

# Mentor's Introduction for Liz Langdon

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## Mentor's Introduction to Liz Langdon

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As Liz's doctoral committee co-chair, I am honored to provide these introductory remarks to her research essay. Liz's dissertation research is based on a six-month collaborative action research curriculum development workshop with in-service art educators revolving around critical inquiries of place-based art education in Texas through a *Deluzian* lens. As facilitator within this inquiry, Liz's understanding of the lifeworlds of art educators has been highlighted. Specifically, Liz has worked to empower her teacher-participants by creating a series of research workshops intended to motivate more critical self-development and professional learning opportunities in relation to an enhanced historical consciousness of place.

Products and practicalities associated with this form of inquiry often sidestep the depth of transformation possible through the ethical practices required by collaborative/critical action research. The action of action research for Liz's work starts with listening as an ethical practice. Using this as a mode of inquiry lends itself poignantly to basing curriculum development on an ethics of listening and exchange. Here, Liz's positioning as facilitator within the co-inquiry acted as an example and inspiration for the participants' action/reflection.

The creation of placed-based curriculum from within the vulnerable space of co-created narratives allows for aspects of curriculum as lived practice to seep into planning that put ourselves on the line. The curriculum as plan is moved into being more responsive to not only contextual factors, but also can

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become opened up to enhanced reflexivity as an ethical obligation to the places and objects we are wrapped up in.

What strikes me as particularly brave is that Liz transforms alongside her co-researchers *in situ*. This to me is the ultimate purpose of research—that we are sensitive to its limits as yielding a form of place-based curriculum if we are willing to hear the jostling of internal and external pulls on us in the acts of research and curricular creation. This possibility is always heightened when we engage with others, be they places, people, perspectives, or ourselves. The sharing and documenting of initial thoughts and their evolving tracings over time provide a witness to our becoming differently. Here Liz found within her participants' initial thoughts on place points of conflict, close-mindedness, and ignorance that then fueled subsequent iterations of inquiry cycles for her work starting with the individual and then circling out towards wider networks of the intersubjective, be it in collaborative settings or in relation to place itself.

Finally, action research as an ethical practice doesn't make claims at the onset of what will be yielded from inquiry. Any preset objectives, such as social justice for example, become fodder for critical reflection and interrogation on the complexities of working differently in contexts we underestimate. Research in this way provides a space to reconsider how we underestimate in the abstraction of living to the perceived demands of methodology. Readers will no doubt find parallels here among curricular encounters with learners across contexts.