‘I ARRIVED IN A GIANT, CURIOUS, AND SCARY PLACE’: DESIGNING ILLUSTRATED
JOURNALS IN A PRE-COLLEGE ESL UNIVERSITY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

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As universities within the United States become more international and enroll a more diverse population of students, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) educators have questioned how best to socialize students into the communicative practices of their academic disciplines (Liddicoat and Scarino 2013). Despite recognizing the need to build more supportive and inclusive institutional climates (Zamel and Spack 2011; Kumaravadivelu 2003), research on international students presents a less optimistic picture. Indeed, studies repeatedly point to the presence of deficit discourses that serve to position international students, and those from Asia, as linguistically incompetent in English and in need of “fixing” before engaging with peers in their academic disciplines (Belz 2002; Zamel and Spack 2011). This study looked closely at one pre-matriculation ESL program for international students studying visual and performing arts. The program’s goal was to socialize international students into the communicative practices valued within arts education, with an emphasis on the ability to narrate how one’s identity as an artist shapes and is shaped by one’s art. Through a series of curricular innovations, and specifically the use of illustrated journals, this program sought to contest the deficit framing of international students at the institution by offering them the opportunity to
narratively construct their identities as artists through a multimodal array of communicative resources (e.g., drawing, painting, collage, etc.), as well as English. Preliminary observations within the program raised intriguing questions about how the multimodal genre of the illustrated journal was affecting the kinds of autobiographical narratives the international students told. Drawing on theoretical work in second language development (Gao 2014; Norton 2010, 2012; Park 2011; Pavlenko, A. & B. Norton 2007; Pavlenko 2001, 2004, 2006; Scarino and Liddicoat 2013), multimodalities (Kress and Leeuwen 2000), narrative and identity analysis (Bruner 1984, 1986; Norton 2010, 2012; Pavelenko and Blackledge 2004), and genre studies (Hyland 2015), this study highlights the role of genre in enabling and constraining the autobiographical narratives that international students choose to tell. Close analysis of the illustrated journals revealed a link between this multimodal genre and the use of inspirational narrative tropes, which seemed to result in strong cohesion among students around inspirational notions of resilience and triumph in the challenging circumstances of navigating a new culture and language. The study's findings allow Second Language Development practitioners and researchers to consider the ways in which traditional cognitive perspectives/deficit perspectives on language limit students’ communicative expressiveness and confidence, and instead argues for using genres like the Illustrated Journal, to encourage students to access their full range of expressive modalities to be comfortable and confident narrators in their new culture and academic disciplines.
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Chapter I: Introduction

“I Arrived in a Giant, Curious, and Scary Place”
Younie Kim

Two Vignettes to Introduce the Problem

The quote above is from a Korean printmaker and is part of her exhibition 1427 days, which chronicles her struggles and growth while living in Philadelphia and studying at The University of the Arts. 1427 Days documents the exact amount of days she had spent studying at the University of the Arts through an installation of 15 narrative print etchings, along with quotes written on the wall, a small sculpture and a hand-made book of simplistic beautifully haunting images, each with one an accompanying sentence that tells the moving story of what Younie calls her “blossoming.” The final print is a girl hunched over surrounded by thorns with the quote, “Don’t worry, your season is yet to come.” The final line on the wall reads, “flowers bloom every season.” The exhibit’s power lies in its narrating the cyclical rhythms of loneliness, confusion, fear and growth we all experience as a constant in our lives, while also highlighting the sense of isolation to hopeful growth that International Students across campuses around the world experience.

While I am not alone in feeling like this installation is successful aesthetically and emotionally, Younie’s exhibit holds special meaning for my work and is often in my mind when considering curriculum for the AELP (Arts English Language Program) ESL program in which I direct and teach. This exhibit was first hung three years ago as her thesis exhibition. While attending the exhibition, the then
Dean of The College of Art and Design came up to me and said, “Mara, this is so sad; what can we do to make her life, and other International Students lives better here?”

I was taken back by our different readings of the exhibit. For me the sadness and loneliness was a necessary part of growth, not just for Younie but for all of us. I responded saying something like, “I wonder if it’s your reading of the exhibition. She calls it her ‘blossoming’. I would say that’s pretty optimistic.”

Even in the autobiographical artistic telling of life stories, it sometimes does not occur to people that artists are telling and reshaping their most resonant stories, but these stories do not represent a monolith. Younie’s stages of fear and loneliness were poignant and powerful her second year of college. As a senior, Younie recognized her story of transformation as a good story to tell, perhaps in her young life, the best story to tell. For it is the one where she triumphs over loneliness, finds her "season" and "blossoms." I have seen both international students and American students walk through this exhibition and cry. We cry because we all recognize the experience of loneliness and growing up in various stages. The one thing that Younie exhibits that is so powerful is the complete circular process of growth and change—we are alone, we are not alone, we change and then grow. We triumph. And then, if we are lucky, we repeat the cycle in stronger emotional shape.

Younie was telling the absolute right story for this exhibition, but the result was some faculty and deans thinking she was less than fine emotionally and that therefore International Students were also less than fine, a common trope
assigned to International Students in the states. This is the story many theorists tell, teachers tell, and sometimes even students tell: the lonely, struggling International Student who must adapt to a new culture, a new language and always does so inadequately. Younie’s exhibit taught me otherwise, and it made me consider: why is this story of the struggling International Student the dominant story we hear in academia in regards to International Students? I knew that Younie was proud of her exhibition, her blossoming. However, she kept having to try and reassure people that she was okay because of the work’s emotional resonance, its story of triumphing over loneliness. That Younie had to experience loneliness was not something our culture wanted to accept. Younie was one of my first students in The Arts University (AU) Arts English Language Program (AELP) four years ago. At that time, we had students write autobiographies and in their art studio class create images to accompany the autobiography. She began the work of autobiography in my class and started writing about her love of small images with the ability to imbue immense amount of stories—she drew carefully, delicately, and emotionally stirring images, while many of her other friends kept it more simple and direct. She chose to be a Printmaking/Book Arts major, while other students chose design fields. This choice fueled a sense of joy and purpose but also loneliness as she was the only Korean printmaker, and it was this move that began the telling of Younie’s almost master-narrative that would comprise one of the most beautiful and emotionally complex undergraduate student exhibitions at AU.

While she may have started this work in AELP, it took her four years to
come to tell the story in a coherent and complex way, fitting of an artist. Younie’s
exhibition left me with a question: in what ways does writing autobiographical
narratives at the AELP allow students to begin to give voice to their fear,
loneliness, joy, the multitude of emotions that comes with arriving in a new place
and learning a new language, in a way that unpacks those emotions and allows
them to both express and analyze those experiences in productive ways that
build on their identities as international student artists. Younie told her story
rather successfully through a multimedia installation, that included text, image,
book art, and sculpture. The installation included more artistic modes than her
academic discipline, Book Arts and Printmaking. However, what struck me and
other viewers was the resonant connection between images and words and the
power they had when they worked in tandem to tell an emotional story.

Younie could tell a story of both displacement and loneliness leading to
courage, growth, and triumph, her “blossoming” through art and text, a story
much more complex than the isolated and hopeless International Student. This, I
thought to myself is powerful, and I began to wonder about the benefits of using
image, text and autobiography in our AELP curriculum.

Vignette #2

Around the same time, I was the target of an academic firing squad at a
faculty meeting at the AU, where I am the Director of International Student
Programs. The problem: the University wanted the faculty to admit more
International Students but some of the faculty simply did not want to, even when
their portfolios surpassed their American counterparts. One professor sited again
and again the East/West cultural divide as insurmountably problematic: “They just don’t understand anything about how our programs run and what we expect from them.” Another professor asked, “Why are they studying here in this country if they have no interest in working with the other Americans in the class?” And still another, “Do they even understand what a critique is? Because they never say a word, sometimes they overtly ignore me even when I ask them a question!” I left that meeting wondering if the utterly incompetent and rude students they taught were the same students in my program, who spoke frequently, understood what a critique was, and with encouragement, spoke up about their pieces and processes.

Bearing the brunt of the firing squad, I was left with another faculty statement that translated for me into a charge: “If the University is not going to offer some real support for these students, we, as a group, cannot admit them.”

Knowing that for them “real support” meant an army of tutors, for which we did not have funding, that would magically transform them into students that spoke and acted exactly as some faculty thought art students should speak and act, my thoughts went to the question and possibilities of building AELP curriculum that, like Younie’s exhibit again, uses art and written autobiographical narratives to allow students to begin to give voice to their fear, loneliness, joy: the multitude of emotions that comes with arriving in a new place, learning a new language, and a new artistic/academic discipline in a way that unpacks those emotions and allows them to both artistically and verbally express and analyze those experiences in productive ways that build on their identities as International
Statement of the Problem

With these two vignettes, along with countless other hostile meetings and discussions with International Students in mind, the Dean of Student Life and I successfully proposed a pre-matriculation ESL program, title AELP (Arts English Language Program) designed to meet the needs of international ESL artists, musicians, and dancers. Integrating issues of students’ histories, cultural adaptation (to the US, to the Arts University), to what it means to be a student artist in Philadelphia and the US, were dominant frameworks addressed in the curriculum. I wanted to counter the view of international students as lost souls needing to be fixed. Moreover, I wanted the curriculum to counter the view that international students are simply byproducts of cultures, and that coupled with their perceived low English proficiency, makes them “impossible” to teach. Instead we hoped to facilitate students becoming active participants in the collaborative structure of their English language learning through the vehicle of multimodal narratives. The cultural and linguistic essentializing they were sure to sometimes encounter in their degree programs, coupled with the fact that all the students at the Arts University are entering highly competitive, expressive, and subjective fields of art, design, and performance made me realize the importance of these students being grounded in their histories and having the ability to fuse their histories with their current lives and future goals. This forging of confident and nuanced hybrid identities as International Student artists became an essential goal of the AELP.
We, therefore, began to shape an ESL curriculum centered on student autobiography utilizing a multimodal approach, inspired by Younie and other artists both in and outside of the AU. The curriculum was structured, in some ways, as a traditional University ESL curriculum usually is with a focus on achieving academic reading, writing, and discussion skills. In our first iteration of curricular change, we added autobiographical academic essays around their experiences and impressions of Philadelphia in comparison to their home cultures. In an additional larger project and essay, “My Map” (Multimedia Autobiography project), students detailed in art and essays past influences as performing and visual artists, present inspirations, and future goals. These essays were tied to presentations, exhibitions, and performances, along with Music and Art Studio classes focusing on critique practices. This program model seemed to help increase student average GPA from a 3.0 to a 3.3 in their first semesters of academic study and students seemed much better adjusted to their lives in Philadelphia before starting their degree programs. Therefore, we thought, our job is done: success?

The Persistence of the Problem

While faculty reported more success with International Students, oftentimes International Students problems still arose with faculty and the same issues were present: faculty felt that students were reluctant to engage with them, other peers, and the curriculum. Faculty saw students’ reticence to participate in their classes as students’ language, culture, or motivation problem.

It was clear things were sometimes getting better and sometimes remaining
quite the same, laden with similar issues that inspired the program’s curriculum. A more dogged problem that persists is that faculty perceptions of students' language and culture impeding learning become most persistent once students are past their first full academic year and are ensconced in their degree programs—a whole other separate micro-culture with linguistic and cultural challenges for International Students that needs to be navigated. What was clear was that after their initial time in the AELP (their first semester in the AU), most AELP students seemed to do quite well and feel relative comfort with the challenges of their first year at the AU. AELP faculty agreed that the “My Philly” essay and the “My Map” essay were highly beneficial in helping students prepare both emotionally and academically for their first year at the AU. However, it was also clear that students might benefit from even more focus on acknowledging how their pasts ties into their present and future goals at the AU, so that they would feel more grounded in their own hybrid identities and saw those identities as important to the AU culture. I began then to reimagine how Younie Kim’s exhibit was designed. The main element was a beautiful artist’s book about her struggles and eventual “blossoming.” I wondered what it might be like for students, at whatever level of English proficiency, to create a book in their own writing and illustrations, rather than just academic essays that documented their processes. I then connected this idea to a student exhibition I saw at the AU in Crafts. All the faculty had students display their art journals, along with their work. The journals, in some cases, were more interesting to look at than the pieces and the students were much more willing to engage in a discussion of their journals,
sometimes expressing a deeper attachment to them than to their work being
displayed. The art journals were incredibly informal and mostly designed exactly
as the students wanted. There was a sense of joy, freedom and a working
through problems with their craft in drawings and language, which may have
inspired their easier connection to their art journals than to the formal work on
display.

This experience made me think that perhaps AELP students might also
generate in more comfortable classroom conversations if they had art journals that
helped mediate and encourage more playful dialogue. Finally, I had been reading
Kenneth Gregory’s book *An Illustrated Life* about his growth as an artist through
committing to drawing and writing every day in his journal. Included in the book
were international artists who also took very seriously the transformative powers
of their Illustrated Journals in documenting their joys, fascinations and struggles
at living or studying abroad. This led me to consider how we might benefit from
positioning AELP students as student-artists undergoing a process that is scary,
joyous, full of valuable lessons, like a traveler on a great adventure. In addition,
the product of an artist’s book is one that is respected by faculty at the AU and
one that has proven to help engage students in discussing their art.

The persistence of AELP students’ perceived lack of engagement in their
degree programs; the success of AELP’s initial autobiographical curricular
design; my perspective on student exhibitions using artist journals and books,
including Younie’s; and the influence of Gregory’s text, coalesced into having
students create Illustrated Journals as a central curricular practice in the AELP
program.

The Context: The AELP (Arts English Language Program)

The AELP is a pre-matriculation ESL program at an Arts University that offers Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in the visual and performing arts. The AELP designs curriculum to meet the needs of visual and performing artists. I will describe the curriculum briefly, with a focus on the Illustrated Journal and autobiography curriculum. While there are other assignments and traditional curricular materials used in the AELP, the Illustrated Journal weaves itself through the entire curriculum in prominent ways. It is important now to list the elements that comprise the autobiography curriculum: Illustrated Journal (completed daily for the entire semester); “My Philly” essay and multimedia presentation (including video and/or musical performance; presented mid-semester); and concluding with “My MAP: Autobiography and Multimedia Presentation” (including video and/or musical performance, presented end of semester).

These three elements, all with a focus on the students’ documenting and working to better understand the implications of their cultural and English learning experiences comprise the 3 main products of the autobiographical curriculum in AELP.

The Illustrated Journal assignment asks students to keep a journal in which they write, collect artifacts, draw, collage and paint every day. The purpose of these journals are four-fold: (1) informal everyday writing has been proven to help students improve written and verbal expression of English (Zamel, 2004);
(2) Writing about everyday experiences and emotions gives students the opportunity to work through this important cultural transformation in their lives; (3) writing about our stories helps give shape and clarified meaning to the often confusing and overwhelming experiences and emotions some international students might be experiencing (Bruner, 2001); and (4) finally, as third-space theorists contend, third-space or hybridity is realized when our cultural experiences are made manifest in a cultural product—an artifact of some sort—be it a painting, a memoir, or a song (Hall in Pavlenko, Blackledge, 2004); in this case, the artifact is the Illustrated Journal.

Additionally, once these artifacts are produced, they then can be seen, read, experienced by others outside of the cultural group, then having the ability to affect change in a context (Bhabha 1998; Hall 2004). For example, as faculty view the product of the Illustrated Journal, they might experience a more nuanced view, rather than a deficit view of the International Student, as the Illustrated Journal is a product they respect.

To conclude the curricular role of the Illustrated Journal, the illustrated journal is the non-evaluative space in which the autobiography essays and performance is rooted. Students do free-writes of their autobiographical essays in their journals, along with illustrating their experiences. These pieces, both written and illustrated, are then manipulated into formal essays and presentations. Key to this academic transference is the recognition that the illustrated journal represents a fixed document of fluidity: fluidity representing the personal changes and identity growth but also a fixed document representing this period and its
growth structure. At the same time, the illustrated journal also represents transformative social and academic growth in and of itself in that it has the possibility to morph into an academic essay and a formal presentation.

There are specific prompts for the journaling and the journal assignments that lead to the different autobiographical projects (“My Philly” and “My MAP”). The first, “My Philly”, is a study of places/experiences students have had in Philadelphia with the following three elements: journal entries, journal shares and conversations, many iterations of formal essays, multimedia or music performance and formal essay presentation which ties together the formal essay and the art product. The second major project is titled MAP: Multimedia Autobiography Project. The same instructional framework is used: journal entries, journal shares and conversations, many iterations of formal essays, multimedia or music performance and formal essay presentation, which tie together the formal essay and the art product. A strong emphasis is placed on formal essay writing and presentation emanating from the Illustrated Journals. These multimodal projects hope to develop a sense of multiplicity in identity for International Students in the following ways: (1) as international students with their histories intact consciously and publicly; (2) as student visual and performance artists with emerging identities as international student artists adapting to life in Philadelphia and the US; (3) and as international students adopting American conventions of arts academia, particularly as it applies to personal but academic, writing, reading, presentation, and critique—all elements we believe necessary for student academic, personal, and artistic success. Most
importantly, we have designed a curriculum that favors the way into the cultivation of these identities as not just through the practice of the academic essay, but through the more ardent focus of the Illustrated Journal. This has been done because we believe that English language learning is most effective when there is the push and pull of academic writing and non-evaluative creative forms of expression (the Illustrated Journal) around English language learning.

The AELP curriculum I outlined is centered on multimodal narrative autobiography. It became no longer just an autobiographically arts based curriculum after adding the Illustrated Journal element because in the journal the idea of creating every day multimodal narratives expressed in the Journal and then verbally became central elements of the curriculum. In the rest of this chapter I refer to the entire curriculum, academic essays included, as a multimodal narrative autobiographical curriculum. However, this study does not take up the entire curriculum. It is grounded in the Illustrated Journal, as the Illustrated Journal encompasses everyday multimodal narratives and drafts of the major autobiographical essays. The journal, therefore, acts as a microcosm of the curriculum and a more manageable research topic to thoroughly explore in this dissertation. Important in understanding the AELP curricular choice to create a multimodal narrative autobiographical curriculum, centered around the Illustrated Journal, we now turn to the larger context of this study: The Arts University.
The Context of the Arts University (AU)

The Arts University is the only solely comprehensive arts university in the country offering Bachelors and Masters degrees in Visual Arts (from Fine Arts to Industrial Design), Theatre, Dance, and Music (Jazz Studies and Performance). Our student body is approximately 2000, mostly comprised of students from the Metropolitan (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware) area, with approximately 150 International Students. One essential issue to consider in this study is the ways in which community is created at the Arts University, particularly between American and International Students. Creating supportive global communities in Universities has been an ongoing mission for faculty and administrators, as well as an exciting topic of scholarly research.

In a University like The AU in Philadelphia, questions of creating community to forge a stronger intercultural ethos between International Students and American students and faculty is a pressing and complex issue and relates to students’ cultural adaptation. In addition, this relates to the idea of what it means to be both a legitimate narrator and how one becomes a legitimate narrator in any academic setting. At the Arts University, all students are in the position of narrating the works they produce and hence themselves. American students, brought up in our culture of self-indulgent story-telling of the self in all media, absolutely have a head-start at this game in comparison to their Korean, Chinese, and Saudi Arabian counterparts. Creating community is packed with issues when it comes to an Arts University because of its inherently and relentless personally competitive nature and the constant scrutinizing lens in
which the students are being evaluated by both faculty and students as part of the critique process, which oftentimes happens every single class period in some form or another. As students are being evaluated on an almost daily basis through critiques and in ways that are less overt, through facial expressions and small sometimes insidious comments, students sometimes experience significant emotional stress. Success—both academic and emotional well-being—is oftentimes dependent upon students having a strong sense of themselves and their own narratives: their reasons for spending hours behind a canvas, or in the dance and music studio. Without a firm sense of their emerging sense of identities as legitimate narrators of themselves as artists and why they are pursuing fields in which the day-to-day stress is considerably high, life at The Arts University can become very difficult. This stress is often compounded for International ESL students, mostly from Korea and China. While these students usually have a strong sense of why they are studying the arts, their ability to communicate that narrative in English can be limited by both the culture of the degree program coupled with the students’ perceived low English proficiency. Additionally, self-narration, autobiographical expression, is not emphasized in many Eastern countries the same ways in which it is valued in the States, and this obsessive look at the self is highlighted even more at an arts university, where a student’s purposes for “adding red” are sometimes examined for reasons as far back as to one’s childhood.

Oftentimes, in this context, classroom community and one’s legitimacy as an artist is created not just through the creation of dance pieces, visual art and
musical performance, but through the various “tellings” of the stories about the pieces created. Without international students being able to feel comfortable “performing” these narratives, as is the expectation and hope of faculty, International Students become disconnected from their peers and their faculty. As a teacher in our Master’s in Art Education program, I see the American students faces come alive when a Chinese student says, “When I was a student in China…” There is a hunger for Americans to learn from their international counterparts but something is happening to prevent this intercultural learning to be the norm, rather than the exception. While there is much work to be done on the faculty and American side of the equation to make more productive intercultural learning occur, this dissertation seeks to study how utilizing Illustrated Journals to create multimodal autobiographical narratives might help International Students feel like more confident and legitimate narrators of their perspectives and experiences with the possibility to shape more intercultural relationships. It is an accepted notion that one way community is created is through people sharing their stories, their unique perspectives and processes; therefore, it seems vital that International ESL students are able to perform this function in authentic and conscious ways when they begin their degree programs, and my hope is that the Illustrated Journal is one vehicle to help them in this endeavor.

Moreover, the Illustrated Journal and Multimodal Autobiography curriculum act as an important artistic genre that promotes stronger student artist identity within the “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) of the Arts University, while also
acting as an artistic product for the Arts University community to admire, reflect upon, and enhance perspectives of who International Students might be, harkening back to the Crafts student exhibition of both their artist books and their “exhibited” work.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Beyond the artistic validation of creating an Illustrated Journal and what this study’s main question investigates, is how the genre of the Illustrated Journal helps to facilitate social, academic, and intercultural identities both individually and communally within the AELP.

I arrived at this idea after close analysis of the Illustrated Journals revealed a link between the Illustrated Journal and students' writing and drawing inspirational narratives with resounding themes of resilience and triumph in the challenging circumstances of navigating a new culture and language. The study, therefore, looks closely at the journals to question how traditional cognitive perspectives/deficit perspectives on language limit students' communicative expressiveness and confidence; instead, this study engages the question of how utilizing multimodal informal evaluative genres like the Illustrated Journal, encourages students to access their full range of expressive modalities to be comfortable and confident narrators in their new culture and academic disciplines. In order to arrive at some conclusions to these questions, this study researches how ELL students in the Arts University design autobiographical narratives and what dominant themes emerge in these autobiographical narratives through a close analysis of their Illustrated Journals. This research
then engages the idea of how these themes shape and get shaped by the multimodal form of the journal. To this end, the research wonders about the additional possibilities for social identity that get created for International Students within and through this project to counter faculty stereotypes by positioning International Students as competent and legitimate narrators. Further, by looking at the affordances and limitations of the illustrated journal as a genre, we see an alternative more fleshed out narrative than the deficit perspective literature highlights; we experience a set of stories, often told around a triumphant resilient trope, and thus a different set of identity options emerges for International Students and importantly by them. Therefore, this study engages the following three research questions:

1. How do AELP students design their Illustrated Journals: what narratives get favored, what forms (art or writing) get favored?

2. What identity options do the narratives in the journals afford to their creators?

3. How do these identity options converge/diverge from the ways in which AELP students position themselves and are positioned by others at AU?

Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), and genre studies (Hyland 2015). Gao, Norton, Park, Pavlenko, and Scarino and Liddicoat view SLA within a socially situated view of literacy, which runs counter to more deficit perspectives that will be discussed. My research builds further on this view of socially situated literacies. The multimodal work of Kress and Leeuwen (2000) help to define both in concept and theory what I mean by multimodal and how the Illustrated Journal fits in with and builds on the work of multимodalities in literacy. Narrative and identity analysis (Bruner 1984, 1986; Norton 2010, 2012; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) is crucial to understanding the narratives the students tell and why they matter in building more nuanced identity options for AELP International Students. Finally, these theoretical concepts help to frame the Illustrated Journal as its own important genre for ELL students, and therefore, Hyland’s work on genre studies is important to build on when considering the possibilities of utilizing a multimodal genre such as an Illustrated Journal.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction and Academic Socialization Discourse

As I noted in chapter 1, this study grew out of my concern for how International Students at UA were being positioned by faculty and peers as “deficient communicators” and what I, as director of International Student Programs, could do to help International Students resist such deficit discourses. To this end, I developed an ESL curriculum that foregrounded a high-stakes genre at UA, the autobiographical narrative as it relates to artistic practice, and gave students the option of using a broader array of communicative resources to tell their stories than what might be traditionally available in an ESL classroom, thereby advocating for a more “meaningful literacy” curriculum (Street, 1995).

Studies of International Students in US university contexts, have long asked what factors shape students’ academic, social, and emotional experiences at particular institutions (Duff, 2007) and what institutions can do to support students more effectively. Given that many international students use English as an additional language and must grapple with a host of unfamiliar, and perhaps uncomfortable, cultural practices, much of this scholarship has focused on the process of what scholars call “academic discourse socialization.” Briefly, Duff (2007, p. 1.1) identifies four central questions traditionally underpinning work in this area:

1) How do newcomers to an academic culture, whether as native speakers or non-native speakers of the language(s) used, learn how to participate appropriately in the oral and written discourse and related practices
associated with that discourse community?

2) How are they explicitly or implicitly inducted or socialized into these local discursive practices (Duff 2008a)?

3) How does interaction with their peers, instructors, tutors, and others facilitate the process of gaining expertise in those practices?

4) How do the practices and norms themselves evolve over time and across practitioners, given the cultural and historical context of the local community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991)?

My work in examining AELP students’ Illustrated Journals is embedded in all these questions, as it considers the ways in which the Illustrated Journal helps students practice Duffy’s questions above.

Much like work within language socialization that has sought to uncover the features of academic genres (e.g., Hyland, etc.) in the service of teaching ELL students, my work looks at the illustrated journal as a genre and seeks to illuminate its contours. At the same time, my focus on the illustrated journals show how this very genre was shaped by the International Students use of it. To this end, I question how the use of the illustrated journal, as a particular genre, both enabled and constrained the kinds of stories the International Students in my study came to tell about themselves. In addition, my study also builds on research within the study of academic discourse socialization that challenges the notion of International Students as “outsiders” or “novices” who must docilely acquire the communicative practices that are valued by “insiders” or “oldtimers”
within particular institutional contexts. That is, by creating a pedagogical context in which international students would have access to a broader and more multi-modal array of communicative resources for the telling of their autobiographical narratives than what is typically available within an ELL classroom, I show how international students were able to construct rich and deeply nuanced portraits of themselves as artists through the usage of the Illustrated Journal and its connection to a medium with the vocabulary and cultural capital of the Language Socialization Discourse of the AU.

Both defining and thinking of how students design the genre of the Illustrated Journal thereby creating these nuanced portraits (that also happen to be the right genre for an Arts University) is at the core of this study. Hyland’s ideas around Genre studies as a communal action created by the group for a particular purpose in a unique context holds particular relevance for this study. In this research, the AELP ELL students are the group, the purpose is both enhanced self-expression and matriculation into the context which is an Arts University—a context that values artistic/autobiographical narratives (Hyland, p. 249). This view of genre is socially situated. It contends that genres are not necessarily fixed but alter depending on the group that is using them and for what purposes they are using them. It also leads to the idea that the students themselves are taking up creating the rules and variations of the Illustrated Journal. The students are creating the genre. This research is analyzing what students designed both individually and communally, based on teacher requirements, to define the contours of the Illustrated Journal genre. It therefore
positions SLD learners as students with a nuanced identity (Norton 2000) that continue to develop through a rich autobiographical curriculum having much to offer, as opposed to the negative deficit perspective framing.

In order to flesh out the ideas of how students acquire academic socialization discourse utilizing meaningful and empowering multimodal genres, this literature review will engage a conceptual framework which discusses theory on the following ideas: counter-deficit framing, multimodalities, language and identity, third-space theory of identity and investment and imagined communities, and Jerome Bruner’s notions around autobiography connected to theories on narrative and identity in Second Language Acquisition theory on identity.

**Counter Deficit-framing Perspective**

This study is situated among a body of research (Rymes 2014, Pavlenko 2004, 2006, 2007; Kramsch 2002; Norton 2013; Park 2013) that values both acknowledging and cultivating International ELL Students’ identity narratives as an integral part of Second Language Development. This framework offers a counter perspective to what Ryuko Kubota warns as the dangers of neoliberal English teaching framework that focuses on “measurable knowledge and skills…on the mastery of linguistic forms that can be objectively measured by language tests, while overlooking personal, cultural, and historical dimensions of the subjective experiences of language learning” (McNamara 2011 in Kubota, 2016). Analyzing the “personal, cultural, and historical” multimodal autobiographies using informal writing and art-making of SLD International
students matriculating into the University is this study’s main concern. However, some faculty across American universities take a more standard view of English and have very high expectations regarding English language proficiency, adapting a more deficit perspective. This perspective sees SLD student’s language as, “Deviations from prescribed linguistic standard…regarded as defective language use and have been judged negatively as lack of education or laziness” (p.12).

Zamel and Spack’s *Crossing the Curriculum* addresses this limited and negative view of language learning. The text focuses on both faculty integrating more positive realistic stances about English proficiency and provides strategies for developing increased English proficiency throughout the entire college curriculum. The text reiterates that faculty will always default to a deficit perspective if their expectations are that (1) all international students should have near perfect English and (2) if they do not, their perceived lack of English will be what measures their success (p. 13). Moving beyond this deficit perspective is the understanding that “multiplicity and complexity of experiences and backgrounds across students, we recognize that multilingual learners who are enrolled in college courses share in common the goal of performing competently across the curriculum even as their English skills are still developing” (Zamel and Spack; 2009, p.129).

This study then aligns with the research that values the “multiplicity and complexity” of English language learners and seeks to harness those characteristics as a dynamic part of the English language curriculum. The
research herein aligns with the thinking that building curriculum to help English language learners develop stronger identities, both academic and personal, as valued intercultural learners in a University community with an array of communicative repertories from which to draw as equally, if not more important, as building standard English language skills.

Betsy Rymes defines communicative repertoires as “the collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, or accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate” (Rymes, 2010, p. 23). In this study, Rymes’ ‘multiple communities’ are the city of Philadelphia, the AELP students and classrooms, the Arts University itself, with an eye toward a future community, that of the students’ academic discipline. Additionally, Rymes ‘literacy’ in this study expands to include autobiographical illustrated art and journal writing, what has been defined in the AELP as The Illustrated Journal. To this end, this dissertation aligns with researchers who value a multimodal approach to expanding the communicative repertoires and strengthening the academic and social identities of International ELL Students. Allowing international students to use broader and more multimodal array of resources for constructing their autobiographical narratives, encourages students, teachers and researchers to challenge notions of the deficit perspective regarding international ELL students and allows all to understand that meaningful stories can be told in English regardless of standard proficiency.

Much of traditional SLA research positions the ELL as deficient, even
when the researcher is working not to position the learner deficiently because the measuring stick has often been that of the L1 user. “In many cases, he or she has emerged rather gauntly as a bundle of dichotomous variables (e.g., +/- motivated) or, perhaps even more anemically, as a ‘deficient communicator struggling to overcome underdeveloped L2 competence, striving to reach the ‘target’ [L2] competence of an idealized native speaker’ (Firth and Wagner, 1997: 295-6). Much of SLA research and pedagogy of the past has situated itself on this notion of the target speaker. It is a difficult notion to dispel because not only has this idea been prevalent for decades among researchers and practitioners, many ELL students also hold the notion that they must talk like an American or Brit as true (Belz 2002; Kubota 2016; Gao 2014).

For this reason, much autobiographical research of students’ writing has fallen mostly on topics about their English language learning reflection. While this topic holds significant importance to researchers, this dissertation seeks to show that ELL students, utilizing an array of multimodal resources, are capable of telling even richer narratives about themselves and that the multimodal ways in which they relay their autobiographical narratives, from users with very “limited” English to the more advanced speaker, has much to add to the current research. In addition, the experience of creating multimodal autobiographies contributes greatly to international ELL students situating themselves in their new culture and the multiple communities in which they will be interacting verbally and artistically, for “the learner is not exclusively a deficient L2 communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence; instead, the learner is construed
as a creative and resourceful multi-competent language user who actively constructs his or her own unconventional meanings” (Belz, 2002, p. 43). This move towards communicative repertoires and the multi-competent language user develops the notion that when the learner’s fuller identities (beyond their language learning reflections) and communicative resources are engaged using genres that encourage multimodal ways of communicating, a more embodied, purposeful and confident stance towards the L2 is developed. This more dynamic stance is documented in Yihong Gao’s charting of SLD students from “faithful imitator” towards “Dialogical Communicator” (Gao, 2014).

Yihong Gao (2014) describes the ways in which researchers of SLA have viewed the linear movement of English language learners from “faithful imitator” to “legitimate speaker” to “playful creator” and finally towards Gao’s goal of the “dialogical communicator.” This linear movement shows the ways in which ELL’s have been positioned. The “faithful imitator” believes that speaking the target language perfectly will result in a cultural life “free of dilemmas and live a happy life hereafter” (p. 61). However, this view, espoused by students and practitioners alike, was associated with identity loss, conflict with the original culture, and emotional pain (Gao, 61). While this might seem like an antiquated belief, I have many students who write, “when I am fluent in English,…” everything will be better.

The “Faithful Imitator” became challenged in the 1980s by the idea of the “legitimate speaker”. In this view, language has multiple varieties and does not belong to one culture. The goal of the “legitimate speaker” “targets not at perfect
imitation, but at effective communication and identity expression” (62). It is with the idea of the “legitimate speaker” that deficit notions begin to get seriously challenged. For example, “accents for English were no longer seen as deficiencies, but as neutral or positive markers of group identity, and of equal and distinct participants in communication” (p. 63). This study examines how a multimodal autobiographical curriculum might help students see themselves as “legitimate communicators”.

Also important in countering the deficit perspective of ELLs with the notion of the “legitimate speaker” is the idea of “Kashru’s World Englishes” (p. 63). World Englishes refers to the English variety developed by nations colonized by the UK and politically and economically dominated by the US. It emphasizes the legitimacy of these varieties. World Englishes laid the groundwork for theories such as English as an International Language (EIL and most recently and applicable to this study ELF, or English as Langua Franca). ELF refers to using any variety of English to gain power needed or desired in any community. From the perspective of this study, the lingua franca is not only English, but also art. In addition, the English spoken is that which elucidates the student’s purposes behind creating the art as well their ability to constructively critique another student or professional artist’s work. In this context, the practice of ELF is incredibly social and individually motivated at the same time, while also being deeply personal and performative, as these critiques happen in front of peers and faculty. Therefore, establishing a sense of comfort in sharing artwork, personal history, and current challenges in the AELP is vital, and this research seeks to
further understand how that complex task is taken up through the lens of Gao’s “legitimate communicator” practice of creating multimodal narratives.

Embedded in the L2 research around legitimate narrators is the idea of “imagined communities” and “imagined identity” (Norton, 2001). Norton discusses that the ELL is invested in the language learning that is most associated with the learner’s imagined community, and it is therefore that identity that they work to cultivate as well. Importantly, imagining that students can even shape an English variety that works towards their imagined community is counter to deficit perspective. The challenge for the imagined community/identity in the context of this study is that there are quite a few communities to imagine: the current AELP community, the larger culture of the city of Philadelphia, the community of their home culture in the program, and the future “imagined community” of their academic disciplines. While this study does not aim to ascertain what it means to be a legitimate narrator in all these contexts, this study hopes to gain understanding about how they perceive their current “imagined community” and their future one in their academic disciplines through examining what emerges when students write and draw about their personal histories, current experiences in the AELP and Philadelphia, and future fears and desires in their academic disciplines. To conclude the description of the legitimate narrator as a counter idea to deficit perspectives and as a way to understand and analyze the AELP Illustrated Journal, is Gao’s invoking of Kramsch’s idea of “symbolic competence”. Kramsch (in Gao) describes symbolic competence as an ELLs “ability to shape the multilingual game in which one invests – the ability to
manipulate the conventional categories and societal norms of truthfulness, legitimacy, seriousness, originality—and to reframe human thought and action” (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p.667). This study examines what happens when ELL international student artists are given a multimodal array of resources (including but not limited to English) to frame and reframe the way they think about and tell their stories for both a current stake in the culture of the AELP and in their imagined communities of the near future.

The next shift in thinking about the ELL that Goa discusses and is useful for thinking about this research is that of “playful creator”. The playful creator is typically young, in their 20s and is steeped in pop and media culture on a globalized scale. “The playful creator lives not within a language but across languages; he or she constantly reinvents and reconstructs language or discourse by mixing different linguistic codes. Unconventional hybridization, fragmentation, and juxtaposition of linguistic and cultural elements …form distinct ways of self-expression” (p. 65). The most prevalent and influential study of this idea comes from Pennycock’s work on “transnational phenomena of hip-hop” (p. 65). He sees hip-hop as a reinvention and reclaiming of English used by what he terms “global English’ instead of world English” because he sees the World English paradigm as structured around the ideas of standard English deviations (p. 65). Therefore, Pennycock sees “Global English” as a reinvention of World English from the localized usage ground-up. This “Playful Creator’ holds important implications for this study because of its connection to creativity and using multiple resources to reinvent expression in English as a unique art form.
In fact, the academic communities to which these students will be migrating (visual art and performance) expect them to act as “playful creators” in their disciplines. This research seeks to understand how using informal writing and drawing in the illustrated journals accesses the idea of playful creator in their English communication competencies as well, while also giving them a linguistic and artistic platform (in the Illustrated Journal) to begin practice their discourse socialization in their academic disciplines. What distinguishes this study’s usage of the idea of “playful creator” is that the playful quality of using nonstandard English with illustrations to communicate personhood is a vehicle for the students to become legitimate narrators in artistic disciplines, which emphasize both the idea of “playful creator,” while at the same time being “legitimate narrators” as “playful creators”. Even terms associated with “playful creator” connect to art-making, “Along with ‘creativity’ tied with ‘hybridity’, concepts such as ‘performativity’ (Butler, 1997), transculturaltion or ‘transculturality’ (Pennycock, 2007)...have become popular replacing the more structuralist terms such as ‘bilingualism’”. The multiplication of new terminology creation shows the postmodernist attempts and eagerness to disform and reform ideologies in the entire field, which interestingly parallel the hip-hoppers' language or discourse (dis)invention" (p.66). How ‘creativity’, ‘hybridity’, and ‘performativity’ are taken up in the usage of the ELLs Illustrated Journal and thus their lives are important to consider in this study and also for students’ academic disciplines and post-academic lives as artists.

The final category of ELLs Gao discusses and that is relevant to this study
is that of the “dialogical communicator” (68). Gao’s “dialogical communicator” is “based on Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue and empirical data of intercultural communication” (Gao, 2010) (p.68). To further elucidate what we mean by intercultural perspectives as they relate to deficit perspectives and dialogical communicators, I turn to Liddicoat and Scarino. The structural view around language proves to be very limited when considering the possibilities of interculturality and the illustrated journal as envisioned in this study. Therefore, the idea that "Language education has adopted a view of language that privileges a prescriptive, standardized, written code enshrined in authoritative grammars, dictionaries, and style guides” (Liddicoat, 2005a) has the power to stifle confident language learning that builds from and into an intercultural perspective that Scarino and Liddicoat poetically describe with the questions: “who am I when I speak this language? How am I me when I speak this language?” (2014, p. 66). In this study, counter to the structural language approach and adaptive to the intercultural approach is the use of the illustrated journal. For as the research will discuss in Chapter 4, students expressing themselves using their English and art repertoires as they know them and are experiencing them at the moment of writing and then in dialogue, forwards the student practice of themselves as “legitimate narrators”. Further, the intercultural perspective questions the view of language as a "structural system, as language as fixed and finite" (p. 12). Likewise, this study explores how the students’ Illustrated Journals take up second language learning as something to be explored, played with, and then made individual and collective unique meanings
from. In this view, intercultural perspectives encourage Gao’s “playful creators” to reach towards her “dialogical communicators.”

The “dialogical communicator” rests on the notion of human beings as inherently dialogical with the need to be in dialogue with not only other people but also with ourselves. “In inter-subject communication dialogical communicators converse—speak and listen—on the basis of mutual respect…In intra-subject communication, i.e. the dialogue between different consciousness or ‘voices’, the dialogic communicator has a reflective sensitivity, ready to discern, expand, deepen, and reorganize various kinds of consciousness within him or herself. These two levels of dialogicality are dialectical and mutually facilitating” (p.68).

Understanding the dialogical communicator as both inter and intra personal is important for this research because the data in this research forwards that the AELP students, through the individual and collective use of the Illustrated Journal, begin their academic journeys as dialogical communicators. In addition, the research examines how the multimodal design of the journal is the vehicle for beginning this dialogical journey. Gao defines the dialogical communicator characteristics as “one who communicates on the basis of respect and reflection. Reflections and respect for cultures, languages and political systems, and most importantly for people as individuals and the good of communities. DC is the very essence of existence (Bhaktin) and its context is the post-modern world today full of conflict and constant miscommunication. The dialogical communicator wishes to be heard to increase love and respect among cultures…and relies on sustained personal commitment and gradual maturation in a nurtured
environment” (p. 69). This, while lofty view, places English Language Learners in positions where they are part of global community forging their way towards greater dialogue and peace through the practice of learning English in a nurturing community that values multiplicity, complexity and the tellings of student history and ideas in multimodal ways as part of an English language curriculum, rather than as negative problems in a university community. Using Gao ‘legitimate narrator’ ‘playful creator’ and ‘dialogical communicator’ framework for both understanding and analyzing this study’s data is a deliberate choice as Gao’s theories counter deficit perspective theories and promote more agentive, creative and dynamic perspectives of English Language Learners. The research in chapter 4 will delve into how the common themes written in the Illustrated Journal and then discussed as a larger group help to create the nurtured environment Gao calls for in achieving the goals of the dialogical communicator.

**Multimodalities**

Just as notions of communicative repertoires and Gao’s ‘dialogic communicator’ run counter to deficit perspectives, having students engage in multimodal learning also rejects the normative deficit perspective we often hear about in regards to ELL students. Central to this dissertation’s findings is that when students are given an array of resources, multimodalities, with which to communicate, they tend to move towards a more passionate stance regarding expression. This study works the idea that engaging the multimodality of art and illustration in a variety of ways enhances students’ communicative repertoires and increases their dialogic/intercultural communication skills.
In considering the importance of communicative resources and multimodalities, multimodality can be thought of as both a theory and a direct application. Kress and Vanleeuwen (2001) have been instrumental in my thinking about multimodalities ability to be both theory and practice. They write,

“Instead we move towards a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes, and in which it is quite possible for music to encode action, or images to encode emotion…One multi-skilled person, using one interface, one mode of physical manipulation can always ask themselves: ‘Shall I express this with sound or music?’ Shall I say this visually or verbally?’” (p. 4).

In this example Kress and Leeuwen call for “unified and unifying semiotics”, acknowledging that writing does not have precedence over the visual in a text, but rather they work together in unifying and making a more powerful text. Applying this theory to how students represent their own autobiographical narrative is very important in this research. For (1) as the Illustrated Journals tell us, the message that comes across to the reader is more nuanced and exciting because of the ways images and text work together and (2) it is precisely through utilizing multimodalities that creates the Illustrated Journal, not only as a physical genre (the book), but also as the research will discuss, as a living human interactive genre.

Kress and Leeuwen use four “strata” in further defining their multimodal theory of communication. Their theory on multimodal communication has important implications for this study's findings. Their strata inspired by Halliday's functional linguistics are ‘discourse,’ ‘design,’ ‘production,’ and ‘distribution’ (p. 8). In this study’s case, I will not focus on ‘distribution’ as the other three strata offer
more direct connection and significance to this study.

By ‘discourse’ Kress and Leeuwen first put forth a common view that discourses are “socially constructed knowledges” (p. 4), a view held by many sociolinguists (Pavlenko 2004, Kramsch, 2010) and one that reaches back to the discussion on academic discourse socialization theory. However, multimodalities goes further to say that discourses “have been developed in specific social contexts, and in ways which are appropriate to the interests of social actors in these contexts” (p. 4). For the AELP students using the Illustrated Journals, a particular discourse is created by what the teacher assigns and what the students create. As the findings section relays, the discourse that arises from this dialogic is one of a triumphant discourse. The teacher might say, “I want you to write about a time you struggled with English and how you are working to overcome that struggle.” The teacher supplies the theme but the students create the images and language, and reinforce the discourse around that theme through language (writing and talking) and drawing.

Kress and Leeuwen’s second strata discusses ‘design’ as the “conceptual side of expression...designs are uses of semiotic resources...to realise discourses in the context of a given communication situation” (p. 5). The design of AELP students’ spread of writing and illustrations in their Illustrated Journals, aids in their verbalization of complex ideas and the discourses of the class. Written expression of journal topics and open journal days as well are designed visually and then expressed verbally, fleshing out the class’ discourse. Further, Kress and Leeuwen’s research calls for something unique to be expressed in
that discourse through multimodality’s ‘design’ strata’s ability to "...add something new..." to have the power to... “realize communication which changes socially constructed knowledge into social (inter-) action.” (p. 5). The “socially constructed knowledge” students are building are around struggles living in Philadelphia and ways to overcome them, cultural sites in Philadelphia, and students’ histories and futures as musicians and artists. Kress and Leeuwen’s research helps elucidate how the stories they design and then interact with through verbal sharing are very uniquely their own and become more so because of their sharing/interaction aspect of the ‘design.’ In this way ‘design’ is studied as not only the design of image with text, but also the design of the verbal exchange that takes place because of the questions and comments that arise. In this way, the design around the journal helps to facilitate the discourse.

Finally, their strata of ‘production’ is defined as the “organization of the expression” (p. 6). In this study’s case, both the Illustrated Journal and the classroom discussion around it are the ‘production.’ "Production" refers to the way the semiotics of the materials (writing, talking and art-making) coalesce with design and discourse in the illustration journal as a product but also the performance of it to create, “unity between discourse, design, and production” (p. 6). This unity is expressed in the Illustration Journal, and it is also expressed in the classroom culture: the culture of sharing each other’s histories in creative ways creates joy, respect, and endurance for the hardships students face in their current situations, as well as in how they view their futures.

Very important for this research is Kress and Leeuwen’s stance that using
semiotics like informal writing and drawing as both unified and unifying processes create a stronger experience for students and a richer text for readers (p.8).

“The terms we have used (‘design,’ ‘production,’ ‘distribution’) might suggest that we are looking at multimodal communication only from the point of view of the producers [in this dissertation’s case, the producers are the students]. But this is not so. Our model applies equally to interpretation. Indeed, we define communication as only having taken place when there has been both articulation and interpretation. (In fact we might go one step further and say that communication depends on some ‘interpretive community’ having decided that some aspect of the world has been articulated in order to be interpreted.)” (p. 8).

Using Kress and leeuwen’s strata in considering the AELP students’ experiences with the journal expands notions of deficit perspectives and reinforces Goa’s ideas of language learning being in the service of creating movement from ‘legitimate narrators’, ‘playful creators’ to ‘dialogical communicators’. When Kress and Leeuwen’s “interpretation and articulation” through multimodal communication is applied to the ESL students in the AELP’s experiences using the Illustrated Journals semiotic resources of informal English and their L1 and illustrations, we can analyze how their own manipulation of ‘discourse,’ ‘design,’ and ‘production’ creates a product (the Illustrated Journal) and the articulation of that product (daily presentations in class) as something uniquely their own imbued with real expression and important messages, pointing to the important role of genre studies in this research. In my findings section, a discussion of the discourse, design, and product that students create through the semiotic resources of writing, art (and discussion) to create a genre that might be viewed as having the ability to create legitimate, playful and
dialogic communicators is examined.

Because the context of this research is an arts university, thinking about multimodalities as it relates to artists and art education helps to understand the context that both the students experience and which this research is situated. David Andrew’s article “An Aesthetic Language for Teaching and Learning Multimodality and Contemporary Art Practice” (2014) grounds Kress and Leeuwen’s multimodal discussion in the context of my research, the Arts University. Further Andrew’s connecting multimodality to both the artistic practice and classroom pedagogy bring together Kress and Leeuwen’s work on multimodalities with artistic and teaching practices. Andrew writes about the connection “that exists between the multimodal and the wide-ranging practices present in contemporary art, and, importantly, the pedagogical possibilities often present in these practices” (p. 174). The linkage important here is in the triad of multimodal-contemporary artists-pedagogical possibilities. When, as ESL teachers, we look to what artists are doing as models for pedagogical practice, we are harnessing more open possibilities in our students, countering deficit perspectives and prescriptive methodologies. In connecting contemporary artists with multimodality and classroom pedagogy, this research is asking the question of how we take Kress and Leeuwen’s second multimodal strata of ‘design’ to apply to not only books but also environments, where the practice of English language learning might too become an art. Here, creating a definition of ‘art’ for this research is important. As Andrew writes, looking at the idea of contemporary artists, multimodality and pedagogical possibilities,
“...my starting premise is that all educators and learners have the capacity to live, to work, and to play with aesthetic devices as a key component in their lives. This is offered as a possible counter to the narrow and stultifying curricular demands often made on educators and learners” (p. 175).

In adopting this counter-deficit stance we as educators and researchers see our pedagogy and our students as engaging in multimodal artistic practice. “The reciprocal relationship...of the artist’s sensibility and multimodality provides a possible basis for a form of teaching and learning that begins to offer insights into how classrooms and schools might be re-conceptualized for accessing and recognizing learner resources” (p. 176). This research asks how can a project like creating multimodal autobiographical narratives with ELL students at all stages of English language learning forward English language learning as a multimodal artistic practice, a counter practice to the deficit perspective. Further this research asks when this multimodal artistic practice is enacted how might it harness students’ communicative repertoires and intercultural communication skills in building more confident and resilient identities. Important to highlight for the context of this research, Andrews’ notion of the artistic practice being inherently multimodal mirrors the types of classroom environments many students in the AU AELP will enter as they move from the AELP to their art, music, dance and theatre studio classes. In this thinking, the Illustration Journal might help provide a foundational multimodal staging for their academic disciplines.

Andrew identifies the artist’s sensibilities as having "a 'less anxious
creativity” (after Appiah 1992:254); a propensity towards makeshiftness (after Schwabsky 2003); an inclination toward more ambulatory thinking and acting (Brenner & Andrew 2006); embodied reflection; playfulness; risk-taking in relation to rules; situated practices; multimodal voices; and the determination to make processes, and the results thereof, public” (Andrew, 2011, p. 175). For Andrew employing multimodal thinking to both artistic and pedagogical thought, works to enhance students’ expressionality and articulation. In this view, multimodal thinking helps SLA researchers and practitioners who strive towards dialogic communication, intercultural communication, and repertoire building in their students, mirroring Andrew’s concepts of artistic practice’s risk-taking, playfulness and more ambulatory thinking and acting.

Finally, to conclude the discussion on multimodalities, I will employ the following theoretical guidelines when analyzing the student’s illustrated journal, as the guidelines provide a connection between multimodality, artistic practice, and pedagogy. They will also be referenced when evaluating the illustrated journal as genre in the findings section. These modes of thinking are adapted by Andrew from the Wits Multiliteracies Group:

1. “Multimodal pedagogies seem to create the conditions for unpoliced zones or less-regulated spaces where these practices can be used in tandem with those of a more academic nature in teaching and learning” (archer 2006; Newfield et al. 2003).

2. Multimodal pedagogies seem to promote projects involving multiple
collaborative moments and processes (Brenner & Andrew 2006)

3. The recognition of how working across and in different modes affords learners (and educators) different opportunities to access, test, acquire, adapt, and make public skills, knowledge, and values, and in doing so, generates an agency that is about identity formation

4. The recognition of learner histories, experiences, and expertise as being crucial for the teaching and learning process

5. The intimate relationship that involves play, multimodality, and learner subjectivity being increasingly present

There is very little research done on using multimodal theories and pedagogies in the university ESL classroom. What does exist favors the ways in which students can build argumentative essays using web-based images and integrating design into their essays. There is no research on using hand-drawn illustrations, painting, and collage along with web based technologies. The question in much of this research tends to be more along the lines of what students favor in terms of mode. What the research has mostly found is that ESL students, even though challenged, still favor the linguistic mode. For instance D.S. Shin, T. Cimasko’s (2008) study, looked at the multimodal argumentative essays in an ESL College Composition class. They found,

“Multimodal composition was interpreted as a distraction from the primary goal of developing academic capability through written language. The students thus opted for the traditional and established centrality of linguistic design, resisted new modalities, and applied those new modalities that were used in ways that did not take full advantage of their rhetorical potential” (p.
In this study’s case the images were not seen as an add-on. What the research in this dissertation does, on the other hand, is to examine how required every-day multimodal communication, used in tandem with written English, enhances an SLD’s expressionality and relationship with the L2. This dissertation is not concerned with what the student favors, but rather how the student uses the required resources to design their multimodal narratives in their Illustrated Journals. Interesting to note as well is that most of the discussion around multimodalities are focused on the digital realm. In this research, we look almost entirely at hand written and drawn illustrated journals. We are capturing, I believe, a more embodied and physical multimodal expression. Although the students take their drawings and put them in a summarized digital form for their final presentations, “My Map,” that final piece represents only one product produced through The Illustrated Journal. Rather the writing and illustrations are done throughout the entire semester and discussed as an important part of every class. This research is much more concerned with the process of the multimedia and how accessing these artistic and linguistic modes creates more flexible, playful and confident English language users. As Shin and Cimasko note,

“In curriculum design and assessment for second language college composition classrooms, multimodal composing is best introduced at the beginning of a course and sustained until its conclusion, fully integrating it into the work of the course. When multimodal work is done in a sustained way, rather than as an “add-on” to non-multimodal texts, students will be more likely to value non-linguistic modes and will be better able to accept multimodal composition as a legitimate approach to re-creating the norms and values of the university” (p. 391).
What Shin and Cimasko add to the analysis section of my research is an elucidation of what happens when students use multimodal communication as an integrated part of a learning environment. How do they design this type of interaction and how does it further their identities? Multimodality and its connection with identity construction is an important consideration in the literature regarding the SLD student, as well as in this study.

Language and Identity

Embedded in the discussion on multimodalities and Gao’s descriptions of ELL’s are issues surrounding identity and language. For this study as well, theories around identity and language are influential. Challenging the deficit framing of ELL students is acknowledging the important idea that every act of language is an act of identity. To begin with, a discussion of identity in the field of Second Language Acquisition as it relates to this dissertation’s view on identity is necessary.

“SLA researchers who are interested in identity are interested not only in linguistic input and output in SLA, but in the relationship between the language learner and the larger social world. They question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual. These researchers have examined the diverse social, historical, and cultural contexts in which language learning takes place, and how learners negotiate and sometimes resist the diverse positions those contexts offer them” (Norton, 2012, p. 1).

Identity and language learning from this sociocultural perspective has much to do with the learner’s relationship to his/her larger social world and particular contexts, for instance, their academic communities. Norton’s fluid, context-laden,
definition of identity calls forth Gao’s idea about the importance of nurturing environments to facilitate ELLs as dialogical communicators. For the dialogical communicator intercultural relationships are key. Scarino and Liddicoat (2014) posit too that building intercultural identities in language learning contexts depend on relationships. “Language learning, because languages and cultures are always in complex interrelationships, is both an act of learning about the other and about the self and of the relationships that exist between self and other” (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2). Therefore Norton’s continued explanation of identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future" (1998, p.5) is important to acknowledge. Scarino and Liddicoat and Norton’s work, along with this study are concerned with looking at long-term identity as it relates to language, relationships and contexts: how past is influenced by present relationships in context and how these past and present perspectives fuse to cultivate an understanding of future possibilities. For this study’s purposes these explanations of identity are useful because we are analyzing how identity is cultivated based on students’ current life in the AELP and Philadelphia, their writing/rewriting of their histories, and their thinking of their future possibilities in the Arts University. This study embraces Norton’s definition of identity but at the same time asks how engaging a genre like the Illustrated Journal helps to further cultivate identity. It takes as accepted theory that identity and language are affected by the ways a student experiences their present context but goes further to suggest that identity can
also be influenced by the genre or the multimodal array of resources students are required to engage with in a particular context. In this study’s case, students are required to create multimodal autobiographical narratives, creating illustrated journals about past and present experiences and feelings associated with them as they relate to their future possibilities.

To conclude this section on identity and language Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) questions are revelatory: “Who am I when I use this language? How am I me when I use this language?” This study hopes to take this statement further by asking how might the process of learning a new language using a multimodal genre expand the question of “Who am I when I use this language? How am I me when I use this language?” This research analyzes how the Illustrated Journal facilitates ELLs posing these questions to themselves and in dialogue with others around these questions in their quests in “finding a personal intercultural style and identity” (2014, 23). By doing so, this study analyzes how the students via Illustrated Journal might be moving towards Gao’s “dialogical communicator”. This view of identity and Gao’s “dialogical communicator” emphasize that language learning is not just about the process of acquiring a new system of linguistic resources. Instead, language learning offers new resources for being in relationship with self and others, new resources for negotiating specific cultural contexts, and new possibilities for self-representation.

When I say self-representation, I am also referring to third-space theories of identity. This theory addresses the importance of a product, an art-form (novel, memoir, installation, hip-hop) or new language variety as a living byproduct of
new identity options embraced by students. When we think of third-space theory of identity Goa’s “playful creator” comes to mind. For the “playful creator” is recreating English as a mash-up that corresponds to her/his language and culture of origin, and importantly is creating something new.

My understanding of third-space theory of identity is influenced by sociolinguists Pavlenko and Blackledge’s text *Negotiating Identities in Multilingual Contexts* (2004). To define third-space theory Pavlenko and Blackledge invoke Homi Bhabha who, in their perspective, see third-space as the way in which multilingual and multicultural individuals create new identity options in the face of post-structuralism’s multiplicity and struggle for cultural capital (Bourdieu in Pavlenko, A. and Blackledge, A., 2004) under the invisible domination of dominant political ideologies and dominant languages in a given society. For Bhabha, third-space theory is discussed as “The recognition of the emerging nature of identity, and of identity fragmentation, de-centering, multiplicity, and shifts, oftentimes exacerbated by transnational migration.” Further, these conditions, “led poststructuralist philosophers to posit the notion of hybridity as the ‘third-space’ that enables the appearance of new and alternative identity options” (Bhabha in Pavlenko, A, and Blackledge, A., 2004, p. 11). Importantly, third-space theory in this framework is concerned with imaginative productions of hybrid identity, in contrast to these identities being imposed by the dominant ideology or language (Hall in Pavlenko, A, and Blackledge, A., 2004) through mere imitation of language and culture (Gao’s faithful imitator comes to mind here). In the University context, this might be the evaluative formal academic
For Pavlenko, Blackledge and Bhabba (in Pavelenko and Blackledge, 2004) the process of acquiring this third space of identity is often aided by new linguistic terms, by visual art, and by literary narratives, which together create new practices of self-representation and thus new "imagined communities" (Hall in Pavelenko, A, and Blackledge, A., 2004). Another way in which third-space is imagined into a real context is through identity narratives. These narratives “offer unique means of resolving tension between fragmented, decentered shifting, (re) constructing links between past, present, and future and imposing coherence. New narratives and images offer a way to impose an imaginary coherence on the appearance of dispersal and fragmentation” (Hall in Pavelenko, A, and Blackledge, A., 2004, p. 22).

This way of thinking imparts more agency on the part of individuals in terms of identity and language acquisition. The view becomes, “dynamic” in that it emphasizes the “production of selves which then has influence over a hegemonic society…valorizing new modes of being and belonging” (Pavlenko, A, and Blackledge, A., 2004, p.22). Third-space being accompanied by narrative and imaginative creations of art hold particular importance for this study. Studying the Illustrated Journal, the students’ multimodal narratives, as art emphasizes that even in the face of limited English proficiency, their stories matter and represent their emerging identities as international student artists. Like Pavlenko and Blackledge, this dissertation forwards not just the notion that a “narrative can claim a social space and meaning in all the discursiveness” (23), but also expands the idea in examining what happens when students use an array of multimodal resources in the creation of autobiographical narrative.
Third-space theory helps elucidate that just because a person enters a new culture and takes an ESL class does not mean a hybrid identity is created. It is the ardent creation of a narrative product showing the fusion of past and present cultural and personal identities along with future possibilities, in this case the Illustrated Journal, that forwards the fusion and growth of new identity options, of third-spaces. This idea of product designed by students using multimodal array of resources calls to mind Kress and Leeuwen’s theory on multimodality. Moreover, the Illustrated Journal as a form of multimodal narrative product as representative of third-space connects also with Gao’s “playful creator”. However, in this version of hybridity/third-space, the narrative created is also used as a medium for intercultural conversation. It is here that Gao’s “legitimate narrator” comes into play as well. The product representative of third-space acts as a space of art would: as a space for creator and participator to exchange ideas and reflect both with the self and with others. This idea corresponds with Gao’s “Dialogic Communicator” that argues for intercultural communication to be about forwarding more reflective intercultural relationships. Likewise, for third-space theorists, it is the narrative product that others can reflect upon that begin to change the social discourse around a particular minority group, in this study’s case international ESL students at the Arts University.

In its loftiest taking up third-space theory as it connects to Gao’s “playful creator” and “dialogical communicator” this dissertation asks how might the illustrated journals act as a collective creative multimodal (student-to-student and
then student-to-faculty/university) imagining for a more just and robust world, valuing multiplicity and interculturality, activating stronger reflection and relationships individually and communally.

**Third-Space Theory of Identity and “Investment and “Imagined Communities”**

Important to the idea of achieving third-space both as an internal construct and through a created product, are two ideas that are current in SLA and identity research and have been researched internationally quite extensively. Those are the ideas of “investment” (Arkoudis & Davison, 2008; Bordieu 1977, 1984, 1991; McKay and Wong 1996; Skilton-Sylvester 2002; DeCosta 2010a; Cummins 2006) and “imagined communities” (Hall in Pavlenko, 2004; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Investment for SLA research can be defined as, “a way to understand learners’ variable desires to engage in social interaction and community practices. Inspired by the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1991), it signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. If learners ‘invest’ in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money), which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power” (Norton, 2012, p. 6).

For this study, this means, that students must feel like their goals for English language learning (being successfully academically and socially in their
art and music programs) are congruent with the practices of the classroom. Therefore, it is vital that the practices and pedagogy in a pre-matriculation program are steadfast in their curricular structure to have students invested in this way. Important also in the idea of investment is that it allows researchers and practitioners to move beyond the notion that students who are not engaged in the ESL program are unmotivated (Norton, 2010). The idea of motivation is a psychological construct and importantly in this current ideology in SLA research, investment is a sociocultural construct. For investment is dependent on students' relationships to peers and faculty and connected to practices in the classroom being aligned with what students are hoping to gain and how they imagine themselves to be in the future.

This idea of connecting a student’s ELL experience to their future ideas of themselves in their degree programs is vital and brings us to the next important theoretical concept that has gained widespread international attention for SLA researchers, that of imagined communities/imagined identities (Hall in Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, Norton 2012).

“An extension of interest in identity and investment concerns the imagined communities that language learners aspire to when they learn a language (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (Norton, 2012, p.6).

For this study, I have found that students are imagining three diverse communities: (1) the international student population of the AELP (2) the people and norms of the city of Philadelphia, representing fears and hopes of adapting
to urban American culture, and (3) their communities of their future degree programs. Herein we study the ways AELP students address these 3 imagined identities/communities through the design and dialogue of their multimodal autobiographical narratives. To this end,

“imagined communities/identities can be further thought of as, “in many language classrooms, the target language community may be…a community of the imagination, a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future. These ideas, inspired also by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), have proved generative in diverse research sites. I have argued that an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language can be understood within this context” (Norton, 2010, p.4).

To build on third-space theory of identity and investment, imagined identities and communities should be explored by ELL teachers and students in very conscious and purposeful ways, but at the same time being open enough to allow for a range of imagined identities to be explored and questioned. For this research, the space where imagined identity/community work is researched is through The Illustrated Journal. For in the journal, among other topics of their choice, students are asked to narrate their past influences and current influences as artist and musicians and to connect them to their future academic and social goals in their degree programs through informal multimodalities: writing, drawing, collage, and painting. The imagined identities/communities work of Norton and her colleagues (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) seeks to better understand,

“the language learner as a participating social agent, and...agentive sense of self that is linked, in narratives, to larger socio-cultural and historical social practices...particularly in the effects of migration on language

This study is exploring how International ESL Students develop a third-space product, The Illustrated Journal, and how the design of this product is affected by students’ investment and imagined identity/communities. Therefore through the very act of this research I, along with Norton and her colleagues, “advocate that classroom communities be fostered wherein a range of narrative identities, as sense-making practices, are respectfully harnessed as resources for learners of diverse linguistic histories” (Norton, 2012, p.7). This means that narrative is a key pedagogical tool for gaining investment by students because narrative, and in particular autobiographical narrative, can aid in students’ explorations of their imagined identities/communities with the ability for them to create productive third-spaces of identity which might help them be more agentive in the academic and social realms of their degree programs. This study forwards, as Norton and her colleagues do, that,

“In this spirit, we take the position that one of the most important features for language researchers, teachers and schools in the twenty-first century is...to link language learner stories and imagined identities. Drawing on Bruner’s work, the goal of such an endeavor is not only to realize the potential of individuals’ “actual minds” but to create both for individuals and for society, more socially just and responsive ‘possible worlds’” (Norton, 2012, p.12).

**Bruner and Autobiography, Narrative and Identity in Connection with SLA theory on Identity (Norton and Pavlenko)**

Similarly Jerome Bruner’s research (1984, 1986, 1990) around autobiography, narrative, and identity has been very influential to this study. To begin with, I will consciously align Bruner’s take on identity and narrative to
Norton’s (2000) post-structuralist and feminist socially situated theory on identity and language in SLA. Norton contends that,

“in the field of language education, ‘identity’ is not a fixed construct but must be understood with respect to a learner’s relationship to the broader social, political and economic world. In this perspective, identities, which are frequently sites of struggle, change across time and space, and are reproduced in situated social interactions” (Norton, 2012, p. 195).

Her view is consistent with Bruner’s construct of a self that is “distributed” (Bruner, 1990, p. 107), a “Self [that] can be seen as a product of the situation in which it operates” (p. 109). Helpful then, and in what follows, are the ideas that Bruner uses to describe narratives and their possibilities, with connections to Norton and other SLA theorists regarding identity.

For Bruner, autobiographical narrative “affirms personhood” (1984, p. 29). As Bruner asserts, “The act of telling, narrating our histories, helps affirm personhood at a particular stage in one’s life”, and for most international ESL students in American universities “selfhood is a place of tremendous flux” (1984, p. 29). While Jerome Bruner does not write specifically about ELL students, his psychological perspective on narrative and identity has been particularly helpful in elucidating autobiographical narrative’s role in cultivating identity in SLD students. Much of the literature discussed on identity in previous sections focuses on the need for International ELL students in a pre-matriculation ESL program to cultivate one's identity through reflection on past, present, and future experiences. In understanding what “affirming personhood through autobiographical narrative,” means in SLA theory, we situate this idea of
personhood as being challenged with the possibility for additional identity options and transformation in any new community through using all communicative resources available, not just English. In this framework, students affirm their “selfhood” through selfhood in various communities of practice—both expanding their notion of personhood and (re) affirming it as well. This emphasis on the social, performative necessity of narrative, much of the sociocultural narrative and identity research in SLA (Scarino and Liddicoat 2013; Kramsch 2010; Norton 2012; Pavlenko 2004) contends, is essential for embodying the English language learning experience.

In addition to “affirming personhood”, autobiographical narrative encourages a theory of growth or transformation (1986). Importantly, Bruner (1986) tells us, “In autobiography, we set forth a view of what we call our Self and its doings, reflections, thoughts, and place in the world” (p. 27). The world of the ESL international student is shifting, unsettled; the telling of their lives in their second language L2 along with their histories works to situate their place in this new life they are cultivating. For Bruner, and important for our ELL students’ autobiographical multimodal journals and this research, is the notion that autobiography helps situate students’ places in their new lives, establishing their, as Bruner (1986) tells us, "theory of growth or transformation" (p. 70). Having a sense of firm personhood and a theory of transformation and growth are especially important for students like those in the AU who are matriculating into very competitive personal and academic spaces such as art and music.

Autobiographical narrative, for Bruner, is importantly “not only about the
present but is busily about the past as well” (p. 71). For International ESL students, this seems especially true. Marrying their histories with their present lives as international student artists using an additional language in a new culture is important for establishing a more complete sense of self in their new homes. Textually, artistically, and verbally expressing their histories fused with their present perspectives in their new language is also an act that helps bridge their linguistic and personal past to their present. Using multimodal resources as additional communicative repertoires (art, Illustrated Journal, music), along with English, for expression (Rymes, 2013), builds on student identities as Goa’s “playful creators” and “legitimate narrators” (2014).

For Bruner, Autobiographical narratives should tell exceptional stories and articulate what makes a student unique. Bruner establishes that, "Narrative must also answer the question ‘Why Tell’ it must also endow the telling with exceptionality” (p.70). Having students recognize and verbalize that their choice to study the arts in the US is indeed exceptional is a way for students to move into their academic fields with stronger purpose and confidence. Recognizing and verbalizing their exceptionality in English speaks to the ways in which Pavlenko, Blackledge, and Hall (2004) have framed Bourdieu’s idea of gaining cultural capital. Instead of framing the International ESL student artists under the “domination” of English language and cultural hegemony at the University, this study suggests using multimodal narrative autobiography to have students be aware and able to articulate their exceptionality. Being conscious that the students have left home and families, language--everything that is comfortable to
make a life here in Philadelphia is exceptional. That these students are choosing careers as artists and musicians – atypical career choices in their countries (and choices that most of their parents did not support), is also rather exceptional. In Bruner’s framework their very presence at the AU lends them exceptionality. What this study is concerned with, however, is how they design (not just textually and artistically, but verbally as well) their Illustrated Journals to reflect this exceptionality, their uniqueness and what they have to bring to their degree programs.

The importance of students developing the ability to narrate that which is unique and exceptional in their current educational context of the AU also speaks to Bruner’s idea of “intentional states” (Bruner, 1984, p.79). Students having the communicative repertoires to express their complex realities multimodaly (as this study forwards) and with intention, makes their life, and the life of the classroom and University, more culturally rich and nuanced. Intentional articulation of what makes International Student artists exceptional and unique in their artistic and academic contexts, regardless of having advanced English proficiency, has the power to move faculty away from deficit perspectives and into a more nuanced view of International Students as intentional unique individuals

Finally, Bruner’s perspective that autobiographical narratives are conscious narrations about turning points and their significance in the ELLs life will be discussed. By “Turning Points” Bruner means

"episodes in which, as if to understand the power of intentional states, the narrator attributes a crucial change or stance…to a belief, a conviction, a thought. This I see as crucial to the effort to individualize a life” (p. 85).
Through the construction and sharing of their narratives these “turning points” are “devices to further distinguish what is ordinary and expectable from that which is idiosyncratic and quintessentially agentive” (Bruner, p.73).

ESL students’ study in Philadelphia at an American university represents a turning point in their lives--totally "idiosyncratic and agentive". This research is concerned with the ways in which a multimodal autobiographical narrative curriculum foster Bruner’s narratorial consciousness through the textual and verbal creation of students Illustrated Journals. While there is a focus on the self, it is the self’s “narratorial consciousness” about “turning points” in fusing new culture and languages with one’s own cultural and linguistic history in imagining future possibilities that imbues the story with Bruner’s “exceptionality.” However, as has been discussed with Norton’s ideas of investment and imagined communities, students having the desire or investment to “self-translate” and perform these identities (thus integrating them) is vital and is where the genre of the Illustrated Journal hopefully does its work in student investment towards their imagined communities.

To this end, a challenge in creating multimodal autobiographical narratives with ELL students pertains to educational styles and values between the US and many Asian countries of my students (Gao 2014, Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Like the literature discusses, many students talk to me about never really seeing themselves as individual in their schools in China and Korea, making an autobiographical curriculum particularly challenging. They were staunchly part of a collective group, singled out mostly by test scores. International ELL students’
lack of individualizing experience and selfhood within an educational context can put them at a disadvantage at The Arts University because of the value the US, and the AU, places on people’s stories, their, as Pavlenko terms “self-translation” (2000, p.133). For Pavlenko self-translation, “refers to the reinterpretation of one’s subjectivities in order to position oneself in new communities of practice and to ‘mean’ in the new environment” (p.133). Adding this sociocultural Second Language Acquisition lens to Bruner’s ideas expands autobiographical narrative as a method and ideology for not only for translating self but also holds that self is always translated in the social practice of particular communities. In this study, I explore how ELLs engaging in multimodal autobiography begin to establish their sense of “self-translation” in the effort to unify past, present and future possibilities within a group of other International Students and in the context of the Arts University and Philadelphia. Importantly, this self-translation/narratorial consciousness is practiced through the individual and also shaped through communal sharing and its influence on “(re)construction of identity” (p.133). For Pavlenko the “(re)construction” of identity is situated within a language socialization perspective that views second language learning as an “essentially ‘social process’, making the relationship between the learner and the learning context dynamic and constantly changing” (p. 133). Additionally, it is the performative aspect of Bruner’s and Pavlenko’s ideas that bolster their impact on learning. For instance Anna De Fina writes about narratives as performative social practice.

“Narratives are seen by many (e.g. Schiffrin, 1996; De Fina, 2003;
Georgakopoulou, 2007) as an important locus for the articulation of identities because they afford tellers an occasion to present themselves as actors in social worlds while at the same time negotiating their present self with other interactants” (De Fina, 2010, p.269).

This is important for this study because the research examines what happens when students become agentive through the telling of their autobiographical narratives which are derived from their interactions with their new cultures, reflections on the cultures from which they came, and in dialogue with other international students.

Pavelenko’s “self-translation and (re)construction of identity combined with Bruner’s “affirming personhood/theory of growth”; “the present is busily about the past”, “expressing exceptionality”; “turning points”; “intentional states”; and “narratorial consciousness” unify qualities about narrative autobiography with the awareness that narrative autobiography is always and, in the case of ELL students and SLA research, a social process. It is through the practice of creating and performative sharing of the Illustrated Journal, the research hopes to show, that international ELL students begin to self-translate and (re) construct identities as intercultural, dynamic, and exceptional, rather than as deficit learners.

This dissertation works to show that through creating and sharing multimodal autobiographical narratives about their present lives and future possibilities fused with their histories, the international AELP students become agentive (Bruner, Norton, Pavlenko): agents, or conscious narrators/actors, of hybrid identities that foster academic, personal, and artistic success.

In order for Bruner’s autobiographical narrative ideas to be firmly rooted in
student practice, much needs to occur in ELL communities and larger contexts, like the University. Two of the most important constructs to consider that are greatly researched in contemporary SLA studies on identity and which speak to this study’s exploration of using multimodal narrative autobiographies are “investment” and “imagined communities/imagined identities”.

Important to my understanding of how to use narrative/autobiography in curriculum and in my research methodology is Pavlenko’s discussion of why and within what frames of thinking might these narratives be examined. As Pavlenko establishes “(a) cognitive approaches that treat autobiographies as meaning-making systems and thus as evidence of how people understand things (Bruner 1987; Linde 1993), (b) textual approaches that see them as a creative interplay of a variety of voices and discourses, and thus as evidence of larger social and cultural influences on human cognition and self-presentation (Bakhtin 1981; Fairclough 1995, 2003), and (c) discursive approaches that view them as interaction-oriented productions, and thus as evidence of the co-constructed nature of our life storytelling (Edwards 1997)” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 171).

Pavlenko’s framework is a useful way of analyzing the narrative autobiographies in Chapter 4, as it describes possible movements in the journal from cognitive to textual and to discursive. In addition to Pavlenko’s socio-cultural lens, I have also discussed Gao’s framework using the constructs of legitimate communicator, playful creator and dialogical communicator; Kress & Leeuwen’s multimodal framework in conjunction with the Wit Literacies Group framework around multimodalities as evoked by Andrews; third-space theory of identity in
connection to Norton’s view on identity as post-structuralist with a focus on “investment” and “imagined identities”; and Bruner and Pavlenko’s frameworks for selfhood and socially situated autobiography. These constructs help us to situate the Illustrated Journal in a body of research that forwards identity development as an important area of SLA pedagogy.

One key question about cultivating identity in the ESL classroom is through what materials might this be best explored. The answer to that lies, for one, in the context of the classroom. Therefore, the type of genres teachers choose to employ has a great deal of significance in how issues around investment, identity, and language learning are taken up by SLA students in classrooms. Therefore, to conclude this study, I now turn to a brief discussion on Ken Hyland’s views on Genre.

**Genre**

First, I will briefly describe Gloria Park’s Cultural and Linguistic Autobiography project (2011) because its usage of the genre of essay writing and a focus on language learning for the autobiographies mirrors many SLA studies on autobiography and language learning and is an example of how the genre of The Illustrated Journal adds to the existing literature on SLA and identity and narrative. While Parks’ study is incredibly useful and generative, I argue that this research, because of The Illustrated Journal’s focus on multimodalities and autobiographical subject matter not necessarily related to language, enlarges the body of research around SLA, Identity and Narrative. In Parks’ adult ESL class, she developed a curriculum centered around adults creating cultural and
linguistic autobiographies. She says her purposes were twofold:

“(1) to increase the adult ELLs’ confidence level and abilities in using English to write in academic contexts and (2) to heighten awareness of the power that comes with orally and textually sharing our immigrant stories and the similarities in experiences shared, which will shape our identities within and beyond academic and professional communities of practice” (Park, 2011, p.157).

Park found that the women who identified with their target community felt the strongest connection to their English practice, but not for those whose goals in their target community were not addressed linguistically in the classroom. While these women were engaged in the important study of autobiography, this dissertation study adds to Park’s findings because it uses textual, oral, and multi-modal (art-making) resources in the telling of international student autobiographical narratives and allows for the subject matter to be more open, perhaps aligning with their target or imagined community. This is important. For the Arts AELP students, they are living their ESL studies in the context of their target community, and above all, the curriculum is structured around their target language community. Because this study’s context is the target community for the students, utilizing a genre that has cultural capital within that target community, this study allows SLA practitioners and researches the opportunity to understand the ways in which multimodal narrative curricula can be utilized in an ESL curriculum. Additionally, this study’s content is broader than language learning. While vital and focused, there is reductionist and possibly a deficit perspective happening when we just ask students to focus on their English as their autobiographical narrative, as if their English language learning is what
makes up their whole identity.

What my research adds to this perspective is in considering the content of the Illustrated Journal: this study asks students to not only draw on their cultural and linguistic experiences to create their narratives, it generates material from allowing them to bring forth what is important, while also asking specifically about their pasts as artists and musicians. This opens the conversation, making their position as language learners in a new culture only part of their identity. The other way the genre of the Illustrated Journal differs from language learning autobiographies of the past in SLA research is that this study uses multimodal narrative autobiographies as a genre and works to understand what happens when we allow students to use a multiple array of resources for written, artistic and verbal reflection in autobiography. To lend the discussion on genre more depth and focus, we turn to Ken Hyland’s work. Hyland reminds us that Genre writing, particularly as explored by Halliday, is a socially situated approach whereby all members of the community work towards the goals of that genre. Basically, as Hyland discusses (2015),

“Halliday’s theory systematically links language to its contexts of use, studying how language varies from one context to another and, within that variation, the underlying patterns that organize texts so they are culturally and socially recognized as performing functions” (Hyland, p. 248).

One aim of this study is to determine what functions help to designate the Illustrated Journal as a genre. Hyland’s ideas around Genre studies as a comunal action, not just a fixed idea, also inform how this study takes up genre.

“The concept draws attention to the idea that we communicate as members of social groups, each with its own norms, categorizations, sets of
conventions, and ways of doing things. Essentially, the idea of community draws together key aspects of context that are crucial to the production and interpretation of spoken and written discourse: knowledge of a cultural and interpersonal situation, knowledge of interlocutors, knowledge of the world, and knowledge of texts and conventions for saying things” (Hyland, p. 249).

This view of genre is socially situated. It contends that genres are not necessarily fixed but alter depending on the group that is using them and for what purposes they are using them. It also leads to the idea that the students themselves are taking up creating the rules and variations of the Illustrated Journal. The students are creating the genre. This research is analyzing what students designed both individually and communally, based on teacher requirements, to define the contours of the Illustrated Journal genre.

The theoretical contours of the genre of the AU Illustrated Journal have been discussed in this chapter and will be the frameworks for the data analysis in Chapter 4. In summary, Chapter Four’s data analysis will ask how does the genre of the Illustrated Journal (1) express multimodal thinking and an embrace of additional communicative resources and repertoires? (2) cultivate identity as hybrid, in connection with third-space identity options and products, considering students’ “investment” and imagined identities/communities? (3) forward intercultural identities, and (4) foster qualities of Bruner’s “affirming personhood/theory of growth”; “the present is busily about the past”, “expressing exceptionality”; “turning points”; “intentional states”; and “narratorial consciousness” in conjunction with Pavlenko’s socially constructed perspective that narrative autobiography is about “self-translation and (re)construction of identity”? Finally, utilizing Hyland’s perspective on Genre Studies, the study’s
conclusion (Chapter 5) will discuss the ways in which these characteristics form the genre of The Illustrated Journal, what the affordances and limitations of utilizing a multimodal autobiographical narrative curriculum might be, and the implications for students, teachers and SLA researchers.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Context

When considering context in this dissertation it is important to review (1) the Arts University and (2) The Arts English Language Program (AELP) with a focus on the ways in which the AELP fits into the structures and needs of the AU, as discussed in Chapter One. In my thinking about the AELP, and its ardent focus on the visual and performing arts in readings and student writing, dominantly in the AELP Illustrated Journal, it is important to note that the program arose out of both (1) faculty concern regarding the students’ challenges in expressing their past and present motivations for their work, along with being able to contribute to thoughts and critiques of other students’ work and (2) the recognition that designing an ESL curriculum around the arts with part of its focus being The Illustrated Journal would be an exciting endeavor and one that matched my career goals and academic interests. I therefore decided to build my dissertation research around the AELP program and, more precisely, its main tool used for student narrative autobiographical expression, the AELP Illustrated Journal.

The Arts University AELP is the site in which my study takes place. The University is a comprehensive arts university offering Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in all fine arts fields, as well as Graphic Design, Industrial Design, and Illustration. Our College of Performing Arts offers Bachelors and Masters degrees in Music Performance (Jazz Studies), Acting, Theatre Technology and Dance.

The students in the AELP are international students from South Korea.
(75%), China (15%), and other countries, such as Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia (10%) seeking Bachelor and Master's of Fine Arts degrees at The Arts University. Most students have been conditionally admitted to the university and need to fulfill their English requirement. Conditionally admitted students are students who have scored at acceptable levels on their portfolio or audition and their High School or college GPAs, but do not have the required English test scores to be admitted into their degree programs. Students are usually in AELP for one to two semesters before matriculating into their degree programs. Typically, we have 5-20 students enrolled in AELP per semester. At the Arts University (AU) we currently have approximately 150 International Students.

**Faculty Concerns and ESLI Curriculum**

The need for an Arts University AELP developed because of faculty concerns that ELL students were not able to express ideas adequately about their art and music pieces or the work of their peers after either entering AU with the required TOEFL or IELTS score or after attending off-campus English as a Second Language programs (ESL). The dialogic fertilization of communal conversation about art between faculty to student and student to student is an important educational goal of the University. Further, students' abilities to clearly discuss and respond to one's process and product, as well as that of other artists, established, iconic, or student-artists, is also a highly valued learning outcome. However, there are no measurable benchmarks that analyze how this type of talk evolves or is expected to mature over the course of a student's academic program, making it a somewhat elusive goal for all student artists, but
even more so for international students. In constructing the AELP curriculum, I thought about this issue and how the ELP might begin preparing students for these kinds of expectations. The utilization of the Illustrated Journal I thought might address this issue at least at the start of students’ academic careers. In designing curriculum that would help students embrace and be ready to discuss their lives as International Student Artists in an academic classroom, I imagined the following as extremely vital to this practice and is an important part of my data collection in this study: 1) daily illustrated journaling about their experiences in Philadelphia reflecting on (a) everyday life using a new language and in a new culture and city, Philadelphia, (b) weekly visits to museums, other artistic/cultural sites and performances c) prompts about reflecting on language use d) prompts about students’ autobiographical experiences and influences as artists in their home countries as rough illustrated journals for academic autobiographies.

If students could leave the AELP being able to discuss their experiences as International Student artists in Philadelphia, as well as discuss their backgrounds and influences as artists from their home countries, perhaps they would be able to begin their academic experiences anchored to both their histories as artists and to what it means to be International Student artists in their present lives, with future artistic aspirations in this new culture. If AELP students could exchange ideas in this vein, the Arts University AELP students would be able to begin engaging in the types of discourse for which faculty were hoping.

Further, I had a strong belief, based on my teaching of other pre-academic ESL classes, that students’ talk revolved around concerns about feeling safe and
comfortable in their new environments. While this is so, I also knew that I could not control all the environments in which they were headed. Therefore, part of my objective became to not be so focused on preparation for everything they might encounter academically, but rather for centering themselves in where they were, having them have an appreciation and sense of excitement in their new homes and developing a program that, while having other academic reading and writing elements, had this sense of self and place exploration at its core: student identity as the core principle of the AELP.

**Context and Research Design**

In this section I work to define the “what” of this study: The Illustrated Journal. In considering what this medium is, I will also be discussing my motivation for researching how ESL International Students take up the design of the Illustrated Journal. As a teacher and creative writer, I understood that creating safe open opportunities for risk-taking with art and language was vital. In creating the curriculum of the Illustrated Journal, as well as considering the journals as my primary source of data for this study, I also reflected on my experiences with writing as a first-generation college student. The positive influence of daily, uninhibited writing, capturing one’s thoughts on paper, helped me feel comfortable with the medium of more structured academic writing. Simply getting used to the act of writing every day helped me move towards academic writing with a more open and confident frame of mind. In college, I first started keeping a journal. I used a black hard-covered sketch book: the same type of journal I give my current students. I was not keeping a journal just to sift
through and record thoughts, I was writing in a journal so that I could feel more comfortable with the convention of daily writing. I thought that if I get comfortable with expressing even my own thoughts about just my everyday life in writing, it would be easier to write academically. It was a practice for me: the more I did it, the better I would become. It is this foundational experience with writing that has led me to empathize with ESL students and enact a curriculum that had uninhibited student-centered writing at its core. This idea is expressed in Casanave’s book *Journal Writing in Second Language Education*. Casanave discusses the importance and the complexities of journal writing for ESL students, but there are certain truths she holds as real possibilities when journal writing is enacted productively.

In general journal writing in language learning, teaching, and research as well as in subject matter classes has personal, cognitive, and social functions. At the personal level, journal writing provides an outlet for risk-free expression of emotion and experience, making those emotions and experiences available to writers for reflection and personal growth. Journals can also function as creative outlets for learners to play with language, ideas, humor, and even visuals. Above all, journals help writers develop fluency of expression that suits their proficiency…” (2011, p.8).

I have always loved to travel and had always created and been fascinated with travel journals as an art. However, my journals were always all writing, as I was studying English and Art History. Not until I spent much of my professional life at The Arts University, did I come to the realization that the journals could be places where visual art was made in concert with text, and might in fact make the journals more engaging documents in and of themselves. As I researched this field, I learned that I was working more towards was the notion of the Illustrated
Journal. Daniel Gregory, an artist and widely published author on illustrated journalling and of fostering the creative spirit and technical form through uninhibited drawing and writing, discusses his allegiance to the illustrated journal in his book *An Illustrated Life*. “Illustrated journaling has transformed my life and given me the clearest form of identity I have ever had” (Gregory, pg. 2, 2008). It is from his book *An Illustrated Life* that my staff and I began to define AELP journals, not as journals, but as Illustrated Journals.

We all connected with Gregory’s ideas about illustrated journaling in both our personal lives and, most importantly, for the lives of our students. For Gregory and for me and my staff, the Illustrated Journal is a space that is “drawn and written to record impressions, to work without judgement, to take risks and to chart new directions...it’s that intimacy and unguarded freedom that makes these books my favorite art form” (2008, p. 3).

As we worked with students in the beginning of our program in 2004, we began to realize how freeing and generative the Illustrated Journal project was for both students and teachers, and this project became the central identity of AELP, part of the experience that students fully appreciated and complained about as well. The Illustrated Journal curriculum takes seriously the notion of our ELL students as explorers and documenters of language and experience through art and writing. Engaging in this multimodal “narrativity” is what we hope helps lay the groundwork for our AELP students to begin to feel comfortable engaging in the academic discourse around their experiences with their own artistic lives, as well as commenting on the artistic processes of their peers and more iconic
artists and artistic movements. In turn, students’ engagement and willingness to verbalize their artistic histories and current experiences in Philadelphia we hoped would help international students connect more with both their faculty and peers.

The question that pervades this study considers how AELP students design multimodal narratives and what themes emerge that might have an effect on an ELL’s social, academic, artistic, and personal growth. As Bruner has said (1986), narrative is “busily about the past,” even as a student might be writing in the past, they are writing about their past through the lens of beginning their lives in Philadelphia. I aim in this study to understand better how the journals reflect the pleasures and frustrations of now, so students will create dialogues of communal struggle, joy and ways forward through text and images in their journals. When I consider defining the journals, I am often reminded of the great poet, Gwendolyn Brooks’, call for passionate engagement with life: “This is the urgency: Live” (1968).

This study seeks to understand the themes that emerged from the illustrated Journals and how these themes help to define the genre of Illustrated Journaling for all ELL students and faculty who hope to engage in this endeavor. This study hopes to also interrogate the curriculum and drive it forward to help continuously improve the practice of the genre of the Illustrated Journal for not only AELP students but for any type of ELL student.

**Rationale**

This section discusses the details behind the rationale for researching the
AELP Illustrated Journal and its cornerstone question dealing with how ELL students take up the design of their Illustrated Journals and further what the implications are for the genre of Illustrated Journals for ESL students. In exploring the study's rationale, I elaborate on aspects of my theoretical framework that deal with the communal and individual study of how the Illustrated Journals are designed.

As the research in this study forwards the idea that oftentimes classroom communities can create shared ways of thinking not only about their academic life in that classroom but sometimes even their outlook of their life in general, it became clear that researching why and how this occurred in tandem with the Illustrated Journal was important to answering the question of how students go about designing Illustrated Journals. This exploration leads to the research into the ways in which a multimodal narrative based curriculum might develop International ELL students' identities and linguistic proficiency as a community of learners, thereby enhancing their “communicative repertoires” (Rymes, 2014). Having students become conscious of their increased English proficiency as only part of the repertoires they bring to bear in the classroom—others repertoires/identity options, including their histories, their knowledge and deep interaction with the city of Philadelphia, their bi-cultural (or more) identities as international student artists, and of course their form of artistic expression-- will allow them to feel and experience their peers and faculty as “co-members” of a dynamic community.

This type of affinity space/co-membership is important to consider when
analyzing this data, as well as important to consider when discussing the rationale behind the Illustrated Journal. Rymes uses Gee and Hayes' definition about co-membership as linked to affinity spaces, “In an affinity space, people relate to each other primarily in terms of common interest, endeavors, goals, or practices, not primarily in terms of race, age, gender, disability, or social class” (Hayes & Gee, 2010, p. 188 in Rymes). Affinity Spaces and co-membership is an important concept to consider in the Illustrated Journal research because through the journaling together students are creating an affinity space based on their art and their English writing—the journal becomes the extension of themselves which they share, play with, and practice their alternate selves in their new homes and their language. They are creating individual identities through the private writing and art-making but also communal identities through the intensive sharing. Through their Illustrated Journals, International Students are embodying their arts and utilizing many communicative repertoires available to them, including linguistic engagement: seeing their writing as connected to the art they create and the stories they tell about their lives in Philadelphia and their lives in their home countries. Consequently, sharing their art and thoughts on life in Philadelphia and their home countries through their private journal, thereby making these ideas and art work public, this research works to uncover how the illustrated journaling project creates affinity space/co-membership.

This is important to consider in my research because as I focus on dominant themes that emerge from the data I must consider how the group affinity spurred the creation of these dominant themes. In addition, I must
consider the illustrated journal as a trope of the dominant themes as well--the coupling of the illustrated journaling and the intensive sharing resulted in dominant themes emerging.

Reflecting back to the conceptual framework dealing with narrative and third space, Blackledge and Pavlenko (2004) inform us that third space is most productive with a creative form representing that third space: this could be a new vernacular, a novel, a painting. In their work, they emphasize Hall's idea that third-space should have an object outside of the person individually that represents the hybridity--an object that a community, in this study's case, The Arts University, can reflect upon. At the conclusion of each semester students do open presentations and we exhibit their journals. The Art University AELP can then be viewed through a productive third-space lens in that the processes of creating the journals and the journals themselves can be explored through analyzing ESLI’s multimodal narrative curriculum and its effect on International Students and classroom culture both in the ESLI program and beyond. These ideas lead to questions that will be taken up in the conclusion, such as: how can illustrated journaling, connected to an arts based university, add to the research being done about how International ESL students shape their intercultural identities and imagine not only their own transformational possibilities but the wider Arts University as well, and, important to this study, the way ESL Illustrated Journals can be defined as a genre with the power to affect individual identity growth, as well as the University’s. I research the ways in which third-space narration of identity and experience are present in the journals through close
readings of the journals.

**Qualitative Research Method in the AELP context**

This section highlights my focus on choosing a qualitative research methodology for my study. I focus on the ways in which the context of the AU, along with the AELP Illustrated Journal lend themselves most appropriately to a qualitative methodology due to their rich more personal data. Additionally, and perhaps problematically when considering funding, the arts, as they rooted in individual and collective creative expression, do not easily translate to quantitative methods of research.

In general terms, this study will be a qualitative analysis of ESLI’s multimodal narratives. A close look will be given to the illustrated journals/artist books they created, with an ancillary look at how these pieces germinated formal autobiographies, blog entries, and classroom discourse.

As my study focuses mainly on autobiographical telling in various narrative forms, a qualitative Grounded Theory methodology, one that considers individual and collective narratives as having the ability to shape theoretical research is most appropriate and useful.

As I am working to uncover the cultural, academic, and linguistic identity shifts that occur when university seeking ELL learners participate in an autobiography and arts focused curriculum, Charmaz’s “method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data” is a useful start, but one that
does not take into consideration researcher and, in my case students’ positioning, as a key factor in data analysis (Charmaz, p.187). Utilizing a Grounded Theory methodology allows a qualitative approach with one that views data as the primary resource driving the analysis and theories that evolve, forwarding the research findings as that which drives analysis, but a more in-depth analysis is needed when considering International ESL autobiographical narratives.

The means of analyzing L2 autobiographical texts is one that Pavlenko has noted has little understandable guidelines (2000).

"The researchers are not to blame however: none of the textbooks on second language (L2) research teach them how to analyze narratives, either fictional or personal, nor do guides to the analysis of life histories deal with the unique challenges of translating one’s life story into a second language" (2000, p.27).

In considering my methodology, I must consider going beyond a grounded theoretical approach and to one that is more honest and critical. Therefore, after a cursory look at the data I employ methods through a more critical framework that considers (1) my purposes (2) my positioning (3) students' purposes for writing the journals and their audiences (4) students' positionings. All these lenses influence the themes that emerge for the students in their journals. Additionally, as a result of the process of creating the journals, the genre (ELL Illustrated journals), my positioning and their positioning are clearly key players in analyzing the data.

Through this analysis, my design will seek to flesh out a framework for
considering the ELL Illustrated Journals a particular genre and discuss methods of analyzing this genre. In order to do this (1) In chapter 4, analyzing the ELL Illustrated Journals and bringing forth dominant themes and by (2) then utilizing a created ELL Illustrated Journal (multimodal) analytical framework to better understand the emergence of those themes. Therefore, this research seeks to elucidate what happens when International ELL students create Illustrated Journals, suggesting theoretical and pedagogical possibilities that emerge from that analysis; and by doing so, the research hopes to create a framework for analyzing the journals as multimodal texts and consider ways to improve the practice.

Research Design

In this section, I focus on how I go about collecting data from 9 students and journals through close readings and interviews. The students participated in the ESL Arts program in Summer 2014 and were placed at Intermediate and High levels of English proficiency. I co-taught this Writing class, along with a graduate student in the University’s Masters in Industrial Design program. So as not to influence the overall evaluation of my students and to gain distance, my close analysis of the journals did not take place until the September after the class was completed. The class was completed in August 2014. However, the interviews about their experiences with the journals were completed at the conclusion of the semester so that the students could respond without too much
distance. It was made clear that the interviews had no effect on their grades and they all signed consent forms which discussed the dissertation project. In this section, I discuss how the initial close readings and review of interviews put forth notions of considering the AELP Illustrated Journals as genre specific pieces and the idea that this genre might have the power to influence the theme of the triumphal story that students began to tell. Therefore, the themes of the Illustrated Journal as a means of expressing a triumphal story and the Illustrated Journal as genre began to define and structure the guidelines for analyzing the data more closely.

The students’ names and majors are changed to protect their anonymity. Four of the students are from China, four are from South Korea, and one is from Saudi Arabia.

**Xin**: Xin is a Chinese female seeking a Masters in Industrial Design degree. At 40, Xin is older than our typical graduate student, International or American. She is incredibly eager to do well in the English Intensive as well as in her degree program. However, this eagerness sometimes causes a great deal of anxiety. Her English is at an Intermediate level.

**Jianfei**: Chinese male seeking a Master’s in Industrial Design. He is a very optimistic, hard-working, and earnest student. His English is at an intermediate to advanced level.

**Bin**: Chinese female student seeking a Master’s degree in Museum Exhibition, Planning, and Design. She is a very diligent worker, very talkative, sometimes tangential in her comments and suffered from Polio as a child, making her
movements slower than the other students and her cognitive and social skills a little bit challenging; however, her fortitude and desire to succeed always help her to persevere. Her English level is intermediate.

**Moke:** Moke is a Chinese male student seeking a Master’s degree in Industrial Design. He is an incredibly confident and sometimes defiant student: defiant with his peers, often challenging their opinions but tries hard to impress teachers by using overly intellectualized vocabulary and abstract concepts that he often says he can’t fully verbalize because of his English. His English level is advanced.

**Hae Ni:** Hae Ni is a very hard-working, free-spirited and very friendly Korean student. She is an Animation major and is always very eager to talk about the films she loves.

**Do Hee:** Do Hee is an Illustration student from Korea. She is supremely kind, hard-working, and all around delightful. She hopes to get her MFA in Illustration at a school in San Francisco, as UArts does not offer an MFA in Illustration.

**Daeun:** Daeun is a shy younger student at 18 years old. Her other Korean friends really help to make her more sociable and she does an excellent job with the journal, which also helps her be more sociable during class shares.

**Wangyuel:** Wangyuel is a 28-year-old musician, seeking his master’s degree in Jazz Guitar. He is warm, funny, and kind, most of which is reflected in his journal. His English proficiency was intermediate-beginner at the beginning of ESLI, but because his journal had so much innocent charm, he was able to connect with everyone quite well.

**Han:** Han is a Korean male, age, 19. His English proficiency level was
intermediate. He is a serious person, sometimes a little depressed, and never just sketched in his journal, but rather, created intricate colored pencil pieces and watercolors. His degree program is a BFA in Painting.

**Ghaida:** Ghaida is a 30 year old mother of 2 children from Saudi Arabia. She and her family are in the United States due to Saudi Arabia’s Cultural Mission’s Educational Scholarship. Ghaida will be receiving her MFA from UArts and will be the first woman in Saudi Arabia to receive an MFA in this Studio Art discipline.

In these descriptions, I questioned the idea of including English proficiency Levels, as this dissertation is concerned with countering deficit perspectives and describing students based on those scores could be construed as viewing them with a deficit perspective in mind. In the end, I chose to leave the scores because the variety of English levels and their abilities to communicate so openly, creatively and successfully to one another speaks to the power of the Illustrated Journal project. Additionally, I grappled with the idea of presenting student journals as individual journals or rather to do it thematically. As my “Findings” section illustrates the most important theme that is highlighted through the research is the notion of individual reflection leading to a communal consciousness of triumph and resilience. I therefore found it most appropriate to discuss the findings thematically with individual reflections, rather than focusing on the trajectory of each students Illustrated Journal individually.

In my research, I have analyzed 10 student journals, videotaped sections of classroom conversation dealing with journal use, analyzed the 10 students’
formal autobiographies and blogs, and conducted interviews about the journals at the conclusion of the semester. As the journal constituted my main point of rich data for this project, I spent the majority of my research time analyzing the journals.

Because my research question revolves around the question of how ELL students design multimodal narratives and what emerges as a result of their processes, analysis of students' Illustrated Journals has served as my main point of research analysis. The steps of that research are as follows:

(1) Close readings. I read through journals putting post-its on all pages that resonated strongly. I found it important to read from beginning to end, thinking of their illustrated journals as books that tell stories. While reading, I felt a sense of deep interest and a joy in reading their stories. The first thing that seemed most powerful and unique, while also being contradictory to much ELL research that focuses on struggles with language acquisition, was the sense of optimism in each one--the grappling with a positive attitude about their positions they hoped to cultivate. From my very first reading, I thought why is this triumphal story emerging? Is it the particular group of students? Is it the genre of the illustrated journal? Is it the activities that go along with the journal?

(2) Note-taking. I reread the journals, taking notes on every page. In this way, I looked mainly for the themes that emerged in words and the design of the journal.

(3) I broke down that analysis into general codes, or emerging themes: optimism,
connections with international friends, classes, city as character/friend (from low culture stuff like chatting with food truck people or people at Starbucks or landlord, everyday life in a new city to high culture experiences at dance performances and in museums), and English proficiency.

(4) Analyzed the Illustrated Journals as multimodal texts within the lens of genre-based pedagogy in order to build on the idea of the ESL Illustrated Journal as its own genre. After placing pages that explored these themes in the journals, I created folders on the computer. In order to more closely analyze the themes, I printed out all the pages and placed the copied pages of the journals on my dining room table to get a better sense of what was going on thematically as a whole. Up to this point I had been looking mainly at individual journals, not the journals as a group. What I realized when I separated out the analysis into the following thematic groups based on student writing and illustrating: Friends; fluidity between cultures: American, International, and home communities; ESLI classes; everyday English successes and challenges; and experiences with the city of Philadelphia, was that strikingly, in all these categories, the dominant story to emerge was the theme of optimism or the triumphal story. It was not one of the themes; it was in fact the theme. I say this here because from this point forward my research question began to evolve into wondering why student’s design of multimodal narratives elicited this triumphal story. The dominant theme of optimism/the triumphal story, as well as the sub-themes, will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

At the conclusion of the Summer 2014 semester, I conducted interactive
conversations with each student inviting them to discuss their feelings and experiences with their journal to explore how they were designed and how we might begin to unpack defining the genre and improving the structure to create stronger intercultural learning and student identity development. Each student had their own interviews and some were also in couples, so that I could understand the ways they talked with each other about their journals. When the coupling took place, it was part of an overlap from one interview to the next and acted as a conversation, rather than an interview. The coupling was not planned; however, when it happened from the first interview to the second, a lot of exciting and important dialogue occurred as students talked about the conversation topics and shared their journals.

Instead of asking direct questions, I, along with my MiD fellowship student, created an interactive discussion tool to facilitate the discussion. On small sheets of paper, we wrote the following: Journals, Class Trips, Classroom Activities, Presentations, Academic Essay and asked them to rank them in order of useful, not/useful, enjoy/not enjoy, and then to discuss why. This method served to create a more directed conversation, rather than a traditional question/response format. The classroom activities that centered around interactive discussion proved to be more successful than more traditional facilitated exercises. Because all of the topics in the prompts above were written about in the journal, I thought that even though the interviews did not focus exclusively on the journals they would focus on the topics in the journal. This would give us insight into those topics as well. I also did not want interviewees opinions of the journals to be
influenced by my focus on the journals. I thought that by talking about them within the wider context of all the activities in the classroom, we’d be able to get a better sense of their impact.

In addition, I videotaped Writing classes that were focused on the sharing of the journals or where the journal acted as a catalyst for an activity done in the classroom. Finally, I reviewed formal essays and blogs that were written with the journal as the very first draft of the piece. Utilizing individual structured and group interviews around the journals, and their relation to reflections on trips, academic autobiographies, and performances/presentation aspects of the curriculum served to mostly confirm what was written and illustrated in their journals. I framed my questions around their experiences with these aspects of curriculum as it relates to their academic, social, and personal identities, leading to issues dealing with intercultural and communicative repertoires. However, my most rich pieces of analysis have been the journals themselves and allowing them to speak for themselves, separate from any other academic or research-related exercise. I will therefore focus my findings primarily on the journals, and in an ancillary way, on the interviews, analysis of essays and academic texts, and classroom videotapes.

Considering the ESL Illustrated Journal as a genre opens up the study to wider possibilities outside of the University SLA context. Much of this analysis up to this point focused on the written content, with an analysis of the drawing as secondary to what was written. In the field of Second Language Acquisition what gets favored is most predominantly language, and not other modes of a students'
communicative repertoire (Cummins, 2007, Rymes, 2014). This exploration seemed to be in line with the dismissive way we currently think of art in a literacy program as well: an add-on that brightens a curriculum, but the art is not necessarily what forwards or drives the curriculum. The next part of my design focuses on how this line of thinking is limiting in imagining the possibilities of artistic practice in both curricular design and in imagining the possibilities of the ways in which having an arts based multimodal curriculum can enhance a learner's identity and contribute to the dominant themes/narratives they tell about themselves.

This part of the research design explores how the Illustrated Journal, as a multimodal genre, helped to create a particular culture that was based on where the students were individually and with the shared way of telling: the ESL Illustrated Journal. The methodological design employed was close readings and interviews to ascertain what it was that helped students to design or tell their stories: the ways in which students created the rules and norms of the genre. This genre is bound by certain principles: free daily expressive drawing, writing, and sharing. It also proved to be dependent on a set of rules agreed upon by students: we all write and draw every day and try to connect with one another through the sharing of our English, art making, and verbal communicative repertoires (the actual verbal sharing in class). As the story of the research will begin to tell, by following the norms and rules of the genre students created a community whereby they communicated better with one another and felt like members of a creative community, telling a story of strength and resiliency as
In order to explore the ways in which the AELP Illustrated Journal as genre facilitated themes of triumph/success, I looked at the Illustrated Journals for the following: (1) The ways in which images and text spoke to one another and may have emphasized a particular theme. In other words, if the image was not present would the theme, for instance, resilience, be quite as strong in the writing?

My analysis leads me to the question: how does this genre of illustrated journals utilized in the AELP curriculum evoke certain themes, the predominate one here, the triumphant positive story of resilience (even with struggle) being conveyed not just through words, but also in concert with images in all my students’ books. Further, my research seeks to consider how engaging in multimodal forms, like the Illustrated Journal in Intensive ESL programs illuminates a more complex, poetically embodied way forward, that acknowledges struggle but plays with it in ways that ultimately overcome it through a creative process. In essence, if I have found that the journals and my interviews with students are resoundingly positive about how they view themselves in their new environment, how does the genre of the Illustrated Journal contribute to that trope, that dominant story? Is it just the writing? Is it the art? Is it both? Studying the journals with these questions about genre led me to the development of a framework for thinking about the AELP Illustrated Journal as genre-rich texts in the classroom and their possibilities.
As Hyland writes about the idea that Genre Analysis can,

“underline the social nature of the production and reading of texts, but see language itself as embedded in (and constitutive of) social realities, since it is through recurrent use of conventionalized forms that individuals develop relationships, establish communities and get things done. As a result, genre analysis has the potential to offer descriptions and explanations of both texts and the communities that use them” (p. 295).

In this study’s case, my research methodology uncovers the rich description of students’ lives as English language learners through close readings of the books they create. This dissertation works to explore the notion that it is the community and the medium that begin to shape the way we think about how AELP Illustrated Journals and about how they might be defined and have impact on the Arts University students and in contexts beyond the Arts University ELP. I will therefore, in chapter 5, analyze the Illustrated Journal as a multimodal text of art and writing, creating frameworks for further understanding this medium as a legitimate genre, with its possibilities and limitations.
Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

Introduction: Struggle to Resilience, the Dominant Trope in the AELP Illustrated Journal

The overall themes that emerged from every journal was a triumphant story that involved struggle. This chapter analyzes students’ journals, uncovering the multitude of ways students tell and retell this triumphal story through art and a variety of narratives in hand-written English of a variety of English proficiency levels. Questions I consider when looking at this research focus on why does this triumphal story emerge so often? Does this particular theme have something to do with the students creating an Illustrated Journal? Is the triumphal theme a result of the curriculum, built on autobiography and cultural trips? Does this theme depend on the mix of students? Might the combination of curriculum, illustrated journal, and student composite contribute to the adherence to this idea of the story of optimism? Finally, in what ways is building this triumphal story, reflective of resilience, vital for international ELL students’ sense of personal and academic success?

Of deep interest in the emergent themes of the triumphal story is the role the illustrated journal as a genre plays in creating this trope. Creating artists’ books, travelogues have long been a vital part of a journey one takes to a new country, a new city, a new life. These experiences act as new chapters in one’s life, so it is fitting that significant travel is accompanied by journals. However, often with the ELL student, we forgo that more optimistic and exciting angle for the preparatory one, the one that favors that which the student does not know.
Without this being the intent, intimidation coupled with the student viewing themselves in comparison or even against the native speaker is born. The Illustrated Journal or Diaz’ “pagina en blanco” creates a counter narrative, an important space for the student to create their own story. Therefore, this research examines what themes are important for students to tell. Further, the ways in which they tell their stories, using a multimodal non-evaluative genre like the Illustrated Journal, might help practitioners and researchers understand what kinds of genres and environments help bring forth stories that are important for students to tell in the shaping of their personal and academic selves as International ELL students.

In answering these questions through an analysis of students’ Illustrated Journals, I have created specific topics that correspond to common generative topics among the group of students’ journals. The sections are: Cultural Trips, AELP classes, International Friendships, Every day Travelogue: Documenting and Reflecting on Discovery, Fluidity and Interaction between and Within Cultures.

Cultural Trips

Cultural trips have important curricular dimensions in the AELP program. They are (1) used to help students enjoy Philadelphia and feel a part of the city through experiencing its cultural sites (2) used to build community as there are always intercultural activities built in and we travel as a group (3) used to have students reflect on these places in comparison to sites similar to their home countries (museums, parks, performances) (4) used as fodder for further
academic research and for readings in other classes (students will read about the history of the Barnes, The Magic garden, etc.).

What I found most useful and surprising about these field trip experiences as shown in the drawings and illustrations in the journal is that students begin to develop a positive and exciting sense of the city and their place in the city. Not only that, but these entries were the most generative, often producing 3-4 pages of writing and illustrations. This is compared to some other topics that might produce about a paragraph or two.

**Wangyuel**

![Figure 1: Wangyuel Journal Entry 1](image)

I will start first with a Master’s in Music student, Wangyuel, whose English was at the low intermediate/high beginner level: In his journal, he writes in Figure 1:
“I think in order to improve, I have to study English hard. (1) I was tired nervous. (2) Then I went to the magic garden. (3) These are very beautiful views and wonderful things (4)...After we enjoyed food, we talked about many things each other. (5) Today is fun!!! (6)"

There are many important things to take note of here. In the first line, there is the recognition of the struggle to learn English. At the same time though there is a rallying call: “I will have to study English hard.” However, what follows is different in mood and it begins with the transition word, “Then.” Here I think “Then” is more than a transition, it is also signifying a mood change. We see this mood becoming more elevated and optimistic with the usage of the words “beautiful” and “wonderful.” The elevated mood becomes almost a stable sense of joy through the intercultural communication we see through his writing that “we talked about many things each other”. Finally, notice the almost poetic creation of the new paragraph stating only: “Today is fun!!!”

From what we know of this student’s position, this entry tells us that even after taking a test and perhaps feeling a bit disheartened, this student writes mainly about the triumphal story of seeing a wonderful place and sharing ideas with new friends and while simplistic, declares that the day “is fun!!” The student’s position of being the only Korean musician in a group of artists encourages him to be open to new artistic experiences; however, this could have easily been the opposite. In his interview, he says, “I never drew before. It was a funny experience. And other people were very kind about me.” Two interesting qualities to note here: (1) drawing for this student becomes an additional repertoire to make his English learning experience “funny”. He is taking what has
been a potentially stressful situation for many AELP students and moving into the
realm of fun.

He is also building on Rymes’ communicative repertoires, building by not
only using an additional media, art, for self-expression but he is communicating
and building relations with others through this new media as well, which
highlights Scarino and Liddicoat’s theories on the importance of interculturality as
a mechanism designed for student-to-student noticing, reflecting and
communication unmediated directly by the teacher. It also helps this study greatly
that we had an incredibly kind group of students. Wangyuel's other position is
scoring among the lowest in terms of English proficiency. It is clear that he can
sense this and in this entry, he grapples with his feelings of frustration and
sadness over that, while also commenting that even though it was hard the day
was also “fun”. The writing of these ideas helps to solidify their truth and create a
prevailing philosophy of living and learning in the students’ new culture. The act
of writing and illustrating this story helps to create the triumphal narrative, the
beginning of a third-space identity fusion: Wangyuel is beginning to see himself
as part of an artistic community in Philadelphia. It is not just that the Magic
Garden itself inspires awe and this triumphal story, experiencing this space with
new friends, talking about “many things” inspired by the visit, create this
productive tri-dialogic between student-student-journal.
Han: Figure 2: Han Journal Entry 2

Figure 3: Han Journal Entry 3

Han moves in and out of feelings of “inspiration” in this entry. Knowing Han as a student and from interviews, the idea of feeling inspired is significant. In
fact, he experiences low grade depression and describes those moods as not depressed so much as “uninspired”.

In Figure 3, Han writes,

“I saw many gorgeous buildings, above all PMA was the best building (1) …I feel many inspirations. (2) I was happy (3)….Party was a hard time for me because I drank too much alcohol (4)…Anyway it was funny time. (5) I appreciate international office (6).”

It is important to highlight that his writing about feeling inspired seemed to come directly from seeing “gorgeous buildings”. He states that he was happy but that then the party was hard because of drinking too much, and after that declares that it was still “a funny time”, and ends by saying he appreciates the International Office. Again, this is a student that has experienced minor depression and so to read of the subtlest joy he is experiencing is significant. I believe the act of writing down what makes him “happy” (the buildings, many inspirations, the international office interspersed with what makes life hard, “drinking”, followed by a general positive conclusion is important to note. Han is recognizing that he is neither just happy or inspired but that life for him can be sometimes hard. As Han’s teacher having him speak honestly about what troubles him and brings him joy is vital. Significant also is the part the multimodal plays in Han’s self-expression. His comfort in his artistic ability allows him perhaps feel a greater sense of freedom to be honest, referring back to Wits multiliteracies discussed in Chapter 2.

Interestingly as well is a comparison between Han And Wangyuel’s feelings about the party and the overall day. They were both able to write about
their personal struggle, even though Wangyuel’s English proficiency was much lower that Han’s but also write, draw and conclude in a positive way. Important to note is that this is their second day together and their first academic assignment, so while an affinity group begins to get established here it is not as strong of a force in the journal creation yet. That said, the positive more triumphal mode starts with the beginning of the semester. Why is this so? Do the elements of the Illustrated Journal (multimodal, non-evaluative, creative) elicit this response? Do visiting inspiring cultural sites like Isaiah Zagar’s Magic Garden promote a sense of inspiration filtering down to the self? Does the group’s sense of excitement begin this theme? Finally, do teachers and students coming together in a warm atmosphere of somebody’s home create a sense of comfort inspiring a feeling of optimism? Or is it the combination of all these things with the coalescing in the act of writing and drawing that affirms this feeling of positivity? This research argues that it is the latter and that perhaps without a multimodal non-evaluative practice in a curriculum such as an Illustrated Journal, students might not affirm these kinds of positive identity formations—it is in the creation of this 3rd space (The Illustrated Journal) where identity gets affirmed helped in part on experiences created through curriculum.
Xin is a Masters in Industrial Design student from China. Again, she is significantly older than most students and has had a difficult past. She was in a near fatal car accident, has no connection to her parents and discusses an ex-husband as the most important relationship in her life. She is incredibly earnest in all her efforts but also emotional and insecure. She rarely writes about these things in her journal. The AELP students protect her and feel a great deal of warmth towards her. Mostly her journal is factual, commenting on the factual history of a site and how amazing a site is or the AELP is in general, but even then, relays mostly facts. Her journal, in contrast to her personality, is more distant. Because she is in her forties, I wonder if the Chinese system of education and culture is the root of her colder style of journal writing. In
response to this question in her interview, she says, “Oh yes, almost definitely yes. Talking is easier to say feelings for me.” The quote I have chosen from her journal is sort of counter to what I mention above about her more factual writing. Here she discusses seeing Ballet X with the other AELP students as part of a cultural trip, and it inspires such an emotional and excited reaction that it generates 2.5 pages of journal writing, but interestingly this is one of the only entries that speaks on a personal level. This is important to note because it emphasizes the transformative third-space tri-dialogic between experiencing inspiring sites, writing and drawing about the experience, and sharing the journal through discussion with other students. The triumphal spirit is, I believe weaved in intercultural experience, sharing experience with others, and the writing and illustrating.

Xin writes in Figure 4 in relation to seeing Ballet X:

“Today was an unforgettable day (1)... It was really a feast for the eyes (2)...I had never seen these stage effects in China. (3) These dancers show was very perfect. (4) they used body language of their own to tell a typical story (5)...Thirdly, musicians….brought us into the different scenes and feel this story (6)...singers was kind of a poetic realm. (7) in general I thought it was a perfect show. (8) This modern ballet deeply touched and attracted me and I hope that I could see it again. (9) This is my first time to see a ballet show and it left a deep impresive (impression) on me". (10)

Xin begins, in sentences 1-3, with joyful statements and words like “unforgettable” and “feast for the eyes” and compares this to what she has seen in China. Important to note is that through the performances and reflecting on them students move into the realm of the intercultural learner through drawing cultural comparisons. Xin writes about what she sees and hears in detail. This is
one of her most emotional pieces. She uses words and phrases like “feast for the eyes”, “perfect”, “poetic”, “touched”, “attracted” showing an almost reverence for the performance. The experience of seeing this performance, writing about it individually, and then sharing it communally in class moves Xin’s writing and academic identity from just the factual into the personal realm of her personality. Again, there is an intimate dialogic here between cultural experience and The Illustrated Journaling (including the multimodalities of writing, art-making, and verbal English sharing), resulting in a coupling of Xin’s academic identity and her personal identity, creating an affirmed sense of optimism, harkening back to Gao’s dialogical communicator discussed in Chapter 2.
Jianfei is a Master’s in Industrial Design student from China. He is in his 20s, very serious, a hard worker, and is fully invested in his English language.
learning. This entry is also his reaction to seeing Ballet X. I particularly appreciate this entry because he uses materials from and advertisements about the performance in his journal. His materials of choice exemplify his connection and appreciation of the performance. Specifically, he took a piece of paper that had been floated from the ceiling during the performance and folded it into the notebook with another piece of paper about Ballet X in back of it and then wrote a lot about the ballet explaining it in detail. These details are so focused there is a sense he wants to write to capture the narrative and all the elements that excited him about the performance. Importantly, he seems to be in the practice now of creating a firm memory of the story told in Ballet X through writing in English. Not only did he illustrate his experience in creative ways that he had never done before (using paper from the show’s set), but he also used his English in very precise ways to narrate the story of the ballet. This entry is an example of his most precise and complex thinking in writing and art. The end of his narrative explains his absolute joy from this experience:

“The only moment I could calm down, is when all of us stood up, applauded and cheered for them for two entire minutes. (1) But that moment is already too exciting. (2)” His detailed explanation of the ballet narrative, along with his exuberant response in the journal, make the journal a space where experiences such as these solidify and become a stronger part of his identity.

It seems that the quintet of journal writing and drawing + experiencing powerful art + experiencing the art with the affinity group, + sharing the reflections in the classroom = solidifying students’ third-space identity of
international student artists as part of a vibrant Philadelphia arts scene through intercultural creative and verbal exchange--thus making them feel like valuable members of the Arts University.

**Ghaida:**

![Ghaida Journal Entry 6](image)

Figure 6: Ghaida Journal Entry 6

Ghaida is a woman in her 30’s from Saudi Arabia. She is here with her family earning an MFA in Book Arts, a discipline that will make her the first in her country to earn this type of MFA. I have two segments from Ghaida: one from Ballet X and the other in response to Isaiah Zagar, the creator of the Magic Garden. The first is about Isaiah Zagar.

In Figure 6 Ghaida writes,

“His work show us about his optimistic view and his inspiration for the future. (1) Everything will be changed, will be improved, and will be different. (2) I believe tomorrow will be better and I will achieve my goals. (3)”
This quote is particularly interesting because it begins by referencing the Magic Garden and Zagar’s inspiration and concludes by turning that quote into her own optimistic views about her own future. This is really an amazing thing to witness in writing. Huda opines about Zagar and her view of his work being one of optimism and then fuses that into her thinking about herself. It seems that this might have happened in process, in the process of creating the sentence, which points to the act of writing about experiences in a new culture, no matter our English level, having the potential to move us towards a more affirmative view of self. These students all have varying levels of proficiency but through the tri-dialogic of engaging in meaningful experiences (Magic Garden, Ballet X), writing and illustrating informally, and sharing these experiences students emerge telling a similar story of triumph.

Figure 7: Ghaida Journal Entry 7

In terms of Ballet X, I include it here because Ghaida discusses the importance of seeing the show with her classmates. She begins entry 7 by telling
us that she saw Ballet X with her classmates and concludes the page long entry in a similar way. “I really enjoyed with my new classmates in that wonderful show.” This inclusion is important because it means that significant to the joy of the moment is in the intercultural sharing of the experience with the affinity group— together, no matter their language of origin, they experienced a type of transcendence because of this show and their experiencing it together. Their sharing of the journals helps to almost ratify the positive feelings of this experience and as English Language Learners and International Students in Philadelphia. For Ghaida, in her last sentence, is not only writing about the ballet, she is also talking about herself: she is experiencing a city’s culture with new friends and feeling an affirmed sense of joy and growth through the experience as well as through the act of drawing and writing about it.

In conclusion, Wangyuel, Han, Jianfei and Ghaida’s journal entries about cultural trips circle back to Gao’s discussion on legitimate narrator, playful creator, and dialogic communicator. In all these entries students are narrating their perspectives on the arts in Philadelphia, helping them to be feel like legitimate student artists and cultural participants in their new city’s life. Each student takes up English and art in their own ways creating their own individual perspectives and creations—thus falling under Gao’s idea of playful creator. Finally, as dialogic communicator works to build meaningful and peaceful relationships with those around them and the world in general, in all these entries students mention being in respectful and meaningful relationships with fellow students and that those connections are bolstering their positive experiences with
Philadelphia’s cultural life. In addition, these entries circle back to Bruner and Norton’s ideas about identity and investment. As these students’ identities as international Student artists get affirmed so does their investment in their academic careers and imagined degree communities.

**AELP Student Reflections on AELP Classes/Academic Identities**

This section is important because of the significant connections student made in the classrooms with each other through sharing the journal. Also, the growth in students’ academic identities are highlighted, as we see them reflecting on creating academic essays from the rough drafts in their journals.

![Figure 8: Youngsun Journal Entry 8](image)

Youngsun is a 20-year-old Korean student. She has a very care-free nature. She is very kind and has a unique style to her, almost mixing urban hippie with tailored Maoist look. She will be studying Animation. Her English level is Intermediate. In this excerpt, Youngsun is writing about her MY MAP essay in
Figure 8. "I want to make my own animation, such as my autobiography. (1) I will make my own film or animation seriously!" (2) The image is of her in a director’s chair with a movie screen above her and the moon with red cheeks affirms the positive feelings about her assertions. These first two sentences in conjunction with the image are important because she is telling herself an affirmative story about her future. She is using the journal and its assignment (My MAP), to clarify and become excited about her future. In this way, the Illustrated Journal becomes a place to not only tell affirmative stories about one’s self, but to also express motivation for future choices. Here, in this case, and in the cases of other students’ journals, there is a great deal of excitement and motivation about life in their future disciplines. They are beginning the work of seeing themselves as part of their discipline’s community, a very important step in the work of fusing their past identities with their current and future one through creating a productive third-space and identifying themselves as interculturally competent student artists with important contributions and enthusiasm to impart.

Youngsun’s entry continues: "Today I edited my present essay. (3) I think my present is wonderful! (4) I proud of myself and believe myself!" (5) In sentences 3 and 4, Youngsun is noticing and reflecting on her academic learning. She performed a clear academic function (editing). In her journal, she reflects the she is proud of herself for doing it well. She concludes with an affirmative statement about the self that is directed at her achievements with the essay--she develops belief in herself through the actions of the essay and possibly through writing about these feelings in her journal. The writing and
illustrating help to affirm a positive academic identity she now has of herself as an International ESL Student at an American university.
Bin is a Chinese student in her late 20s. She will be a Master's in Museum Studies. She has some slight learning disabilities and physical limitations as a result of having Polio as a child. She drags one foot, her hearing is a little bit limited, and she is a bit awkward socially, while she talks a lot. She is an incredibly hard worker, is very interested in everything we do, and is determined
to be successful. Her English level is Intermediate. She is writing about one very busy day in the AELP. This day begins with Conversation class and then moves on to Writing Studio, which was 4 hours this day. It began with students interviewing faculty and chairs of their program. The interviews took place around what had been written in their My MAP essays. Students and their partnered faculty/chair asked each other questions dealing with the following: What teachers or family/friends influenced you to become an artist/performer? What artists/experiences are inspiring you right now? What goals or projects do you have for the next year? Here are some of Bin’s responses from her journal to that day: "Today is great day this is because I interviewed many people"(1)…Also when I revised my past essay, tutor helped me a lot."(2) The image helps to affirm the positive relationship she has with the tutor. “Conversation class exciting today also” (3) “today I revise my past, present, and future” (4) Therefore I feel fulfill today." (5) In Bin’s “great day” are various types of academic successes that are at the same time built around intercultural academic relationships. This takes place during the last week of the program, where students are interviewing their degree faculty professors and polishing the final drafts of their academic autobiographies. It seems fair to say that this student has achieved a positive sense of her academic self and intercultural personal relationships and reflects on this and I would say affirms this even more through her writing and art-making.

This story she tells is indeed one of triumph and affirmation at both the academic and personal level. She acknowledges that the interviewing was
“great”, even if at times it was difficult. She affirms the help of the tutor, which is so important, as it gives her tools for her future academic life. Perhaps this will make her seek tutoring regularly in her academic life. In sentence 4 she achieves an academic goal of revision, and like Youngsun, she claims she feels fulfilled because of her academic achievement.

Included in her academic achievement is the conversations she had with other faculty and people in her major, along with her work with the tutor—she is moving beyond Gao’s legitimate narrator and playful creator to a dialogic communicator. In the journal, I would posit, Bin reflects on her academic achievements but also her intercultural achievement as well. The journal itself reflects Bin’s personal third-space of identity to include her academic and personal growth. Additionally, students shared their journals with their conversation interviews/partners, and the journal became the medium for reflecting about interactions—the space where students have the opportunity to affirm their feelings of being “fulfilled” and “proud”. The genre of the Illustrated Journal, based on Bin’s experience, has become one where the creative dialogic of writing and art-making create a third-space product which can then be used to increase intercultural communication and success with academic writing, a constant building of personal and academic repertoires.
Dohee

Figure 10: Dohee Journal Entry 10

Dohee is a Korean illustration student in her 20s. She will be transferring to another school because The Arts University does not have a Master’s in her discipline. She is a beautiful person, supremely kind, warm, funny, and open. The other students and faculty adore her. Dohee is talking about her first interview session in the beginning of the program. Students were interviewing some Student Life staff members and Student Life work-study students about Philadelphia. We had them write an essay titled “My Philly” about the many sites they visited in and around Philadelphia and their impressions of Philadelphia. The conversation here took place around discussing sites in Philadelphia.

In Figure 10, Dohee writes,

“At first I was nervous (1)...I talked about background (2) Philly experience, suggestions, and events each other. (3) I was so fun and excited. (4) Even though my speaking skills was not good, I seemed to
She is reflecting on the conversation in her journal in ways that are a bit different than the other two above. Dohee is expressing some anxiety and some optimism. She concludes with a combination of insecurity about her English, but in the end, a sense of growth and optimism. Dohee’s piece is a little more complex than some of the others we’ve looked at thus far. Sentence 1 expresses anxiety, sentences 2 and 3 tell us what was discussed, and by the time we get to sentence 4, she expresses a sense of “fun” and “excitement”.

In sentence 5 Dohee concludes by reflecting on her interaction: while she does not feel “good” about her speaking skills, she recognizes her own growth. Again, even couched in some insecurity, Dohee concludes affirming her own sense of growth. I would posit that through the act of writing she comes to these realizations in a stronger way than had she not written them down. Again, the dialogic between journal and classroom activities facilitates this triumphal story.

The culture of the classroom and its effect on the way students view themselves in regards to their disciplines, their personal lives, and as academic writers seems to have had a transformative quality because of and in tandem with the enactment of the AELP Illustrated Journal.

To conclude this section on student reflections to AELP classes, the student journals invoke Bruner’s ideas of “turning points” and the necessity of marking them and building them into solid aspects of identity, as well as Norton’s theory of investment and imagined communities. Bin, Dohee and Youngsun are
all making shifts in their academic views of themselves, marking a significant turning point. They are noting these as significant by writing them down and illustrating them. Thus, Bruner’s idea of turning points being made manifest through conscious self-awareness. At the same time, these three students are invested in their academic work as seen by their pride in the advancement of their writing from journal writing to academic writing and in their desires to capture their autobiographies and relate them to their major, which we see most specifically in Youngsun’s connection with her autobiography and her animation major. Finally, these students are writing about and working towards their imagined communities through commenting on their autobiographies as they relate to their majors and through commenting on the excitement they have with speaking to their faculty. The experience in and of itself germinates notions of turning points, investment and building of imagined communities, but the journal is where these experiences get affirmed and reflected upon, perhaps increasing the likelihood of those feelings remaining.

Finally, the triumphal narrative as a trope of the Illustrated Journals is very prevalent here as well. Students do not paint pictures of things being easy, it is indeed a struggle, but the content of the Illustrated Journal, both the writing and images continues to point towards the theme of resilient optimism.

**International Student Friendships**

The friendships that develop in the AELP program seem to be at the center of the writing and illustrating in The Illustrated Journal in reflecting the themes of resilience and triumph even when they are experiencing difficult
moments with each other. These friendships are not only created by shared experiences, they are also created through engaging in a joint project together, which is unique to most other students in ELL programs: that of constructing an Illustrated Journal where those friendships are documented, discussed, and finally affirmed and reaffirmed through the circular nature of writing, drawing, discussing, and sharing.

Jianfei:

Figure 11: Jianfei Journal Entry 11

In Figure 11, Jianfei is describing working through an Industrial Design reading with his fellow Chinese Industrial Design majors. “Today is not an easy day. (1) Working out something together with Moke is always stimulating. (2) We always are difficulty to agree with each other about our comprehension on readings. Fortunately, after long time of arguing and thinking out our wise opinions and discussing, our answers are recognized in the final. (3) Moke and Xin’s way of thinking are not always perfect and logical, neither is mine. (4) However we all have such valuable for each other to learn. (5) The first sentence conveys difficulty. The reader would think upon reading this
statement that we are not going to be reading about a triumphal story.

In the second sentence the use of the word “stimulating” is very interesting. Moke is a student that many students had difficulty working with. He can be arrogant and combative. Jianfei’s use of the word stimulating in sentence #2 shows his desire to overcome the obstacles of working with Moke and cast the situation in a bit of a more dynamic way, rather than just difficult or negative. Here Jianfei is beginning to work through the complexities of being an intercultural student. In this example, intercultural also represents varying learning styles even within one’s own ethnicity and working through them in the new American context. Had Jianfei been working with somebody who was Korean or Saudi and that person agreed more with his views and was more flexible, this situation might not have proven difficult. Interestingly, all three of these students are Chinese but are communicating about a complex reading in English, challenging their cultural ties. In sentence 3, there is also a very compelling construction of words and possible meanings. In sentence 4, Jianfei remarks about their thinking not always being “perfect” or “logical”. If he finished the sentence here, that could be construed as critical negative thinking; however, he moves on to say, “neither is mine.” This concluding part of the sentence takes the bite out of the first part and puts them back together as a team, and refers to his idea that their relationships are “stimulating”. He concludes the writing by discussing how they all have valuable things to learn from each other, suggesting once again there is significant struggle and perhaps conflict, but the triumphal story still emerges. In looking at the image, I think that perhaps drawing each
person out contributed to Jianfei’s feelings of acceptance—the act of seeing him and them and creating the team on the page provoked a calmer kind of attitude. It is so interesting that they all have glasses on. Perhaps this suggests a lack of connection between them or a sense that they are all hiding aspects of themselves from each other.

Jianfei seems to be working through his emotions in his writing, which may be a result of the genre of the Illustrated Journal and a result of the affinity group’s general “yes we can” spirit. In his interview Jianfei says, “I just did not want to end the journal bad.” This points to the idea that the communal philosophy of resilience fostered Jianfei’s critical but positive outlook. What is clear through this example and many others is that the journal elicited a sort of reckoning with difficult struggles but always concluded with an optimistic way forward. What is also impressive is that Jianfei is working through the complex interactions he is having with his fellow Chinese Industrial Design students through writing in English in his journal and drawing. This example also shows that through the journal, coupled with the interactional activities, Jun continues to develop an academic identity. This identity seems to be rooted in intercultural interactions with the use of the journal which allows him to observe/notice himself and others, reflecting on the interactions, and emerging on the other side with an academic identity with the know-how about navigating these complex waters. It is important to note that Jianfei’s stance led the entire group in developing an affirmative stance towards their situations as International ESL students.
Ghaida:

Figure 12: Ghaida Journal Entry 12

This entry is on how Ghaida feels about the other students in the program. Ghaida is the only Arabic speaker from the middle-east and was concerned she would feel very excluded. Her image and text tell otherwise. She drew each person and wrote about the sense of friendship and support she feels: “I found the Chinese and Korean student are wonderful friends. (1) Although all of them speak different languages about me but I feel confident with them and I like to spend my free time during break time with them. (2) I hope to be in contact with them forever. (3) It is amazing to make friends from different cultures and languages. (4) I am so happy about my new friendship.” (5) The image coupled with the writing, shows the reinforcement of a sense of third-space and
interculturality. Through creating connections with students from different cultures (interculturality) she was able to articulate in writing, drawing, and verbal sharing a new idea about who she is (third-space): “confident” and “happy”. Ghaida has moved into a person who now sees herself as intercultural and, based on her art and her writing, Ghaida is beginning to identify herself as an intercultural person. We can see this through her writing that although they speak different languages she still enjoys being around them and would like to remain friends “forever”. The Illustrated Journal, the sharing of it, and the assignments performed in it, play a part in creating this interculturality. They are all involved in an endeavor that might make them feel a little uncomfortable but is new and exciting in many ways. When they share, there is always laughter and a sense of awe at what people draw, even those with limited drawing skills (which in this program is akin to limited English). Ghaida’s written and illustrated expression of this “wonderful” friendship solidifies this emotion and has the power to enhance her personal and academic identity, seeing herself as in intercultural member of a university, an expressive statement harkening back to Liddicoat and Scarino’s “How am I me when I speak this language”. Who Ghaida is when she speaks English is a confident, happy woman proud of her friendships with international students from a variety of cultures, embracing Goa’s goal of the dialogic communicator.
Dohee:

Figure 13: Dohee Journal Entry 13

I include Figure 13 of Dohee’s to highlight the fact that not every entry is significant in its revelations. Often some are quite simple, but are still imbued with a sense of optimism and joy.

“I am satisfied my day (1) Even though it is always same, I am happy. (2) In the evening Youngsun and Daeun and I ate the dinner. (3) And then we looked around the center city. (4) It started to shower. (5) We finally wet from the raining. (6) However, we enjoyed the raining and came back home.(7)”

This excerpt highlights Dohee’s appreciation of her friends. While the friends she mentions here are all Korean, they are of different majors and much younger than her. Enjoying friends and everyday life with friends is such an important aspect of creating a positive and strong sense of identity as an
international student. It is not just doing it though that facilitates this type of identity, it is also proclaiming it is happening in art, writing, and sharing, as Dohee is doing here. This creates Bruner’s stable self-concept which leads to that productive third space and intercultural sense students need to move forward in their academic degrees with a sense of confidence.

One last thing that is interesting is that even though they get caught in a rainstorm she states that they “enjoyed” it. This is a beautiful thing to remember. As Second Language Acquisition practitioners and theorists it is important to remember how much these moments, that to regular inhabitants of a place might be a nuisance, can be beautiful and enjoyable for the International Student. Importantly, a genre like the Illustrated Journal allows students to reflect on these moments so that they become a more overt way of identifying who they are in this place speaking this language, answering that important question dealing with interculturality: How am I me when I speak this language? (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2014).

If we apply Kress and Leeuwen’s idea of specific discourses being created through multimodal products to this section, we can see that the theme of resilience and optimism is part of the discourse created through students’ usage of the Illustrated Journal. Additionally, when we apply Gao’s legitimate narrator, playful creator and dialogic communicator, we can also see that these students narrate conflict, joy, and everyday life in ways that legitimize their experiences and International Student artist selves, but more they use images to play with those ideas, accentuate them and work through them (especially in Jianfei’s
case). Finally, their dialogic communication skills seem paramount for them, whether it is working through conflict or affirming their sense of pride in their new friendships. This shows that the Illustrated Journal as a medium might not cause these fruitful (even in conflict) relationships, but it certainly helps to facilitate a particularly positive point of view about self and relationships.

**Developing Relationships with Philadelphia**

The AELP students’ usage of the journal as a means of documenting their relationship with the city of Philadelphia highlights their (1) intercultural learning and appreciation, (2) their self-translation (Pavlenko) as international student artists connecting with their new city, (3) their sense of moving into Gao’s dialogic communicator, and (4) their development of their own third spaces as they connect to their new environments and fuse that with their own histories and views of self.
Dohee:

Figure 14: Dohee Journal Entry 14

Figure 14 is about students going together to Independence Day celebration in Philadelphia. There was a lot of excitement about this day. In class students talked about being surrounded on all sides by “real” Philadelphians. Her
writing is accompanied by a gorgeous watercolor.

"Xin, Jianfei, Bin, Moke, Youngsun and Wangyuel went to festival (1)... I was so happy and excited. (2) The fireworks were amazing and surprised. (3) We yelled out a cheer and we enjoyed the moment. (3) I was so happy today. (4) I seemed to relieve stress as a today. (5) I don't forget today's festival and moment. (6)"

Another vibrant free drawing in red follows. I include it here because it augments her writing in a purely artistic form—showing a similar sense of joy and excitement she writes about. However, the drawing is not simple; it is complex, perhaps a reflection on the complexities, as well as joy and excitement, she is experiencing.

In the first sentence, she mentions exactly who accompanied her, Korean and Chinese friends, which shows that the group is a unified one, even though people from home countries spend alone time together as shown in previous quotes. Most research does show that a balanced life of international and home-country friends proves to be the healthier for International Students (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2014). Sentence 2 shows her happiness at the situation and sentence 3 gives us follow-up explanations about why she was happy. I appreciate her description of the group as “we” with them yelling out a cheer together, as if the cheer was not only for the 4th of July holiday, but also out of recognition of what they were all experiencing together: learning a new language in a new culture with the hopes of building academic careers.

She finishes that thought by saying that they all “enjoyed the moment”. This is very powerful as a concluding part of that sentence. To me it means that
they all know they are involved in the struggles of being an international student, but that together they are able to celebrate their taking the chance to explore a new city, language, and culture and work to make it their own. Not only that, but they are celebrating their collective independence with Americans who are celebrating their own independence as well, true intercultural learners. In addition, in sentence #5, Dohee writes that she relieved stress. This is so interesting. We all know that coming together with friends can be a stress reliever, but Dohee writing this makes the idea all the more real, again solidifying the notion that becoming an intercultural friend and student, not only breeds success but also stimulates a sense of happiness and stress relief, as we also see from Ghaida’s example.

The beauty of this image and writing is in its ability to combine her experiences in Philly with an appreciation of her international and home country friends, this exemplifies that fusion of home and Philadelphia identities creating personal third spaces of identity.

Her concluding sentence is also quite powerful: she will not forget this moment. Not only will she not forget this moment because it has become a part of her memory. She will not forget it because it is written and drawn in her journal, declaring the importance of the moment solidifies it and creates a powerful discourse around who she is and who the group is—her “self-translation” (Pavlenko, 2004) through art and English. Through the multimodal lens we can see how productive utilizing media in a non-evaluative format, such as through the Illustrated Journal, brings forth positive identity growth and its
In Figure 15, Bin is remarking first What will I do? (1) Where will I go? (2) Who will go with me? (3), and on the next page we see that she enjoys the 4th of

expression.
July celebration with her friends. In the image, you can see her drawings of them. She writes: We were exciting and singing with all of the audience. It was an impressive night for me. Here Bin is celebrating her connection with her International friends and her connection with her new culture in celebrating the 4th of July. Capturing these moments in genres like the Illustrated Journal helps students create affirming identities as being a part of another culture, while also sharing in that culture with friends, rather than people with the deficit of not knowing. Writing and drawing these observations and then sharing them puts International ESL Students in closer connection with their new city, its people, and language.
Jianfei.

June 24, 2014. The

Finally, I became a pillow!

This is the same bus we took earlier. There is a young man in yellow who asked me about what I was doing. He sat on the edge of the seat and held his phone. Before he left I said thank you to him.

Amazingly, my mom (I got it from China) is useful in IKEA in USA. Line is empty because she thought I would need her in US or she thought I needed a snack.

June 29, 2014. Sunday

Another place in Philadelphia: Whole Food

At the first time of visiting the supermarket nearby where I live: Whole Food. I noticed that the place I go frequently in the following days. In this market I can find all kinds of food (unusual to me) very fresh. At the entrance, I thought it looked like most abundance grocery food here. Soon, I found milk and bread in supermarket economical prices. Compared with other markets, fresh food and prepared food are also cheaper and more better at the same time.

For now, I've already tried yogurt which cost only 99¢ and interesting because it has a high quality. Yesterday, I bought many ingredients at whole food, within a quick bread, a cup of yogurt and a box of milk food. It was so awesome because it proved me right about how fresh milk I'll depend any meals at this market.

Whole Food supermarket gives me an impression that Philadelphia is a city with abundant types of food, especially good and varied food.
This excerpt is a very sweet observation about people and the city of Philadelphia. It is not something we hear often about our city, so I thought it important to share to highlight this International Students’ point of view and how capturing that in actual writing and drawing can help build affirming identities.

Also, his ideas and images about Love Park and City Hall convey a similar type of almost romantic connection with Philadelphia.

“Everyone is nice, totally nice, insanely nice… (1) Philadelphia is too beautiful to be true.” (2)

Here Jianfei’s intercultural learning embraces the people of the city and the city itself as almost a character. The third-space he creates in this entry is one of his almost romantic connectedness to his new home. While this might not remain his view always, there is something affirmative about beginning his journey with a sense of awe. It is also interesting to consider here with Jianfei’s entry how drawing these sites in Philadelphia, the activation of the imagination, influences
the way he narrates his perspective. Jianfei being an artist and connecting with
the city using this expressive repertoire has particularly positive ramifications, as
the image that is drawn stares back at him, not only influencing his perception of
himself as a competent and creative artist but as one that has a particularly
positive and unique view of Philadelphia, his effort at making the city his own.
And then additionally, when other students and faculty comment on the drawing it
re-affirms these emotions. Again, this trilogic dialectic of drawing, writing, and
sharing utilizing the Illustrated Journal help to build affirmative identities for
individuals, as well as positively influencing the group dynamic.

Han

Figure 17: Han Journal Entry 17

Han’s Figure 17 is another example of the fireworks celebration. I include
it here because Han is usually slightly morose “...and then they set off fireworks,
It was perfectly beautiful, wonderful, gorgeous, brilliant, fantastic, brilliant,
unbelievable, and marvelous.” Again, Han is creating another view of himself
here in the journal: one that can experience the marvelous, the brilliant, and can be overwhelmed with positive emotions. That this type of optimistic feeling is strong, attainable and is being written and drawn about is significant. Again, that students experience these feelings is one thing in and of itself, that they ratify these feelings through their Illustrated Journals puts it in the realm of positive identity formation for their English Learning intercultural experiences.

Ghaida

Figure 18: Ghaida Journal Entry 18

In Figure 18 Ghaida describes in detail about how she feels about Love Park. I include it because it shows how her journal writing has complex emotions but again concludes with a positive statement. It also delves into international students' building of relationships with the city of Philadelphia. The city itself acts as another intercultural interaction--a character in their lives. Ghaida writes:

“Have you ever known what Philadelphia means?” (1)  The first part of this word “phila” means brotherly love and the second part means the city in
Greek language. (2) The brotherly love of the city has a famous statue. (3) It is LOVE. (4) This place is the most place I like in Philadelphia. (5) I used to go there in several situation, to enjoy my time, to relax and when I miss someone who I love such as my mother or anyone of my family members. (6) Furthermore, I go to it with my husband or with my friends to walk around it. (7) I can hear some “musick” from some people who play “musick” surround the park. (8) I see lovers take a picture. (9) Not only that, I see some love story with happy end or sad end. (10) This place is really emotional place. (11) I like to visit it even if I want to be alone some time. (12) I can change my bad feeling, sadness or anxious to be more relax and happy. (13)"

To begin, Ghaida starts her entry off in an academic way, by defining. This is also like how some travelers treat their journals. I appreciate how she connects the first sentence of defining with the 2nd sentence which transforms the city again into a character by first proclaiming “the brotherly love” of the city--she begins this by using the definition as a descriptor of the city, again the city as intercultural interaction is present, with the city as almost a person. She concludes sentence 2 in an almost cute, intriguing way: “it is a statue”. Sentence 3 is beautiful in its simplicity and its further seeming characterization of the city of Philadelphia: “It is LOVE”. Like many of the other excerpts I describe in this chapter, there is a poetic and playful vibe to the writing. It is not trying to be exact grammatically--it is working to convey a feeling, and because of this aim that interculturality tries to emphasize, Ghaida can work through her attachment to LOVE Park. Sentence 4 tells us important information: indeed, this is her favorite place in Philadelphia. She follows by telling us the many reasons why she enjoys Love Park. She visits to both enjoy and experience loneliness. Ghaida here is identifying with locations in the city that represent her joy, her sadness--she is connecting with the city in important life-sustaining ways that are not just about
happiness and excitement. The writing of this connection makes it even more real. In addition, sentence 5 provides a very direct example of being there with her husband and provides actual details in sentence 8 with hearing the music being played. She also talks about lovers she sees. What follows in sentence 11 is important because this place becomes a site in which her imagination expands: she imagines lovers' happy and sad endings.

Her sentences, leading up to her final sentence, are also very telling. When Ghaida feels negative, whether that's sad or angry, she says she goes here to feel happier and more relaxed, concluding with, not only this optimistic point of view that is the prevalent theme in many of these journals, but also by telling herself that this place is the place that will make her feel better--that her interaction with this park is both a healing and affirming part of her personal identity in this new culture and her image along with her writing are the third-space product that supports this. This is true for Ghaida, as well as for Dohee, Bin, Jianfei, and Han. Their interaction with the city and each other, and their expression of this through The Illustration Journal writing promotes interculturality, a positive self-translation, third-space identity growth and Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal production (through their Illustrated Journals).

**Illustrated Journal and Cultural Fluidity**

Important to building intercultural learners is the sense of moving with fluidity between and within cultures (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2014). Many of the students’ journals expressed this idea. While intercultural communication is difficult to achieve, the Illustrated Journal became a sort of agreed upon
language and action that has the ability to be a fluid intermediary between language and culture, producing a shared culture with diverse peoples and ideas.

**Dohee**

Figure 19: Dohee Journal Entry 19

Dohee’s Figure 19 is interesting because she hangs out with Korean friends in the beginning of the evening and then she hangs out with Min (the Industrial Design Master’s Fellow) and with Min’s Chinese friend she had never met before, showing her fluidity between different types of friends. While Dohee can move in and out of these groups with some fluidity she notes her initial nervousness at meeting Min’s Chinese friend.

"Before I met her friend I was a little nervous. (1) However, because we spoke English and we have a good time. (2) While we talked each other, I felt a confidence and I was surprised myself. (3) I thought these opportunities needs me improve my English skills. (4) Anyway, today was happy (5)"

In sentence #1 Dohee is very clear that she was nervous. However, this is
quickly overcome because they both speak what seems a similar type of English and enjoy each other’s company. In sentence 3 she observes and reflects that as they spoke for a longer time she gained “confidence” so much that it “surprised” her. Dohee then continues to realize, to declare that the action of speaking with new people from different cultures is indeed what will help her improve her English. She concludes by saying that today she was “happy”. Happy because she made a new friend. Happy because she spoke English well enough to express herself and make a new friend, highlighting interculturality’s perspective on the importance of wanting to express ones’ self as paramount to learning English. Happy because she also had Korean friends with whom she connected earlier in the day. Happy because she could move in and out of American contexts (movies, a music cafe) with friends of different languages (Korean, English, Chinese) and feel “confident” and have “a good time. I would say that her joy sprang from all of these scenarios.

The writing of that joy cements, makes it real, serves as an important reminder that spending time with friends of her own nationality, talking with people of different nationalities, moving in and out of different American contexts and speaking English is the key to her burgeoning positive intercultural academic and personal international/cultural identity, the keys to a more satisfied happy life as an International ESL student. Again, the writing and drawing, creating this story of herself serves as an incredibly useful third-space product showcasing her positive actions in situations she claims are initially hard but situations in which she finally concludes she overcomes and integrates her English speaking,
connection with the city, and international and Korean friends into her identity.

Wangyuel

Figure 20: Wangyuel Journal Entry 20

I include Figure 20 because I think it illustrates what makes Wangyuel feel satisfied and excited while also touching on feelings of insecurity, but again wrapping up with affirmative statements. Here we see a student already beginning to develop his academic identity that is closely knit with his personal identity. Once again, we see Philly as almost a character, a person the students are having a relationship with. As Wangyuel writes in Figure 20,

"My life in Philly makes me happy. (1) Today, I went to Merriam Hall. (2) I met my friends. (3) We played Jazz music. (4) After we played the music, we went to coffee shop. (5) We told about our gig. (6) Maybe we would play in Chris Jazz Cafe. (7) These days I was worried about my life. (8) However, I would focus on English. (9) I like to adapt in Philly life. (10) It makes me happy. (11)"
I appreciate how Wangyuel goes through an entire evolution of thought in this excerpt, ending with where he began but developing a deeper sense of that initial affirmation: “My life in Philly makes me happy.” Sentences #2 and 3 describe his going to the Music building and playing Jazz music with friends. The action of playing music and with friends seems to be connected to his idea of happiness. Here Wangyuel can connect his academics with his friendships creating a fluidity between those two relationships that is very positive for him. In lines 4-7, they then go to a cafe where they talk about possible future gigs, with even playing at a real Jazz Cafe.

I want to highlight here that they are in an American context at a cafe, talking about their dreams of playing at Chris’ in a style of music that many would define as uniquely American. This means that Wangyuel is experiencing a fluidity between his culture, his friendships, his new city, and his academic goals, developing a strong positive sense of his identity and investment as an international student musician. But then he abruptly switches gears in line 8 where he says that he is “worried” about his life. He does not elaborate on this, for better or worse. However, he does declare a solution in his next sentence: He will focus on his English studies. It seems amazing to me that his English studies is what will make him feel better since for many the study of English in a new culture causes a sense of frustration. I wonder if the writing brought him to this conclusion. Finally, he goes further to declare what will make him happy: continuing to “adapt” to his life in Philly because it makes him “happy.” This is so
interesting. Again, this notion of adapting to a new place is like developing a new intercultural relationship and it is one aspect of what makes these International Students build these stories of resiliency and joy, even in the struggles and the moments students like Wangyuel feel “worried”. His image is simple and perfect in illustrating his positive and affirming connection with Philadelphia.

**Youngsun**

![Figure 21: Youngsun Journal Entry 21](image)

I include figure 21 because this is a wonderful last page of her journal that includes her fluid sense of moving in and out of academic classes, speaking English with Korean friends, and bringing in her relationships and desires into the classroom using the third-space of the Illustrated Journal as the object which helps her move successfully through these intercultural contexts. She and other students are going to perform Carol King’s “I’m Really Rosie” as an extra credit assignment they devised based on our studying of Maurice Sendak and our visit
to the Rosenbach museum. As Youngsun writes in Figure 21,

"I'm really Rosie! (1) I'm looking forward to singing tomorrow. (2) After the practice I went to Junhee’s new house with Wangyuel (3) I cannot forget this (4) When I eat the dishes I feel more healthier than before. (5) I proud myself (in Conversation Class)...when I was speaking with them (other American students), I felt comfortable to speak English more than before first conversation class…(6)"

Youngsun’s first sentence is adorable and curious. However, it is this sentence, along with the image, that show she is exclaiming her excitement for singing Rosie, and she is feeling like the character Rosie, a precocious happy child. In sentence 2 she grounds the passage by saying that she is excited to sing the song. In sentences 3 and 4 she describes going to friends’ homes and eating delicious Korean food. In sentence 4 she writes that she "cannot forget this". I believe she is talking about this moment of feeling wonderful about her English classes--that she will be singing a Carole King song the next day in class (she is not a vocalist), that she has made such good friends and that she ate delicious Korean food--she is on the ground in America embracing this culture and language while also embracing her Korean culture, becoming a truly intercultural person. What is also interesting is the circular like design of the image, showing that the idea of creativity, academic success, friendships with both international and Korean friends is what creates a positive intercultural stance and the circular design suggests the continuation of this pattern, rather than the idea that identity growth is fixed.

In the final sentence, she declares that she is proud of herself. She notices an improvement in her ability to speak English and communicate with
other Americans. This passage speaks to the theme of the triumphal story. It is an affirmation of building a multi hybrid third-space identity: she is experiencing a new language, a new culture, even a new artistic medium and is embracing it all with joy, gratitude and zest.

Conclusion

The journals all emphasized the building of intercultural friendships, academic confidence, and a relationship with the city; these connections produce a triumphal story in images, written words, and shared discussion. Through the data we can see that it is not just the experiences themselves that help to attain these ideas. It is writing and illustrating and then dialoging about these entries that helps to affirm these experiences as part of one’s intercultural identity. It seems clear that the journal, coupled with the other activities, has many positive attributes that should be considered when shaping ELL curriculum.

This chapter has highlighted the intercultural learning that takes place because of the multimodal practice of the Illustrated Journal, creating products and selves representing third-space identity, one which students, faculty and the AU can reflect on and continue to grow with. Importantly in this reflection is the students’ ability to self-translate (Pavelenko, 2010) with Bruner’s narratorial consciousness (1984) in mind as international ELL students who are invested in the imagined communities they are in through adopting the communal and individual discourses of triumph and resiliency and the imagined communities they seek through their pride in their academic work and conversations. Finally, they self-translate as students with meaningful relationships with other
international and American students and with the city of Philadelphia. These relationships not only live within them but can be, as Gao discusses, legitimately narrated, playfully created and dialogically communicated. Thus, these students are adapting a personal and communal discourse through the Illustrated Journals, while, because they are art students, an academic discourse as well. Additionally, the data in this chapter affirms the social/communal and affinity group membership the project creates--this, according to Hyland, is one major aspect of defining a genre. Chapter 5 will conclude this study by looking at the journal as a specific genre with its implications for future study and curriculum.
Chapter 5: Overarching Themes and Recommendations

From Pagina en Blanco to Pagina en Color: The Illustrated Journal

Pagina en Blanco refers to a repeated phrase used in Junot Diaz’ brillant novel *The Brief Wondorous Life of Oscar Wao*. The novel is the story of Oscar de Leon, a poor Dominican immigrant who struggles with issues of identity, mainly because he does not fit the stereotype of the Dominican machismo male but is rather obese, a lover of writing and graphic novels, and he suffers from crippling depression. The novel also circles the life of the main narrator and family friend Yunior, a constant narrator in Diaz’ fiction and one that fits the machismo stereotype of the Dominican male. Finally, the novel is also about the sad decline of Oscar’s mother, his sister and the tragic history of the de Leon family in the Dominican Republic under the violent and tyrannical dictatorship of Trujillo. Each of these characters’ quests, but especially Oscar’s, reveals an essential truth for Diaz and one that he is trying to impart in this novel: immigrants can be powerhouses of destructive secrets about family history. These secrets have the power to destroy lives as they do in the de Leon family. Although Oscar’s fate is tragic, his quest to learn everything about his family and write it down for the rest of the family to read, learn from and heal is Oscar’s legacy. For all these confused and tragically sad characters, it is their blank, white pages, their “pagina en blanco” that ensnare them. Not knowing their history, the why behind their mother’s constant anger, is the most vital thing to solve for them to be able to reflect and move forward. This Diaz shows us is important for all of us, but is
most important for the lives of immigrants, as they leave a life behind to start a
supposed new blank or “white” one. Oscar filled in those pages for his family and
for Yunion, the narrator. As Junior says, Oscar’s writings and Junior’s telling of
the story (essentially the novel) was a “zafa” a lifting of the de Leon curse of not
knowing. Perhaps in this study’s case the “zafa” can also be thought of as third-
space of identity, the space where conflicting ideas of identity shape a cultural
product (the Illustrated Journal) that represents an identity fusion of sorts.

While the theme of identity in the novel is fraught with the violence and
despair of the tragedy of colonialism, and most International Students in this
study are middle-class and upper-middle class, their identities and ways of
seeing themselves are being reinvented as well in the sphere of what Diaz calls
“the Great American Doom” (Diaz, 2007, pg.5). While Universities strive to be
places of fairness outside the constraining bounds of racism, elitism, and
xenophobia, they still are American institutions and International Students
content with notions of how faculty see them as different and lacking in ways
that their American counterparts are not, as discussed in Chapter One. They are
also being thrust into a storytelling culture of the self. Diaz, a first-generation
Dominican, tells the ultimate American story, even if it is a critical anti-American
one: he tells the story of self and its ability to be redeemed through the retelling
of its many identities.

While the students in AELP are not writing to heal an identity that has
been necessarily hidden, they are writing to consciously proclaim their spaces
and assert themselves as student artists with their own legitimate narratives to
tell, not the stories we tell about them. For

“America signifies...displacement, marginalization, diaspora (Hall in Sundaram, pg. 86). Within this raggedy displacement, is the fertile possibility for creative genesis if Oscar and Yunior, (and in my study’s case, the International ESL students)...are willing to delve into their stories, connecting them with their present lives in America and future hopes” (Hall in Sundaram, pg. 86).

This displacement teems with possibility, along with ardent struggle.

The identities of the International Students in the AELP are obviously diverse and can never be fully known, understood, re-written, and it is not that past I am necessarily after, so much as it is the students consciously knowing the importance of telling that past and reimagining it, through their very present fusion of their identities in the United States, in their present writing in the program, and in the work they produce as artists. What becomes particularly interesting in combining the ideas of genre studies and Diaz’ “pagina en blanco” is that the genre of the Illustrated Journal brings forth past, present and reimagined identities and moves toward a communal identification of self as resilient, as students who are taking a risk by their very being in the US, and in that risk, and constant reimagining becoming triumphal resilient student-artists. Studies in genre theory helped me to work through and explore the content of the journal and its implications in the classroom, and Diaz' “pagina en blanco” helped me to realize a poetic more novelistic lens with which to better understand this phenomenon.
Particularly salient for the ways in which the idea of “pagina en blanco” relates to this research is the fact that in being honest about the struggles and ways to overcome the struggles without denying any student’s individual personal history, in fact invoking the individual personal history to help tell the common story of struggle and resilience, Diaz’ idea of “pagina en blanco” and the Illustrated Journal “emphasizes the relative freedom afforded by such a dynamic process of cultural identity formation, which allows a fragmented people to construct an identity that binds them together without denying their differences” (Hall in Sundaram p.19).

The genre of the AELP Illustrated Journal does not want to have cultural identity be a fixed idea, but rather it hopes to cultivate multiple views of culture and identity, making cultural identity a space of productive flux without easy solutions, even if, like in this study, most students’ entries conclude with the theme of resilience. For the Illustrated Journals, and as literary theorist Sundaram writes of Diaz’ “pagina en blanco,” “Cultural identity for Díaz is a site of conflict, in which redemption is possible … In the world of The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, as Dr. Manhattan says, “Nothing ever ends” (Díaz. p. 331). While the Illustrated Journal captures students’ histories and impressions on experiencing Philadelphia, the AU for the first time, it is understood that students will face many more moments of “pagina en blanco”. As this research shows, creating the Illustrated Journal will be one more repertoire for moving productively through personal, cultural and academic conflict.
Genre Studies and The Illustrated Journal

The genre of the Illustrated Journal draws on Diaz’ idea of “pagina en blanco” and like Oscar and Yunior urges AELP students to fill the white pages of their Illustrated Journals with their stories, their color. A genre is described by Ken Hyland as writing that is “Purposeful, socially situated responses to particular contexts and communities” (Hyland, 2004, p. 5). As the data in chapter 4 showed, AELP students developed their own discourses around the art-making and writing in their Illustrated Journal to reflect the general theme of resilience in the face of social, personal, cultural and academic struggle. This discourse was developed because of Hyland’s “socially situated responses to particular contexts and communities” (pg. 5). The Illustrated Journal, while individually created, was shared communally. The Illustrated Journals were created in reaction to the context of student international artists adjusting to two imagined communities, that of their lives in Philadelphia and with the AELP, and that of the future. The journals held their fears, hopes, struggles, and desires. The community of students and teachers, always reacting to the Illustrated Journals, and consciously or not, transformed those ideas into a discourse of triumph. While, the cultural activities, the dialogic communication occurring around the journal helped to create that theme, this chapter discusses too the role of The Illustrated Journal in and of itself in creating that trope. Simply, when we journal are we always going to try and end with some type of hope? Are the acts of writing and drawing themselves acts of hope? For students facing the excitement and struggle of creating a new life for themselves in a new culture and language, is it
important to provide a multimodal non-evaluative space for them to flesh out this experience? The data in this study shows how meaningful creating Illustrating Journals can be, not just for students’ personal enrichment but also for their academic sense of self. This chapter will work to define the genre of the Illustrated Journal to illuminate its contours, so that teachers and researchers can consider the implications of utilizing a multimodal non-evaluative form in the classroom, such as The Illustrated Journal.

The ESL Illustrated Journal Genre Defined as a Flexible Repertoire Building through everyday Art and Informal Writing

Drawing on Rymes’ idea of repertoires as having the ability to “help us move through our lives, be they academic, professional, or everyday encounters on the street, with more resiliency and curiosity” (2014, p. 14) this section shows that the journal not only builds additional repertoire for students in and of itself, but the Illustrated Journal also helps students reflect on the communicative repertoires they are building, solidifying them into more common practice. Those other repertoires include social, academic, relationships with their new city, and more. As the data shows, what makes the AELP Illustrated Journal a meaningful project is the building of expressive, communicative, and flexible repertoires. For example, when Wangyuel, a musician, tells us that the “journal made English more funny” he was also getting at the idea that creating art around language is a way that students’ artistic communicative repertoire, and for those like Wangyuel, art-making as an additional repertoire, adds to the complex richness of communication. The genre of the illustrated journal can be defined through its
action in fostering an additional expressive repertoire for students. “From the monolith perspective, languages exist as discrete, compartmentalized and, at times, daunting holes” (Rymes, 2014, p. 24). The repertoire perspective, however, sees multilingualism emerging out of everyday encounters and argues for the harnessing of those encounters and the building of them into a perspective from which we view language as always growing and transforming, and that as we interact in more natural ways with the multilingual opportunities around us, we build expressive repertoires. Again, as Rymes says, these repertoires “help us move through our lives, be they academic, professional, or everyday encounters on the street, with more resiliency and curiosity” (Rymes, 2014, p. 24). Here, the journal is the artifact of the repertoire being built and is the way in which students begin to see and analyze their cultural interactions and develop a philosophy around those interactions.

The genre of the AELP Illustrated Journal enables one to create a perspective or curiosity and resiliency because of the building of additional repertoire perspectives.

“From the repertoire perspective, combining languages in a single interaction happens effortlessly every day... languages can combine in multilingual interaction, from the most monolithic possibilities, to the more flexible and repertoire-oriented instances” (Rymes, 2014, p. 26).

Achieving this “flexible repertoire” through observing, writing, and drawing about their lives in Philadelphia--capturing it and their movements, their unique perspectives of it, allows them to develop their “Philly” repertoire, their “academic” repertoire, their “international student artist repertoire”. The examples
provided in Chapter 4 illustrate the personal ways students talked about their connections to Philadelphia, to each other and to their academic work. When considering utilizing a multimodal non-evaluative form like The Illustrated Journal, this research suggests that considering what repertoires are important for students to develop are important. The data also suggests that a genre like The Illustrated Journal has the potential to build on and develop personal and academic repertoires for the student.

**Illustrated Journal as “Work of Art” or “Working Art”**

Most ELL teachers rarely look at students’ writing as works of art; in fact, most often we bemoan its woeful state. Our job, after all, is to correct, highlight where they have gone wrong, these students with “low English proficiency”. As this study considers the ELL Illustrated Journals as works of art, teachers are given an invitation to think of their students as co-constructors of expression outside the realm of conventional academic writing. They are invited to explore language, art, and the complexities and endless fascination of expressionality. This stance is a very difficult place for many teachers to be. Some faculty have looked at me in shock, “You don’t grade the journals for grammar at all, not even quizzing them on one grammatical point?” I assure faculty that there are plenty of other places to engage in teaching the rules of grammar and the conventions of academic writing, but here we are interested in creating artistic books together. We are interested in only seeing, hearing, thinking, and feeling--and getting it down however we can but with as much creativity as we can. The journals, after all, can be read as works of art, of book art.
Lynda Barry, an influential book artist, graphic novelist, fiction writer, and scholar, who teaches writing and directs University of Wisconsin’s Institute for Discovery, created a course titled, “The Unthinkable Mind”, which is an inspiration for the AELP Illustrated Journal and is very helpful in defining the genre. “The Unthinkable Mind” is a course that is a creative writing course. Students get graded mainly for their “notebooks” that are full of writing, drawing, and journaling--and later become fiction and graphic stories. Students get graded on how many notebooks they fill in a semester, using her guidelines as to what “fill” means: different prompts, structures for writing but all are based on utilizing senses such as hearing and seeing and turning them into modes of analysis in shaping what students think, feel, see and ultimately draw and write. For Barry, designing and teaching this class was part of her journey as an artist and educator.

“I began keeping a notebook in a serious way when I met my teacher Marilyn Frasca...She showed me ways of using these simple things--our hands, a pen, and some paper--as both a navigation and expedition device, one that could reliably carry me into my past, deeper into my present, and farther into a place I have called the “image world”...I wasn’t quite 20 years old when I started my first notebook. I had no idea that 40 years later, I would not only still be using it as the most reliable route to the thing I’ve come to call my work, but I’d also be showing others how to use it too, as a place to practice a physical activity--in this case writing and drawing by hand--with a certain state of mind. This practice can result in what I’ve come to consider a wonderful side effect: a visual or written image we can call a “work of art”...by being present and seeing what’s there” (Barry, 2014, pg. 9).

This is important for the AELP Illustrated Journal because the genre is about the creative consistent work of being present in one’s space (the
community of students, the city of Philadelphia, alone in a new apartment or dormitory) and the ardent expressionality of that space through different repertoires other than students’ L1: informal English and art-making. For AELP students that space is defined by their culture, their experiences in Philadelphia, their past, their present and their future desires. Additionally, as we have seen, that space is also defined by individual written and visual expression in the journal and through creating a communal ethos, as well in the sharing of the journals. For AELP students the journal represents the art of experiencing a new culture. As Han says in her interview, “It is my art of my Philadelphia”. For this genre, Barry’s idea of the journal as art and as representative of “being present and seeing what’s there” are essential aspects in this genre’s definition.

The students’ examples in Chapter 4 show us that The AELP Illustrated Journal can be defined as not so much a “work of art”, in a precious hang me on the wall way, but in a way that looks at art as “working”, as having the ability to capture time and emotion and extract expression: written, illustrative, and verbal. The journal is the creative artistic way of being present in their lives as International ESL students and living in Philadelphia and reflecting on it, thus embodying an intercultural stance.

**AELP Illustrated Journal Genre as Interculturality in Process**

What does it mean to interact with a culture? How do we know another culture and begin to know ourselves in another culture? How do we change because of this immersion and how might we change this new world we inhabit? (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2013). These questions echo Bruner’s turning points and
the Illustrated Journal is the space where students voice their “narratorial consciousness” around these questions. Without reflecting in writing, drawing and speaking students might not engage these questions in the same way as if they were passing thoughts. Students become self-aware of their intercultural learning as they create entries about their relationship with each other, with the city, with the new personal and artistic culture, and with their academic lives. As we have seen, what defines the Illustrated Journal as intercultural is the students’ “interactionability” in their art, writing, and sharing as a means of both being in connection with and showing connection to their new city, Philadelphia, their fellow students, and their academics. Interacting with a culture using the Illustrated Journal as a genre for doing so means reflecting, noticing, and creating not only impressions, but also a guiding philosophy around how struggle is dealt with. Key in interacting with culture when using the Illustrated Journals is the importance of sharing cultural impressions not to assume the same thematic stance, although this is what occurred, but to engage in culture through not just noticing but also reflecting and building philosophy as both an individual and as a member of a group. This is a skill that will be continuously honed as they move through their academic degrees.

As has been noted, one of the most significant results of the Illustrated Journal, is building more intercultural and resilient learners. Therefore, one aspect of the genre is in its building of resiliency and interculturality. The complex and beautiful aspect of this is that the journals do not display this in ways that are always so easily identifiable. It is like reading a poem—you are getting many
voices and images of what it means to be resilient or experience interculturality. Therefore, while each student experiences interculturality, their voices and modes of expression in the written and visual are different. However, as we have seen, the Illustrated Journal can create a strong sense of shared narrative for the entire group.

When we share journals with each other, students of multiple languages with varying degrees of English proficiency, the evaluation in part becomes other students' interaction with the journals. They are evaluated through the conversations they provoke and the fascination they spur in the group, creating a communal creative consciousness that is connected to their identities as English speakers. This genre propels students to consider themselves creative users of language, language as fused with art and the creative self--as opposed to English language learning that exists as a monolith outside of themselves. It’s evaluated as a showcase of meaning, as an individual quest that ultimately helps create a multivalent communal ethos. The Illustrated Journal in its seeking of multiple voices through words and images in various voices is counter-evaluative, not non-evaluative. It favors creative expression over correctness. The Illustrated Journal is foundational practice ground for Intercultural competence and learning through creative and communal expression, two modes that will be instrumental for success in these students’ academic majors.

**AELP Illustrated Journal defined as a Communal Genre**

In addition, Hyland reminds us that Genre writing, particularly as explored by Halliday, is a socially situated approach whereby all members of the
community work towards the goals of that genre. Basically, as Hyland discusses (2015),

“Halliday’s theory systematically links language to its contexts of use, studying how language varies from one context to another and, within that variation, the underlying patterns which organize texts so they are culturally and socially recognized as performing particular functions” (Hyland, p. 248).

The AELP Illustrated Journal project moves from the individual realm of writing and drawing to the communal one in very purposeful ways as I have outlined. Structured classroom activities are designed to use the journal to stimulate discussion, question ideas, and act as drafts for academic essays. This communal goal of the Illustrated Journal highlights Hyland’s ideas around Genre studies as a communal action, not just a fixed idea.

“The concept draws attention to the idea that we communicate as members of social groups, each with its own norms, categorizations, sets of conventions, and ways of doing things. Essentially, the idea of community draws together key aspects of context that are crucial to the production and interpretation of spoken and written discourse: knowledge of a cultural and interpersonal situation, knowledge of interlocutors, knowledge of the world, and knowledge of texts and conventions for saying things” (Hyland, p. 249).

**Implications for Pedagogy: The Genre of the Illustrated Journal as an Intercultural Counter Methodology**

Moving away from a prescriptive methodology in the ESL classroom by utilizing multimodal narratives, such as The Illustrated Journal has proven to be important in the shaping of not only students’ but also teachers’ intercultural perspectives (2013). The journals act as a non-methodological space because they are created/designed by the students, and in doing so help to create a
communal cultural stance. While the teacher provides the tools, the students provide the design and the content. The fact that I, as researcher and teacher, am not a very skilled visual artist helps. The students are in the position of being more practiced in art and I am never critical of their art, but mostly in awe. This awe makes me curious about what they write and draw and its connection to their emerging identities as international student artists in Philadelphia in concert with their pasts. The journals are fascinating in what they tell and how they tell these complex stories. As Scarino and Liddicoat write,

"it is important to think beyond an understanding of teaching practice as method to consider how the complexity of lived experiences of linguistic and cultural diversity shape both the focus of language teaching and learning and the processes through which it happens in the classroom--what we call a perspective" (p. 3).

Through this research, I am arguing for a counter-methodology rooted in inquiry and meaning making for both teacher and student practiced through the journals.

Scarino and Liddicoat acknowledge Pradhu’s (1990) argument that it is necessary "to think of good teaching as an activity in which there is a sense of involvement by the teacher" (Pradhu, p.171). That is, the engagement of the teacher in the act of teaching is fundamental to good teaching. The journal creates a sense of reflection for the teacher. It calls into question assumptions the teacher might have about students or the ways in which the student is reflecting on their own learning experiences.

“For intercultural learning and classroom counter methodology… the relationships between students and teachers are “demonstrably active and alive…not based on some particular method” (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2014, p.4).
In the Illustrated Journal project method is driven by students’ collection of their ideas and the tellings and re-tellings of their histories and present experiences through art and English.

In addition, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) in Liddicoat and Scarino contends that,

“language teaching now faces a post-method condition, that is, language has moved beyond method as basic organizer of practice...more recognition to the role of the teacher in the act of teaching and constructs the relationship between theory and practice as closer and multivalent” (p.5).

This idea of teaching being multivalent is so important when considering the use of the Illustrated Journal--the voices, ideas are never predictable, but always multiple and so teaching becomes this very exciting, yes, “multivalent” practice.

Further, the Illustrated Journal project is a project where students are working to express multimodally their lived experienced--harkening back to Bruner’s idea that “the present is also busily about the past” (1984, p. 92).

In considering this idea in relationship to interculturality, counter-methodology, and Second Language Acquisition, Liddicoat and Scarino forward that,

“We understand intercultural language teaching and learning as an intercultural perspective, that is, as the self-awareness of the language teacher as a participant in linguistic and cultural diversity; it is therefore not simply a way of teaching, but a way of understanding lived experiences of language and culture as the framing for teaching...The intercultural in language learning is then a way of viewing the nature of language, culture, and learning as they come together in the acquisition of a new language” (p. 6).
The journal helps students foster this coming together and envelop new identity stances, and the journal also helps the teacher to explore what this means for students. Further, for Liddicoat and Scarino, Intercultural Learning, “is not a method because we understand teaching as dialogic relationships between theory and practice, between teaching and learning, and between teacher and student…framework is continuously evolving, based on teachers’ distinctive worlds of experience and reflection on that experience” (Scarino, 2005a, p. 9).

The journal becomes this amazing dialogic medium between student and self, student and other students and student to faculty. It also becomes a hopeful bridge linking student to student current experiences and reflections. Therefore, this dissertation forwards the notion that, “intercultural oriented language teaching and learning places the learners themselves at the focus of intercultural engagement” (p. 9).
Conclusion: From Pagina en Blanco to Pagina en Color: Defining The Illustrated Journal as Genre

I have titled this chapter “From Pagina en Blanco to Pagina en Color: Defining The Illustrated Journal as Genre” because the dissertation shows the ways in which AELP International Students take the notion of Diaz’ white page and fill it with their stories, and literally and figuratively their color. The white page represents a number of things for our students: fear of a new culture, fear of English language learning, a visual representation of Hall’s “decentering”, the deficit perspective assigned to them. The color and writing students add, the ways in which they go about designing their Illustrated Journals represent the students’ overcoming these challenges achieving intercultural identities individually and communally through building third-spaces and identities as resilient explorers with Gao’s legitimate and dialogic voices as artists and writers.

Considering Diaz’ “pagina en blanco” and utilizing an intercultural stance the color and writing of student histories and present and future goals, helps to create productive third-space identities for the students but also highlights the Illustrated Journal as a vibrant, colorful, complex artistic creation of third-space, counter to the blank/white (blanco) deficit perspective and notion that international students have little to offer. For, through the usage of the full expressionality of the Illustrated Journals, the writing, art-making, drafting of essays and very importantly, the conversation and theme building they create together, the students in this study practiced becoming Gao’s dialogic communicators not only in the fusion of their past and present lives, but also in
the act of investment in their imagined academic communities of the future. For the artist book is part of the cultural capital of their academic disciplines. Finally, their pages in color represent their building of an important theme of this genre together through their individual struggles and their communal themes of resilience and triumph. The student-centered creation of the genre of the Illustrated Journal and theme of resiliency answers the Scarino and Liddicoat question posed at the beginning of the chapter: “How do we change and how might we change this new world we inhabit?” Further, as Younie did with her 1427 Days thesis exhibit, I hope the AELP students, as a result of their experiences using The Illustrated Journal, stay curious and resilient and continue to ask and answer through their art and lives: “How might we change this new world we inhabit?”

The research in this dissertation highlights what happens when ELL practitioners to (1) utilize multimodal genres in a classroom in purposeful ways (2) consider practicing in genres that are counter evaluative so that both teachers and students can experience a sense of excitement in the classroom (3) utilize genres that work to enhance ELLs academic, personal, and cultural identities (4) consider using genres that are both open and creative, while also holding important cultural capital in the communities of the English Language Learner (5) utilize multimodal genres like The Illustrated Journal to help students develop various forms of expressionality that encourage productive dialogue and investment in their current communities and imagined communities of the future.
Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

As discussed above there are numerous benefits of using a multimodal genre like the Illustrated Journal. Using the Illustrated Journal in the AU highlighted these benefits. While I believe that the Illustrated Journal can work in an environment other than an Arts University, I do think it will be important to connect any multimodal genre to something that has cultural capital in the environment in which the ELL class is taking place. This research has shown that notions of investment are very important for ELL student buy-in. In some environments art-making might need to be very directive and proscriptive, perhaps limiting the openness and genre creation students bring. Ultimately, though it is through the conversation around the journals that many of the tropes of resilience are built. A journal project like the one described in this research, should always be considering dialoging activities that are built from the verbal reflections and sharing of the journals.

In addition, the buy-in from faculty across an ELL program to the usage of an Illustrated Journal is very important as well. The semester of this study, the teachers were particularly invested in the Journal project—not necessarily in the result of a beautiful book, but rather the process. I can imagine that this might not always be the case. In using a genre that is so open, consistent engaged encouragement from faculty is vital for the students to be very productive in a project like The illustrated Journal.

For Future research, I believe it will be illuminating to conduct a similar
study with a different group of students to understand how much the group
dynamic influenced the ways in which the Illustrated Journals were created, in
particular, the group’s emphasis on themes of triumph and resilience. It would be
interesting to also examine the faculty’s influence on this theme as well.

Finally, I would be very interested in designing and researching the effects
of an Illustrated Journal project for elementary-secondary school settings in
community refugee programs with the intent on utilizing Illustrated Journal
assignments that did seem to overtly spark themes of resilience and triumph in
adjusting to a new culture. In the current climate that feels quite hostile to
immigrant cultures in the United States, it might be very important to design
curriculum that values the cultural home identities of our younger
immigrant/refugee cultures, while also emphasizing their investment in their
future communities and our commitment to helping them develop articulate and
creative modes of expression to communicate and engage collectively with
confidence and resilience.
References


