Developing Talent Not Privilege: An Exploration of the Vulnerable-Resilient Vessel within the Everyday 'Student Journey' at an English Arts University.

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Abstract

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the *International Journal of Talent Development and Creativity*, I return to the vision of the publication, by understanding what it means to develop talent and creativity in the 21st century. This paper celebrates the development of talent in the context of an arts education for neurodiverse students. Often talent is overlooked in pedagogies of neoliberalism, as the ethos for universities favour the market forces of competition and survival. In particular, post-1992 universities, face fierce competition for students due to market saturation. Students' needs have been forgotten in unethical recruitment practices that are disguised as increased access. Unfortunately, it is to the detriment of welfarism and what bell hooks terms 'the care of the soul'. This paper partly explores the current milieu, at university to contextualise the tenacity, resilience and vulnerability of those working and learning. Here talent and development are encouraged in young people, who have hitherto been marginalised and disadvantaged. It celebrates the successes, facilitated in part by the mediation of a small team of study skills support workers, including the author. Accordingly, a feminist approach engages auto-ethnography, and psychosocial spaces of the imaginary. Borrowing from the oeuvre of *Feminism, Adult Education and Creative Possibility: Imaginative Responses,* woven within the threads of this theory are small vignettes, art and poetry by one study skills support worker and the author. Speaking from the lived experience of being a child from a working-class background who is neurodiverse, I understand what it means to be marginalised in the English system of education. From the experiences of the support worker and me, this paper explores the 'student journey' within the context of inclusion in higher education, followed by an exploration of creative practices and reflections.

Keywords: talent development; creativity; study skills; support worker; vulnerability; resilience; autoethnography; everyday; vessel.

Vessels vulnerable; resilience revealed.
Vessels vulnerable, small, fragile.
Receptacles malleable, delicate.
Naked, clay ready to be shaped:
Painted in pictures of patriarchy;
Glazed in moulds of naked muses;
Fired in the furnace of misogyny.
Glazes glossy, reflecting back. Back
To empire, taken for granted truths.
Knowledge filled up, packed, pushed,
Squashed in, patted down. Confined.
Contained. Knowing no different,
Impermeable to the imaginary.
Once hidden, twice shy, put aside,
Inside, on the side, on the shelf,
Forgotten. Of no consequence.

Vessels knocked over.
Seeping.

Knowledges trickling.
Dripping.
On the cold stone slabs.
Spilling.
Soaking into the cracks.
Oozing.

Unconfined.
Uncontained.
Unruly.
Culture untethered.
Unrestrained.
Transformations taking space.
Imagine, agency attained.
Being accepting of change

Vessels smashed. Look! Hurts healed,
Moulds broken: possibilities revealed,
Pieces scattered: mosaics made,
Beauty woken: golden mends remain,
Lacquer threaded: cracks displayed.
New pictures collaged: creatives played,
Talents developed: identities crafted,
Vulnerability shared: resilience grafted.
Vessels re-seen: old wounds repaired,
Strength renewed: courage declared.

(Hayward, 2023)

Introducing the vessel's journey

As a child often I was, and with affection, called a 'bookworm.' Worming my way, into and through stories, being immersed, absorbed, eagerly consuming the lives of the characters. This was to forget the ordeals and torments of my school life, for a time at least, as I escaped my persecutors. Clark et al (2008, p.65) elegantly clarifies the significance of stories: 'stories draw us into an experience at more than a cognitive level; they engage our spirit, our imagination, our heart, and this engagement is complex and holistic. Good stories transport us away from the present moment'. I needed to be transported, to a place of safety, where my damaged psyche and wounded soul could be repaired. The act of repair was visceral; I could feel the pain leave my body as I read with fury. The act of reading was an addiction and maybe this was why my mum made the observation: "You always have your head in a book." She must have forgotten that I could not read until I was eight, and the word "always" felt premature. For most of my childhood and much of my adult life, I did feel vulnerable. My affect was, in a traditional meaning of the term, exposed, scared, helpless.[3] In this paper, and as the poem illustrates, I lay bare small pieces of my story to you, the reader, as I weave the intersections of vulnerability and resilience with a neurodiverse (dyslexic), working-class learner identity.

In the first stanza of the poem, there is little intersection of resilience until the traumas of being dyslexic were confronted. This confrontation took place ten years ago, but even now, the embedded struggles of traumas past resurface, and on occasion I am still that vulnerable, scared, lonely child. Yet that traumatic lived experience has developed a resilience and strength. For I am not part of patriarchy's Western-Eurocentric 'revenge economy' (Hoult, 2015, p. 110), instead, I seek to support

[3] On proofing the draft for this paper, I realised that I had typed scarred for scared. This led me to consider the trauma of literacy difficulties as scars and wounds upon the psyche.

and care for students' well-being by exposing my vulnerability. In this way the vulnerable body takes strength from the confession (Frosh, 1997) of not masking or passing as the all-knowing vessel, filled up to the brim with knowledge, ready to reproduce an identical vessel to all the other vessels on the shelves (Freire, 1970). On the learning journey, I argue that resilience-vulnerability is positioned to resist and challenge the sameness of patriarchy's imperial, colonial educational systems (Cixous, 1986; Mohanty, 2013; Smith, 1999; Ahmed, 2023). Visualised in the poem is Freire's vessel-student, shifting to critical thinking, where the moulds of reproduced discourses are broken. In breaking the yoke of class, gender and racial privilege, critical pedagogies facilitate actions to social justice, empower change and develop talent and creativity (Magro, 2022; Freire, 1973; hooks, 1994).

By borrowing from Liz Hoult's (2015) understanding of resilience as symbiotically linked to vulnerability, resilience-vulnerability is seen as intersecting rather than as binary oppositions. Accordingly, I understand the positioning of the student as oscillating between vulnerable-resilient. Her conceptualisation is drawn upon to enable ways to develop talent and creativity in people, not of a privileged background. Strength is found in the ability to be vulnerable, and resilience is felt in the ability to bounce forward' into something both familiar and new' (Walsh, 2011, p. 85). With the help of Walsh's creative understanding of resilience, I am able to disrupt and problematise the generalised definitions of resilience, that is 'the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune' (Ledesma, 2014, p.10). This over-simplification is a limitation of resilience theory, as is its saturation into most, if not all disciplines, creating a plethora of definitions. Accordingly, a systemic literature review is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a major contributor to resilience theory was Norman Garmezy. He understood resilience to be attributed to the internal and external conditions of individuals, their personal qualities, kinship and community (Garmezy, 1992).

Drawn upon in this article are the experiences of Carole and I to explore the hauntings of past traumas, revisited in the vulnerable spaces of the conscious. This is to understand how we are resilient members of a collective community, making 'transformations' possible for us and our students (Helmick., 2022). For adversity invites 'windows of opportunity to transform' (Berkes and Ross, 2013, p. 9). Being set back is to learn as students and researcher to move forward.

Contextualising our collective communities

Oppression and domination are confronted by us, a small group of artists, once working as support workers at the University for the Creative Arts in Rochester, England. Working in Student Services we identified, as what Clover (2010) terms, 'artists as educators' to create solidarities and coalitions in critical and self-reflective approaches to new knowledge production and pedagogies (Freire, 1973; Cruz, 2019). Most of us, entering the academy as artists, undertook a degree in the creative arts, to become educators and in this positioning, we were motivated to mitigate the trauma of our own education. I experienced many situations where learning was difficult and painful. Accordingly, this paper weaves my experiences, as a vulnerable-resilient student educator, and my journey with that of my friend and colleague, Carole Hatfield. Carole's contribution to this paper is significant as it facilitated my conceptualisation of the repaired vessel as a metaphor for the traces of developing talent and creativity. Carole (in Hayward 2019) made this observation, suggesting that vessels contain the remnants, hauntings, the traces of new knowledges, the mysteries and secrets yet to be revealed.

> "I quite like vessels because there is, something inside, well also I'm a vessel. There's something about the form and the shape; I like vessels, be it teapots, cups, pots, bowls, anything that can hold something, because it can hold something secret, ... it could hold nothing, or fresh air".

As collaborators we share our practices as resilient-vulnerable study skills tutors, who began as first-generation degree, mature students. As a collective community of resilience-vulnerability we use our 'community resources' to support others in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise" (Magis, 2010, p.401). I reflect upon our experiences to make recommendations for students who may be struggling to breathe in the academy as thirsty fish out of water (Reay, 2020, 2017; Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999; Wilson, & McGuire, 2022)

Vignette of vulnerability

And I was thirsty, as reading opens whole new worlds into which I could journey to water my parched body, to forget the enduring dry, hellish school days. Stepping onto the path, from the school gates to go home, I walked into nightmares of Beelzebub's making. Still, the stuff of *my* dreams-nightmares is tangible, and life may seem fleeting as Shakespeare (1611/1983) eloquently visualises in *The Tempest*, but my living and dreaming realities were merged into a cycle of trauma. In my attempt to get to the safety of my home two miles away, I ran the gauntlet nearly every weekday for six long years. In that Renaissance military tradition of administering corporal punishment, the guilty ran the gauntlet, which consisted of trying to sidestep two rows of tormentors. My tormentors were the school bullies on the left and the traffic, mainly buses from the road on the right. And there I was running down the middle; more often than not my punishers delighted in the anticipation that I should be trampled underfoot. Those huge metal horses dressed in blue and yellow caparisons, were so close I could feel their breath on my neck as they galloped past and dust from their hooves landed on my frumpy, brown Clark's school shoes.

My schooling was felt in a heightened sense of existence, much like the depiction in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch (1490-1500) (figure 1). In particular, the demise of the knight resonates, as the etymology of gauntlet, the gloved hand of a knight, merges its meaning with running down the line. In the image the knight is depicted being devoured by two differing groups of monsters on either side; a detail of which is included in figure 1b. Ironically, in these psychological and physical spaces of danger, I learnt to read. The power-knowledges of reading enable access to worlds of possibilities and sanctuary. Liz Hoult movingly explains this as she weaves the warp and weft of resilience-vulnerability together:

> "We need help from books if we are to find that remote and desert place where resilience and vulnerability operate, not as binaries but as each other's nucleus, so that the knowledge and near memory of what it feels like to be hurt is core to one's understanding of resilience, and the knowledge of one's ability to repair is core to our experiences of vulnerability" (2015, p. 107).

Figure 7: Hieronymus Bosch, The Garden of Earthly Delights (1490-1500)

Figure 1b: Detail Knight devoured by monsters

My ability to repair took many years. My trauma began as an illiterate child. Freud described 'trauma' as 'any excitations from the outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield … the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus which have broken in and binding of them'. Cathy Caruth in her reference to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920/1955), accepts the later usage of this term to mean, 'a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind' (Caruth, 1996, p.3). Not being able to read, did wound my psyche. I was a 'pretender', passing as literate; an 'outcast on the inside' (Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999).

In the UK in the 1970s, the whole word reading method was in vogue and relied upon memorising whole words, known as the look/say approach (Parker 2021). An example of which can be seen in the Janet and John books; still available to buy. The whole language, 'Real Books', came next. There was no instruction given, as the books were highly illustrated. The alternative method phonics, being a casualty of the 'reading wars' (Castles et al 2018), lost the battle. For Goodman (1986, p. 371), the 'expert', said '[m]atching letters with sounds is a flat-earth view of the world'. Accordingly, I was caught in the middle of the whole word/ whole language reading methods which opposed the phonetic approach. According to the co-founder, Ken Goodman (1986), children could understand the context and read for themselves. Reading would come naturally, achieved with access to a plethora of storybooks and a supporting adult. In an email conversation with Carole, she said:

> "There were many similarities with my childhood and although I did learn to read at school - younger than you - I don't remember much encouragement in the home for reading - no bedtime stories, no books bought for me and so on. The first books I remember receiving were in a boxed set of *The Little House on the Prairie* from a friend for Christmas when I was ten! I lost myself in drawing and making things" (July 2023).

Unfortunately, neither I nor Carole had the privilege of an abundance of books, nor to borrow the adage, 'the guide on the side.' In agreement with Harju-Luukkainen et al (2022, p. 182) 'not all

parents are equipped with equal possibilities to support their child, and here expert skills are needed from the educators … [as] socio-economic hardship puts children in an underprivileged position.'

To continue with my journey, at the age of eight I finally had to 'confess' to my teacher that I could not read; at regular intervals over three years, I stood in line at Mr King's desk for the reading assessment/test. First in line was Andrea, she read aloud to the teacher, and then it was my turn. One day, she read three sentences in a row. 'Well, that was it,' I thought to myself. Not being able to recall and recite three sentences, I had to admit to my failings. The 'game' was up, my vulnerability exposed (Foucault, 1988). Unbeknownst to me at that time, I was neurodiverse and so began the humiliation, fear, guilt and shame of being 'included' as a child that needed extra help. Now I realise that my acquisition of knowledge was embedded in a self-regulation of reproductive education. I was a vessel that needed filling up, in the vein that bell hooks and Paulo Freire critique in their writings (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970, 1973). To fill up to the level of those vessels who could read, memorise facts and become a productive member of society, my punishment was extra literacy lessons. Already, my peers were 'disciplined' in the game, readied to be controlled by the privileged. So began my instruction: laminated flash cards were presented to me and ironically, I learnt synthetic phonics. I was the child who used up the limited staffing resources as I needed 1:1 tuition. Learning in this context, every lunch time, I later understood that my 'identification, access to power and … taken-for granted elements of society … define where different identities are located within the broader social structure' (Stuart et al 2011, p 491).

Unfortunately, still much of the UK's educational system is entrenched in the banking system of knowledge and this requires the ability to retain vast amounts of facts and to reproduce them in exams. These reproductive knowledges were clearly in production and my education was very much in the vein of rote, reproductive, boring, uninspiring knowledge acquisition. I did pass some exams, and to continue with the analogy, the vessel was filled up to the rim. Accordingly, after compulsory education, I continued into the 6th form and at eighteen there was no more space left to memorise all the facts required for A levels; I failed those exams. Later, I remember as a mature student, the first text I was given to read and study, was Dicken's novel of 1854, *Hard Times*. As soon as I read the opening sentence, I thought that my own compulsory education was not that far removed from Victorian times - nothing had really changed. The opening of *Hard Times*, still echoes with me:

> ""NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"" (Gradgrind, in Dickens, 1854/1993: 3).

Disappointingly, thirty years on, I am reminded of this banking model, since being constrained to the regurgitation of facts, my students express their frustrations with their education. Yet there are ways to teach differently, drawing upon the interests and motivations of the students, discussed later on in the article. Enlightened, rational reasoning was instilled in our malleable minds to ensure an adherence to individualism. Then the onus of the failings of the underprivileged is a lack on their/my part, not that of the State. Personal responsibility was the discourse in *Hard Times* and my childhood in the 1970s, which severely escalated in the 1980s and onwards. Not being functionally literate would have defined a subjectivity as a child not able to fulfil my parents' aspirations to be something better than working class. They understood the discourses of social mobility especially with Thatcherite rhetoric shouting the advocation of individualism, capitalism, and a fervent encouragement to own property. Thatcher (1975) states that the means to achieve these 'desires' was by developing talents via education:

> "that human progress is best achieved by offering the freest possible scope for the development of individual talents ... For many years there has been a subtle erosion of the essential virtues of the free society. Self-reliance has been sneered at as if it were an absurd suburban pretention. ... The desire of parents to choose and to struggle for what they themselves regarded as the best possible education for their children has been scorned".

My father extolled this ethos of individulaism and self-help, and in our household he amended the Biblical phrase: 'God helps those who help themselves' to 'I will help you if you help yourself'. But to become literate was not easy. Education was a site of complex political and psychosocial issues in my family as the transgenerational legacy of dyslexia left traces in the social and cultural experiences of our lives (Hayward, 2019). My mother left school at fourteen and developed her talents as a seamstress. She lacked the ability to read and write due to the failings of the educational system. My father played truent from a very young age and 'got in with the wrong crowd of older boys'. Standing before the local magistrate at fifteen, he was given the choice of going to borstal or joining the Merchant Navy. He chose the latter, became a cabin boy and learnt to read and write, whilst abord ship. My father managed to mitigate a life of crime and imprisonment but this is not the case for many.

Unfortunately nearly 60% of adult prisoners have a literacy level below that of an eleven year old (Ministry of Justice, 2021). This is well below the general population as identified by the National Literacy Trust (n.d.): '1 in 6 (16.4% / 7.1 million people) adults in England have very poor literacy skills'. The Trust makes a poignant point: 'Adults with poor literacy skills will be locked out of the job market and, as a parent, they won't be able to support their child's learning.' This is the result of the literacy crisis and those who are not privilidged may require help. Seeing the serious nature and implications of the situation, my mother took a cleaning job to pay for a private tutor. She came every Saturday morning for an hour. So began the lessons with the tutor who taught me to read in context and with meaning. We began with Dickens.

This was the first time that Dickens came into my life. Although his work was, and still is, part of the West's literacy canon, it is highly problematic. There are many contradictions in his novels and personal life, illustrating elements of misogyny, racism and xenophobia. For example, he is an ardent proponent of the 'Angel of the House', whilst supporting and encouraging women to contribute to his journals; he recruited prominent writers such as Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell and Eliza Lynn. Furthermore, he was a committed social activist, a political journalist, and he had a profound talent for storytelling. As an astute storyteller, his visual descriptions of the everyday are embedded in my memory. At this time, I was introduced to *Great Expectations* (1861). It seemed an inappropriate book for a child unable to read. Yet it was apt in terms of the content, as it gave an insight into the education and literacy development of the characters of the book and therefore it was a relatable text. The text is a metaphor for the hierarchical nature of learning; Pip attributes his success to Joe, being taught with love, in a father/son relationship that draws on the apprenticeship model. This contrasts with the abuses of the formal education in *Hard Times* and the education I received at school. In much the same way Pip receives instruction from Miss Havisham, I was instructed. Critical thinking was not on the curriculum. Thus, some forms of knowledge production have value and worth over others.

I remember the formal lessons provoked much anxiety. I felt thick, stupid, as though there was something wrong with me. I thought I would never be able to read and write. It was emotionally challenging, a struggle. I much preferred a visual way of accessing knowledge, but to be able to 'read' visual cultures was not enough to function in 1970s Western society. To be literate was the requirement. In most societies being literate was and is a necessary cultural capital. My parents being aware of this, bought me the Collins Encyclopaedia when I was nine. Still not a proficient reader, I used a visual technique to increase my understanding by looking at the pictures in the book. Intrigued and curious it sparked a passion for exploration, for the discovery to detect the message(s) behind the images.

Time and again I went back to one image, Dali's Soft Construction with Boiled Beans *(Premonition of Civil War)* (1936), figure 2. I wondered why a painter would want to create such a grotesque image. As a child I had not seen anything like this before. Thus, on the margins of becoming a reader, I understood the power of visual cultures. Even as a child I felt the power in that image. On reflection, I now realise the ways in which the language of visual culture can move the viewer, I feel that my illiterate self was open to the emotions conveyed by Dali's depiction of the grotesque trauma of the horrors of war. As a child of the 1970s I had not been saturated with the prevalence of multi-media that is now the norm of visual cultures in the 21st century. Accordingly, my experiences were

not so far removed from my illiterate ancestors of times past. They were instructed by the power/knowledges of religious visual language. The emotional impact of such imagery is palpable, made to move the soul and affect the viewer. Even as a child, this I understood, and desired the talents to make creative possibilities available to me. I wanted to use creative talents to communicate powerful messages.

Figure 8: Dali, Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War), 1936, oil on canvas, 100 x 99 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art

By understanding the power and significance of visual aesthetics, the language of visual culture, it explains why those of privilege need to make the study of the arts unattractive to marginalised groups. The cultural elite do not want their canon destabilised and surely by developing the creative talents of the under privileged this would happen. Therefore, those students are left by the wayside in pedagogies that are to be consumed, as the capitalist beast feeds from the breast of the privileged. For the working class, women, disabled and people of colour are fed the scraps from the master's table at his discretion. However, rammed down our throats is the notion that the only courses fit for our consumption are those that secure employment, nursing, teaching, STEM, neither humanities, nor the creative arts are easily accessible. For turning that table would make obvious the depiction that our cultures are not valued in society.

Reimagining the vessel

Nevertheless, there are those of us, who are challenging the status quo by understanding what it means to develop talent and creativity in the 21st century. With the advancement in technology, it is not necessary, as I did, to spend hundreds of painful hours remembering mathematical formulars and obscure spellings. All that time, energy and frustration taken in those pursuits, can be used to develop critical thinking. What is of importance is to understand how to live in a peaceful world that takes care of the planet and globally vulnerable. As artists as educators, we have a responsibility to nurture talent not privilege, by exploring with our student's creative approaches to learning.

So, what might this look like? Carole and I encourage the students we support to use their experiences in the everyday, their interests and emotions to facilitate a motivational and inspirational affect. To research what is curious to them, to encourage them to create work that produces new meaning making. As artists both Carole and I use our experiences in the everyday as examples to produce 'different', subjugated knowledges and in doing so position ourselves as educators and practitioners of the arts (Foucault, 1980). These subject positions are visualised in the conceptual processes of the artworks, often learning new techniques as we go, improvising on our creative journey. That creative journey often takes a path which is unexpected and non-linear. An example of which is visualised in the poem I wrote to open this paper: Beauty woken: golden mends remain. / Lacquer threaded: cracks displayed. /New pictures collaged: creatives played.

The lines of the poem were conceptualised a few years ago when I was tutoring a study skills session with a fashion student on 'how to analyse an artwork, figure 3. She was required to research ten artists and their work. The template I created can be adapted, substituting the image for any media and arts discipline to the interests and motivations of the student and then adapting the formal elements to suit. However, this session was not going to take place until we had addressed why she was distressed. The student wanted to talk about her grandmother who had recently passed away. We had a conversation about her feelings and memories describing how she would visit her grandmother and have tea from a teapot. This story led me to suggest the fashion designer and print maker Mary Katrantzou and the Fall 2011 Collection: Ming Vases, Faberge Eggs, and Other Tchotkes (Katrantzou, 2011). We both reminisced about nostalgic childhoods, having tea from a teapot in a cup with a saucer. I supported the completion of the research template using the images she found.

The tracings of our stories were still with me when I asked for a cup and saucer for Christmas in the style of Royal Albert Bone China, Old Country Roses Collection, 1962. This was an object that connected me to my past and I was excited to use it at work. However, on the first day I dropped it and smashed the saucer and the handle. Carole could see how upset I was and said she could fix it for me using the Japanese art of Kintsugi. Using gold lacquer, the breakage is repaired with an obvious join, which is made part of the object's history, rather than trying to hide the crack. Once Carole did the repair, figure 4, I decided to transform its function, as a container to hold jewellery. The art of Kintsugi is an embodiment of the broken vulnerable, fragile vessel, transformed once repaired. The pieces are put back together, the wound, the trauma is healed. Strength is visualised in the repair and here the experiences and significance of the everyday became apparent. Revealed in the found objects around us are new knowledges, inspiration and creativity. The creativity in the making process and the production of new stories, reveals the secrets and emotions that are significant. The importance of the everyday impacts the narratives of our art, an example, of which occurred during my interview with Carole for my doctorial study. We decided to sit in her garden because she wanted to peg out her washing when something fell from a tree. In this serendipitous space I said:

> "Oh, what was that? (Interviewee: 2016: 38.00)
> It's a beechnut, an empty shell; it's rather pretty, isn't it? Look – it's rather nice. It's another empty vessel, isn't it? I might use that. I'll keep that now, I'll take that (Interviewee: Eve, 2016, 38.25).
>
> so, you use found objects? (Interviewer: 2016: 38.30).

yes, I love finding things and making things with a bit of old something, also with clay. … It's soft, (we take turns holding the beechnut), so if you look at it, it's soft, smooth on the inside, but look at the outside. It's deadly" (Interviewee: Eve, 2016, 38.55).

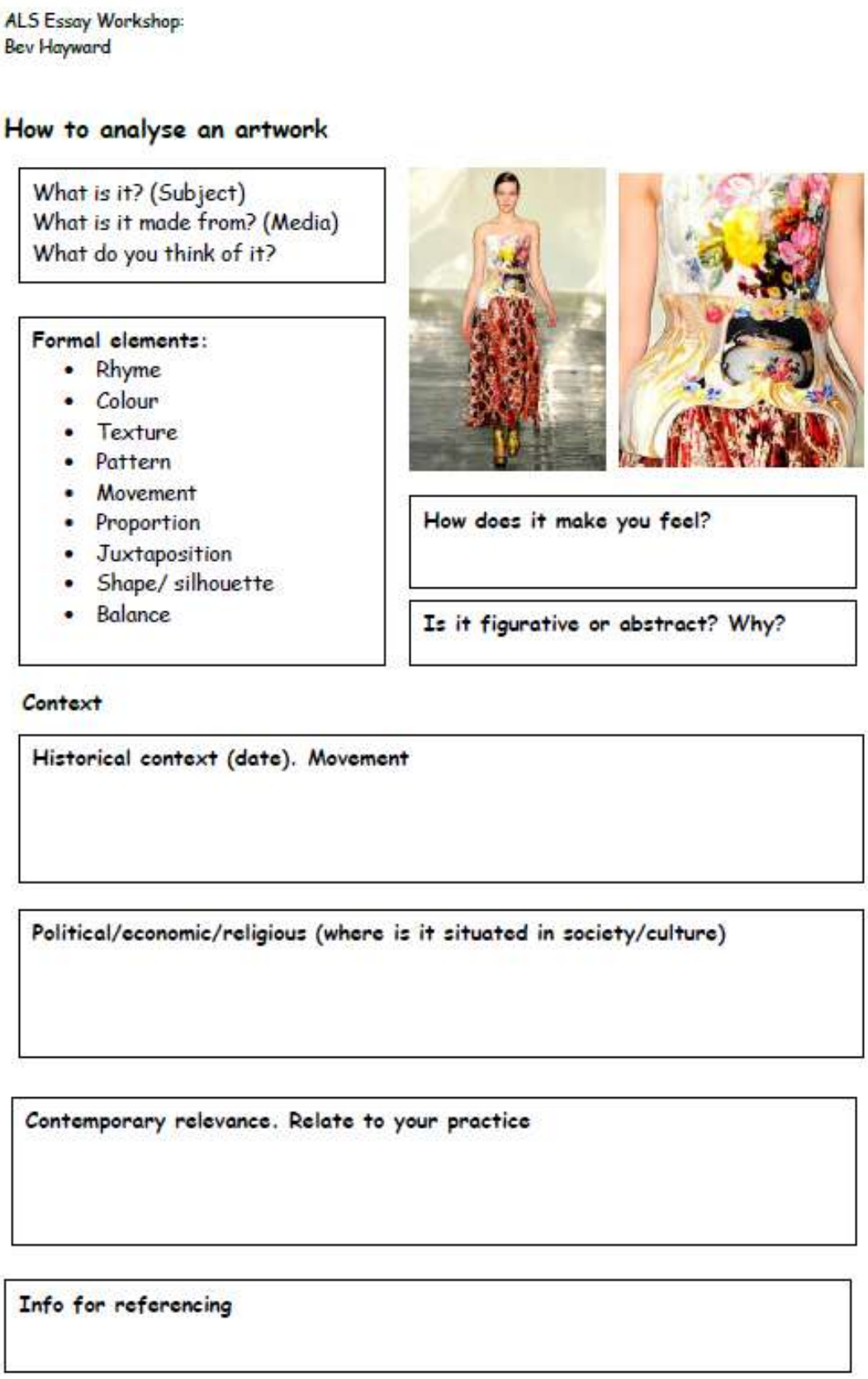

Figure 9: Scaffolding activity to generate ideas and research: How to analyse an artwork, by Bev hayward

Figure 10: Royal Albert Bone China, Old Country Roses Collection, 1962, Kintsugi repair by Carole Hatfield. (photographed by Carole Hatfield).

This experience was incidental, unexpected, Carole's use of the everyday in knowledge production is creative, intuitive, innovative. It is often these experiences that are overlooked in a neoliberal agenda, as having no value. For the onus is placed upon researching 'great' artists: cutting and pasting the 'master' pieces in a sketchbook. Unfortunately, often the reading lists and project briefs are written in a way to reproduce the same and deny access to the marginalised groups. They are only accessible to those of privilege, to those 'in the know.' For many of the students we support, the use of academic language and books, especially theoretical books used for research, are the cause of much anxiety. Failure at school, due to limited reading and writing skills are presented to the support workers, as we try to care for extremely stressed and vulnerable students. We, the support workers are aware of these anxieties, as some of my colleagues and I have experienced extremely negative learning experiences. If only some simple inclusive pedagogic practices had been put in place, it would have negated those experiences. For example, it is important to take the time to have a conversation and getting to know the student and their interests. However, often the enjoyment, the love, has been lost, as an arts education has become a market in which the learner must quantify their creativity. If researchers and students are not given the time and space to get lost in those everyday moments, then 'secret' knowledges such as that which Carole shared with me, are not considered to be significant. Figures 5, and 6 show a sample of the diversity of vessels made by Carole that contain those secrets yet to be revealed.

Figure 11: Carole Hatfield, Ceramic Vessels, 2007. (photographed by Carole Hatfield)

Figure 12: Carole Hatfield, Felt Vessels, 2007 (photographed by Carole Hatfield)

Therefore, observation in the everyday is an approach to facilitate an inspiring experience that is embodied in art. Often learning and teaching is having the ability to listen and understand the motivations of our students to explore what is available, relatable and of value to them. 'Teaching should energize, engage, and enlighten. Teachers in this context are co-investigators with their students; they are visionaries, challengers, advocators, artists, mentors and facilitators of learning' (Magro, 2019, p. xvii-xviii). In this context, the vessel, once broken, figure 4, is recreated with confidence and self-awareness, figure 7, to think critically about their practice as artists, and we the ethical collaborators are encouraging of their active engagement.

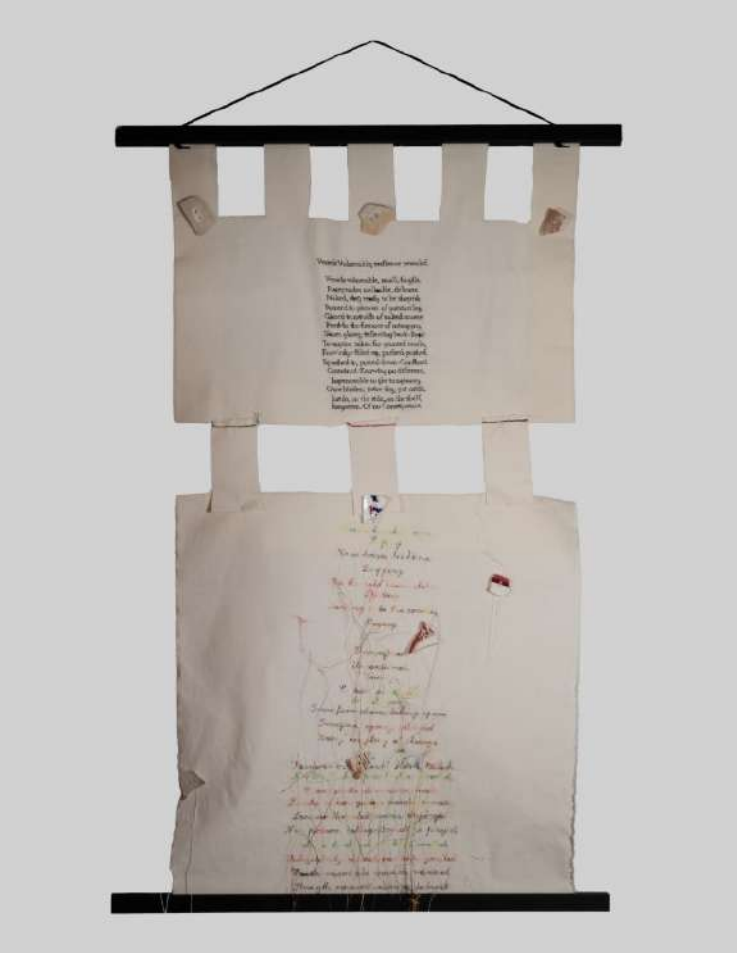

Figure 13: Beverley Hayward, Vessels Resilient - Vessels Vulnerable, calico and silks, 2023. (photographed by Bev Hayward)

The journey continued.

The intension is to encourage and support those students that find learning a struggle. To ensure that they do not give up on education, but to continue as vulnerable-resilient artists. In a community of support and encouragement a democratic pedagogical experience can be fostered to nurture talent development, to help each other through challenging times. Only recently have I had the confidence to speak out about my own literacy difficulties, but in sharing my experiences, I feel I have fostered a more authentic approach to teaching. In finding my own voice and telling my story, I hoped to facilitate a democratic approach to enable learners to feel comfortable to tell their stories and be successful in their/our lifelong learning journeys. This is voiced in my poem and visualised in the artwork's format of the two poems. As learners, we can move from the banking vessel to a kintsugi journey of strength and opportunity.

Thus, as a collective of caring ethical practitioners, we have a responsibility to make learning fun, enjoyable and exciting (hooks 1994), to develop talent and create identities, and most importantly to encourage transformations from the reproduced vessel to new pictures collaged from repaired pieces, reassembled to create dazzling, striking mosaics. Learning should not be a cause of suffering and a means to pathologise, marginalise and wound (Magro, 2019). Accordingly, by recovering feelings and remembering repressed 'hurts' (Hayward, 2021), lived experiences are accessed and reflected upon. This is to facilitate creativity in what I anticipate and hope to be an easier journey for those students in our care (hooks, 1994, p.16; Hayward, 2019).

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Dr. Bev Hayward is an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London. She teaches on the master's programme in Education, and Social Justice. Being neurodiverse and working-class, often she was marginalised in the UK educational system; accordingly, by exposing her vulnerabilities, she hopes to foster a transformative and democratic pedagogical student experience. During her PhD in Education, Transformation and Lifelong Learning, she employed a creative approach to explore creative arts-based practices. She is a poet, writer and embroider and is interested in the artist as educator. These mixed methods are drawn upon in her current body of work, which seeks to expose the state's unjust practices in forced adoption.

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