

Paulo Freire: Community-Based Arts Education

Christine Ballengee Morris
The Ohio State University

Portraiture

Portraiture, as used in this study, is a way of presenting data as a collection of stories—stories told in an attempt to illuminate historical, social, and cultural influences on Freire’s life, his influence on Francisco Brennand, Ana Mae Barbosa, and on an international community of educators. I had multiple goals in using portraiture as a tool of data representation for this study. Foremost, portraits capture stories that:

Attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. . . . Through telling, writing, reading, and listening to life stories—one’s own and others—those engaged in this work can penetrate cultural barriers, discover the power of the self and the integrity of the other, and deepen their understanding of their perspective histories and possibilities. (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p. 1-3)

Stated in the language of feminist inquiry, portraits are also a means by which individuals who have been objectified are able to define themselves and tell their own stories as individuals who occupy “a legitimate position from which to experience, interpret, and constitute the world” (Stivers, 1993, p. 411).

The use of portraiture to present data has potential to capture the multiplicity of asking, telling, writing, and reading stories. My conceptual framework includes the assumption that “Narratives are not produced in a cultural, ideological, and social vacuum. They reflect context, intent,

and expected audiences” (Mishler, 1991, p. 106) and stand on moving ground (Riessman, 1993). As a local situated creation, the portraits presented in this paper portray the cultural values that structure and integrate individual experiences and their representation in a specific teacher education context.

The Documented Portrait of Freire

Paulo Freire is from the State of Pernambuco whose capital is Recife. Once considered one of the world’s poorest regions, its economy has improved in recent years (Freire, personal interview, September 1, 1996). Freire was born in 1921 into a middle-class family. In the 1930 depression, his family went bankrupt. However, due to his father’s determination, he was able to stay in school. He studied philosophy and law at the University of Recife and worked for three years as a labor union lawyer. His professional experiences and his past experience in being poor made him realize that education was a privilege enjoyed by a minority in his country. The majority of the people lived in poverty oppressed by a minority that dictated the rules to the oppressed majority (Mashayekh, 1974, p. 4).

Freire became a professor of philosophy of education at the University of Recife, where in 1959 he earned a Ph.D. in education. With the help of student volunteers, he started the Adult Education Program of the Popular Culture Movement, which taught people how to read and write and also encouraged the development and production of popular festivals, performances, and arts programs in the ghetto and rural areas of Recife (Brown, 1974, p. 245). The Movement’s objectives were to raise class-consciousness and increase the popular vote through the arts and literacy education program. The initiative was begun during the early 1960s when rural and urban unions started organizing in the Northeast of Brazil. By 1961 two farm workers’ strikes had already brought together 83,000 and 230,000 workers in an effort to bring about social reform (Freire, 1978).

In Brazil, literacy was intimately associated with power. According to the law, only literates could vote; and the traditional political duty was to vote according to the interests of the elite. However, with the formation of the peasants’ leagues in the 1950s, farm workers became aware of the power of voting. Consequently, they wanted to transform their powerless poverty position prescribed by the elite. Freire’s cultural movement accelerated the revolts. In 1963 conditions were ripe for the literacy campaign to start in the country. Its beginning was June 1963, several months before the end of the populist government of President Jao Goulart. The Minister of Education, Paulo de Tarso, was a friend of Freire. He was impressed with the work in Pernambuco, and decided

to adopt Freire's literacy method for a Brazil-wide National Literacy Program. Under Freire's direction, training programs for adult literacy educators were developed in most all the state capitals from June 1963 to March 1964. The coordinators were mostly college students. The campaign started in the "cities of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, and in the Northeast states of Rio Grande Norte, Bahia, and Sergipe" (Elias, 1976, p. 13-14). Freire's plan was to start the literacy campaign in regions where social and political reformation had already begun through organizing leagues and unions. As Freire (1978) wrote, "the tone of the literacy campaign in Brazil was eminently political" (p. 110) and not only training for illiterates. He added that it was urgent to establish as close a link as possible between literacy education and political consciousness of Brazil's masses.

A Broad Stroke of Reflection

The following excerpt is from Freire's September 1, 1996, presentation at Diadema's Congress of Cultural Education and Leisure Sports, which is where I had the opportunity to meet and interview him. Freire tells his story of that time period and how his educational theory developed. Freire's speech is presented in an unedited form and translated by Christina Rizzi, a professor at the University of Sao Paulo.

It was hard for me to understand how these people dealt with reality. They used to explain pain, discrimination because of destiny or god's punishment. For me, this ideology paralyzed the people and maintained stratification. We had to learn the power of the counter attack because to stay in fatalism helps the dominant. What we tried to do was place the people in movements—candidates of subjects within history. When I went home I felt drained but happy. Paulo, I asked myself, how could I challenge the gently ingenious consciousness with this group of people that is out of the fight? Paulo, why not use something to provoke reflection about culture before reading and writing class. Paulo, what you need is to be able to offer challenges that allow growth and apprehend the comprehension of culture as a result of practical intervention of the human beings of the world (world not made by humans) through their work. The results were to create a world in which culture became one with history, politics and social knowledge for all. I tried and it worked very well. And I thought, well, if me and two more fellows [sic] are able to open a hole to get water—if you are able to defend us against bad climate. . . if I'm able to change the world that we didn't make. . . why can we not change the one we did? Culture is the instrument of the world changing. So, I thought that it would be a very good idea to work with concrete and existential situations. So I asked an artist, Francisco Brennand,¹ a sculptor, to make ten visual works

that illustrated concrete and existential ideas. What I wanted was to provoke the reading of codification that brought to them discovery of the relationship of culture and nature and try to overcome fatalism through community arts.

Soon the campaign spread all over the country. The plan was, by 1964 to equip 20,000 groups to teach approximately 20 million illiterates. Working this way I was fascinated watching people discovering that it is possible for people to change the political world by collaborating. [On April 1, 1964] The literacy campaign was interrupted with the military coup, which ousted Goulart. [Blamed by the new government for applying a model of education opposed to national interests, Paulo Freire was put under house arrest and imprisoned for about seventy days.] Because the dictatorship wanted to find something on us and found nothing, they intimidated the students. A student who was very scared about the situation told the military about the visual art works. The government apprehended the art and stripped my citizen rights.

Francisco Brennand: The Artist's Sketch

At this point in Freire's story, it is necessary to bring in Francisco Brennand's memory of those tenuous but necessary moments in time. I traveled to Recife and visited with artist Brennand at his studio on August 27, 1996. According to Freire, Brennand's sculptures and installations invoke cultural and personal pride and are communicated through cultural metaphors and understandings. I asked Brennand to give an account of his working relationship with Freire, to describe the artwork that was seized, and how he dealt with the dictatorship.

Freire was very famous in Recife for his literacy program and his political work with the workers. The idea of educating illiterate[s] was so simple but so dangerous and Freire made many enemies. The company owners and elite did not like the idea of literacy programs. They feared that the workers would want more say and more money. Everything was political. Freire approached me to make art that symbolized culture, reformation, literacy, and self. I studied the program, the situation, and I began to design the works. I make tiles which is a traditional art form. I paint on tiles. I work with clay. Clay is from the earth and is a part of humans and we are a part of it. Freire's goal was for the viewer to understand the relationship of self to the world and that people can make change for the good. I produced the works and Freire was very pleased. The political situation became unstable and we began to realize that the elite and others targeted the literacy program and the connection to culture and the arts of the people. When the military coup occurred, many people were in danger and others easily talked to save themselves. Freire was one of the targets because of his work with the workers. My art was seen by the dictatorship as dangerous and it was

destroyed. There are no reminders of that work, no photographs. Freire was not yet beaten. He asked me to make another set. I said no Paulo. They will be destroyed also. This time was hard for everyone but especially for those who had dreamt of a different Brazil. I was fortunate. I continued to be an artist and made tiles and sculptures.

Brennand portrayed Freire as one who never gave up. As Brennand found solace in his clay and kilns, Freire was exiled to Chile and worked with the UNESCO Consultant at the Institute of Capacitation an Agrarian Reform. While in Chile, he also directed a National Literacy Program under two different government regimes: the Christian Democrats and the Popular Unity Party. Under both governments, literacy was narrowly viewed as a way to increase workers' production and quality of product (Freire, personal interview, September 1, 1996). During the Christian Democratic government, the purpose of adult literacy programs was to strengthen production on the farms and factories. During the Popular Unity Party government, the role of the literacy campaign was to make the peasants aware that literacy and having a job was one and the same (Freire, 1978). Although the governments' objectives and Freire's differed, literacy was the ultimate goal for all.

In 1969, Freire came to the United States at the invitation of the Harvard University Center for the Study of Education and Development and the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change. In 1970, he went to Geneva, Switzerland, to work as a special consultant to the office of education with the World Council of Churches. During this time, he kept in contact with key people in Brazil (Barbosa, personal interview, September 10, 1996). Ana Mae Barbosa, a recognized international leader in the political movement of Brazilian art educators, was one who kept in contact with Freire as she was one of his former students and a colleague prior to the dictatorship.

Ana Mae's Portrayal

As I continued to travel in Brazil in 1996 and collect the stories about Freire, I found myself at Ana Mae Barbosa's home on a cold, rainy night in Sao Paulo on September 10th. After reviving ourselves with hot cups of coffee and substantive food, we curled up on sofas and I listened as she drew her connection to Freire and the impact of that composite.

My father studied in the United States, Chicago. He died when I was three. My mother married again and one year later died. I was reared by my grandparents. I moved to Recife. I was exposed to good teachers, the best minds from Recife, and a strong cultural center. I decided that I wanted to attend a university and go to medical school. My grandmother

was so against this, because, she thought the only job for a woman was teaching and she was so powerful in the family and no one in my family would help me. I entered in a competition to teach in a public school. It was necessary to take a course to prepare for the examination and the person who was giving the course was Paulo Freire. He was already a famous Recife educator, but not nationally known. In a writing examination, Freire asked us to write why we chose to be teachers. I wrote why I hated the idea of teaching and that I was forced to do this to get a job. The next day he gave back everyone's composition except mine. He said that we had to talk privately. He invited me to investigate the possibilities of education. I used Paulo Freire's methods. For three years, I taught literacy, reading, and writing to children in the first grade; I did that through art. This was revolutionary in my day. I was invited to teach art education in the school where Paulo Freire was president and then I worked for the *Escolinha de Arte do Recife*. I was a fighter. Freire taught me about liberation.

Barbosa and her husband lost their jobs as professors during the dictatorship. The government saw Freire as dangerous because of his literacy programs, and many educators were arrested and imprisoned. Unemployed and with two children, Ana Mae first took a job as an art educator at a Montessori school, and then she and four other women started their own school. Social concerns were central to the curricula at this school. Barbosa remembered: "Paulo was always trying to send books to us and we would write to him frequently about our work, our readings, and our research. I went to Geneva twice to visit him" (personal communication, 1996).

Community as the Heart of Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Theory to Praxis

Considering the sketches of Brennand and Barbosa and building upon their relationship with Freire, their affiliation revealed co-learning. The position of co-learner is in contrast to a position of power-over, which the three of them found themselves trying to escape during the dictatorship. In the story about Freire's conversation with Barbosa about becoming an educator, she says that he invited her into the profession. The teacher's position as co-learner fosters the student's ownership and social action. Just as Freire modeled his own social action and relationship with Brennand, he influenced Ana Mae's actions as a prospective teacher. Freire (1987) states that an educator is a coordinator, and, to be a good coordinator, it is necessary to have faith in people, to be creative, and believe in the possibility of change. The three learned to view the world as a challenge for change and not

an obstacle. As they continued to grow separately and relationally, they would find that their theories to praxis would once again emerge into a community of learners.

Freire's theory considers the arts and education as cultural community action for freedom. Adult literacy can only be viewed as cultural action for freedom—an act of knowing and reflecting critically on the process which motivates people to learn to read and write. It is not enough to become literate for the purpose of obtaining a job or keeping a job. He explained that “illiteracy is not a disease that needs to be cured but a concrete expression of an unjust social reality. At the same time, it is a linguistic problem and a political problem” (Freire, 1977, pp. 16-29). The act of knowing is based on a dialogue between the community, teacher and the students. The subject to be explored is determined by the community needs. The exploration facilitates action to reform problems. Through reformation, freedom from illiteracy and oppression is possible because the people have determined the process and course of action. The cultures and the arts are ways that express issues in languages that are understood by the community. Freire referred to this as problem-posing education. He maintained that in order to become literate, “it is necessary for learners to acquire a new vision of the world, which is based on critical awareness of social inequities” (1978, p. 72). Freire believed:

- that the same way they were denied the right to read and write, they were also denied the right to profit from the product of their work
- that their work, regardless of their illiteracy, is for them a source of knowledge
- that nobody knows everything, and nobody ignores everything. In this world we are all learners. (1977, p.29)

Freire did not consider the literacy movement a miracle instrument for freedom, but it certainly contributed to the process of becoming free. He believed literacy increased the learners' consciousness and helped them to become aware of their social, historical, economical, and political realities. In his presentation at Diadema in 1996, Freire explained his pedagogy in simple terms:

Joy makes a political differences and joy [or] to be happy is the key to literacy. Education is not only about school systems. Education is about joy—education, culture, and leisure. Without arts, we have no way to express the needs for reformation. Why the arts [?], when there are so many needs such as jobs, homeless[ness] and I reply [he or she] who doesn't have a cultural project doesn't have an educational program—both are needed. (personal communication, September 1, 1996)

Freire viewed the arts and culture as languages. To be literate and to be understood by many, people must be able to express their ideas in a multitude of ways. Freire (1973) wrote that “to be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world” (p. 3). If people adapt to the world, accommodating themselves to situations, they become passive; unable to change anything. If they integrate and have relationships with the world, they become dynamic and will be able to change things, creating culture. By developing a critical attitude, people can overcome a posture of adjustment and become integrated. According to Freire, students should experience this process in education by experiencing art, expressing ideas through their cultural arts, integrating subjects, integrating one to the world, developing a critical consciousness and encouraging dialogue. This requires a new pedagogy, attitude, and approach.

Freire believed that literacy implies discussion of the whole education field in society. It does not make sense to discuss literacy in a society whose form of education is selective and elitist in character. This kind of education has to reach everyone, should be revealing and critical, with learners and teachers conscious of their own role, and be interdisciplinary. Freire recommended exploring issues, ideas, values, concepts, hopes that characterize an epoch, as well as obstacles which impede human’s fulfillment. He referred to those as generative themes because “they contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled” (1972b, p. 74).

A Glimpse of Applied Freirean Theory

Here are two examples of Freire’s theory as applied. The first example took place in Sao Paulo from 1989 to 1992. When Freire was nominated the Municipal Secretary of Education in 1989, he faced several political and pedagogical challenges. The Workers Party assumed power in Sao Paulo, the third largest city in the world. Never had this happened before and the pressure to succeed was great (Morris, 1998). Freire also inherited an almost broke educational system that had developed into:

- reproduction of fragmented and compartmentalized content, and use of pedagogical didactic books as the sole instructional resource;
- an authoritative relationship between the divisions of the school;
- powerless school communities that were not allowed to participate in the educational process;
- disregard for the students and community’s social and cultural experiences in the development of the curriculum. (Rizzi, personal communication, September 12, 1996)

According to Freire (personal communication, September 3, 1996) at the time of developing this project, Sao Paulo had almost four million children between the ages of 1-14. Fourteen percent of these children were illiterate. Approximately 400,000 were dropouts and 80,000 were juvenile delinquents. The Municipal Educational System was composed of nearly seven hundred schools in which about 700,000 students were enrolled. Because of the complexity and magnitude of the problems, Freire and his Secretary of Education team selected the following goals as a plan of action:

- to establish a public, popular and democratic school system;
- to create interdisciplinary curricula.

Freire conceived of school as a place where participation is understood to be indispensable for the growth of the individual in society and believed there must be a partnership between school and community. A school is where educators are free to choose their own pedagogical approaches, engage in critical thought, select programs and methods to suit their needs, and understand their community. The schools that participated in this project volunteered to do so.

This project was an opportunity to work with generative themes in a public educational system. Freire's generative themes included: issues, ideas, values, concepts, and hopes that characterize an epoch as well as obstacles which impede people's fulfillment. Freire calls the themes generative because "they contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many themes, which in turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled" (Freire, 1972, p. 74). According to Freire, investigation of themes requires investigators to work with the people of the region as co-investigators. Freire viewed collaboration as a valuable educational tool. The questions raised at this time by the Freire team were:

1. Which content is the best and for whom?
2. What is the relationship between course content and the students' reality?
3. What is the relationship between school and life or more specifically, what is the significance of school in daily life?

Samples of generative themes that were chosen by the schools during this process are as follows:

1. The subway and leisure
2. Raising social consciousness: prejudices and employment
3. Quality of life: consciousness and participation
4. Housing: urbanization and values
5. Cohabitation and violence

A Glimpse at Pedagogical Amalgamation

The above project serves as one of many exemplars of Freire's pedagogical principles. Taking his stance further into the realm of art education, Ana Mae Barbosa created Triangular Methodology of Art Teaching, which became their pedagogical connection (Rizzi, personal communication, September 12, 1996):

1. The knowledge of Art is constructed at the intersection of experimentation, codification, and information. Three domains must be taught:
 - a. Art History
 - b. Studio
 - c. Reading Art, including aesthetics and criticism.
2. A society is artificially developed when, along with high quality artistic production, there is also a high level of understanding of this production.
2. Each generation has the right to look at and to interpret history personally giving it new meaning.

Barbosa stated (personal communication, September 10, 1996) that in the evaluation done by the Secretary of Education at the end of 1992, the following items were considered successful outcomes of the project:

1. A new school organization was developed with the collaboration of teachers, allowing for the growth of educators and other professionals.
2. The opportunity for dialogue was created which modified the concepts of curriculum and construction of knowledge.
3. The students became participatory, creative, aware, and critical.
4. The integration of the community and of the parents in the schools.

She also stated the following obstacles were noted and still exist:

1. Teacher turnover
2. Organization difficulties such as scheduling
3. Difficulty in integrating the general curriculum with the arts
4. Lack of professional development
5. Lack of professional commitment by some educators
6. Establishing a dialogue where none had previously existed

In addition, the following were considered difficulties in the art education process:

1. The practical and theoretical preparation for classroom educators
2. Difficulty in abandoning old pedagogical practices because of a feeling of insecurity and fear of the unknown.

Barbosa (personal communication, September 10, 1996) also stated that the following were considered successes of the art education process:

1. Better comprehension and awareness
2. Better comprehension and awareness concerning areas of knowledge which are involved in the construction of the knowledge in art.

Utilizing community and community art, such as Brennan's, as starting points for art education programs, Barbosa provided rich and meaningful educational experiences for the children. She had been influenced by Freire's generative themes, which characterized an epoch, in terms of possibilities as well as obstacles, which impede people's fulfillment, and in this case, the teachers' abilities to be risk takers and abandon old practices.

Critiquing the Dialogic Works

"Dialogue is key to the literacy process and teachers need a forum to dialogue" (Freire, personal communication, September 1, 1996). With this idea in mind, a conference on September 1, 1996, in Diadema, a city in the state of Sao Paulo was organized to evaluate the literacy project based on Freire's ideas. The conference was viewed as a time where community-based art-centered education could be further explored. The emphasis was to evaluate the project and make changes that would address the problems. The conference was also a time to share and to celebrate the development of a community art-centered literacy curriculum and program. Children and adults filled the lobby with visual displays of artwork. The artists were there to discuss their works with interested viewers. The 1,500-seat auditorium was full. People were sitting on the floor and on the stairs. One of the teachers that I had met earlier asked me to follow her to a room where I was introduced to Freire. Paulo smiled, patted my hand and asked me if I spoke Portuguese because he preferred to speak in his language. I admitted that my Portuguese was at a two-year old level. He laughed and decided that it would probably be best if he continued to speak English. I asked many questions, but the main question I had was about the conclusions of the Sao Paulo and Diadema evaluations regarding teacher reformation and attitudes when initiating integrated/interdisciplinary pedagogy and curricula. I asked "How do you continue the momentum when there is resistance to change? How do you get beyond negative resistance?" Freire thought for a moment and then answered:

Time. It takes time. We forget that it took a long time to get to this moment. Often failure is due to enthusiasm that turns into frustration. To be successful the identified goals must never be forgotten but

often the way to obtain those goals change due to unperceived needs. If you think of literacy metaphorically, we are all illiterate of something. Teachers are taught and then they teach. If they are taught to do a job, they do not know the value of learning beyond making a living. They will measure their success according to their pay and in Brazil it is very little. It is not hopeless. I get tired of hearing how this prevents successful reformation. These teachers, like illiterate students, need to be taught the intrinsic value of learning. They need to experience the joy of teaching and making a difference in one person. They need to have the support of those who already understand this and not feel inadequate. Negative resistance is illiteracy. To never try is fatalism. To attempt and quit because some did not see it your way is fatalism. To continue but not address problems is asking for failure. In applying a theory such as in this case in Diadema, the teachers must go beyond believing and just be it. It is not about literacy it is about living, it is about being, it is about cultural identity and expression, it is about political awareness and participation. Teachers who resist reformation are often afraid—afraid of inadequacies, afraid of challenges, afraid of change because it is new.

We discussed many projects and the similarities of the evaluations to programs that I had worked with in the United States. He stated, “many times people assume I have the answers but I do not—only the energy to explore.”

Back in my seat, the conference began with a working people’s chorus. The community culturally and politically influenced the content of the songs and the audience responded with approval. At times, I felt that I was attending a church service because of the confirmation and affirmation that many of the teachers were experiencing. The second act was a dance company that addressed issues of the working class including company owner’s attitudes. They combined European music, African dance and Catholic religious symbols to tell their story. When Freire walked in, everyone stood, applauded, and greeted him. The ovation lasted for over thirty minutes. He did not seem to notice the mass as whole, but greeted individuals with a smile, a handshake, or a hug and a kiss. The physical manifestation of mutual admiration was contagious.

It was hard for me to realize I was actually witnessing this occurrence. Freire climbed the stairs to the stage and took his place at the long table. Political figures, teachers, and adult students sat at the table and each proceeded to greet him. After the introduction, Freire delivered his presentation, which included his educational and political history and what he perceived as the current pedagogical concerns:

Democracy is hard because it demands tolerance. To live democratically demands and makes us go beyond words and to leave are differ-

ences, which is so hard to face. To change is difficult but possible. It is my advantage to be seventy-five years of age and it is possible to have no fear in speaking because of the experience I've accumulated. I remember when I was discussing with a street sweeper about culture and the worker said "Oh my God, I'll go into the work place with my head up high because I know who I am. This is the way we change things—not with guns. To change with guns gives power to the gun not with the people." Everything is about people. Reality is the reason for reality. We have no time to think about change—we have to do it. The neo-liberal ideology is perverse, and I'm astonished with the number of educators and fellow students [who] after the fall of the Berlin Wall pervert[ed] themselves and start[ed] to become pragmatic educators [strongly stated]. For me the dream is fundamental, utopia didn't die, history didn't die because if history is dying what we have is eternity of the present and the present is Capitalism, [and the] Capitalist. And to be politically conscious today is even more important than that of the 1960s. Do you believe or not? The neo-liberalist arrived at the university, they are the postmodern fatalist and they are who we have to fight against. It is important [necessary] to continue to fight for the people. The globalization of the economy will be able to generate a new worldwide dimension. Even being this way, I cannot accept quietly the perversity of the neo-liberal theology that imprisons people and makes the poor miserable. This theology is fatalism. With the same energy—only a little tired at seventy-five, I'm still fighting today. So fight. Don't stop the fight because the motionless will get to you.

Freire expressed that power is not in a few but in the mass called—democracy (Personal communication, September 1, 1996). Taking this further, it is through the cultures and the arts of the people that the mass will understand the importance of education. In Freire's evaluation of the Diadema and Sao Paulo project, he explains that literacy is not about a job and/or a career, but lifelong learning and pursuits for possibilities. During and after this project, students and teachers experienced:

- respect as human beings and citizens
- the possibility of trying the joy of collective creation
- the possibility of doubting and figuring out the best way
- the possibility of being different and not being excluded
- the possibility of thinking, being, expressing this existence and being listened to (Freire, personal communication, September 1, 1996)

In 1994, I taught a workshop for teachers at The Paulo Freire Secretary of Education Building that was sponsored by The University of

Sao Paulo. Many of the teachers had been a part of the Freire project. The teachers spoke about the joy of being able to exist, think, and contribute to the welfare of a community. Those who experienced it stated they would “never forget the quality and commitment of this project and they know that they still have to work hard in order to build up all the possibilities and hopes” (anonymous student, personal communication, June 22, 1994).

A Group Portrait

When I visited Brennand’s studio, busloads of children roamed his magnificent site. Teachers spoke enthusiastically, children shared their thoughts, and dialogues were occurring. Community surrounded him and they continue to embrace his works and studio space. In more recent years, Ana Mae’s writings and presentations have focused on utilizing community and community art as starting points for art education programs. The melding of the artist, artworks, art educator, and literacy movements provided rich connections that began in Recife and reached out to the world philosophically and in practice.

As I read and write about current educational reformation that includes aspects of integration, critical theory, and collaboration, I conclude that it is very important for educators to look outside of their own field and place, to find and explore reformation projects that address literacy. So often in the United States, literacy programs seem to translate into eliminating the arts as an important component to children’s education and literacy. According to the National Institute for Literacy in the United States, adults who cannot read cost Americans an estimated \$224 billion each year in lost wages, lost taxes, basic skills training, unemployment compensation, prison and law enforcement, and lost international competitiveness. The most poorly educated adults suffer the highest rates of morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases and conditions. Children’s literacy levels are strongly linked to the educational level of their parents, especially their mothers. The most significant predictor of success in school is having a mother who completed high school. These are our realities, but, possibly, integration, collaboration, community-based, and arts centered programs that encourage critical thinking, cultural identity, cultural embracement, and multiple ways of expressing are the pathways toward literacy.

Paulo Freire’s influence has touched and inspired many. Freire was his theory. I found his philosophy and actions to be one and the same. Until his death in May 1997, Freire continued to write, support the Workers Party, present at conferences, teach, and mentor educators from all

over the world. Freire remarked, "I find all the experiences have helped me grow as a person and of course as a teacher. I have enjoyed meeting so many people from all over the world but I belong in Brazil" (personal interview, September 1, 1996). I conclude with a thought that Freire expressed during our interview, "Education is a process that requires collaboration, democracy requires patience, and life requires both."

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