished selves.

AMS

Struggling Art-fully

Many clutch my heart
As I act out.
My "madness" is free
To speak its true part.
Finally I can see
I am a whole Human,
Capable of beautiful Art.
Told to whisper; want to shout.

SN