Curriculum Disruption:
A Vision for New Practices in Teaching and Learning

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Abstract:
With increased attention to measurable, common student achievement outcomes, the experience of both students and teachers has been overlooked. While measurable outcomes may possess value, they have served to shift the focus of schools, administrators, and teachers to writing curriculum that centers on assessable content learning rather than meaningful educational experiences for teachers and students alike. This study of a recent teacher workshop examines a lesson planning approach that is based on John Dewey's notion of the aesthetic experience and places such experiences at the heart of the educational enterprise. Findings include the notion of curriculum disruption, which refers to an alteration of the improvement trajectory of standardized curricula, offering innovation in lesson planning.

In the standardized, test-driven world of contemporary education, a great deal of attention has been placed on common student achievement outcomes with the hope of improving the education of all public school students in the US. While such a goal is ostensibly worthwhile, a number of unintended side effects have resulted, particularly as they relate to curriculum.

First, the aim of helping underserved students through a standardized curriculum is counter-productive in so far as it leads to what Maxine Greene (1988) calls a "one-dimensional 'excellence'" (p. 12) in which diversity is ignored or marginalized. Such standardization, according to Peter Taubman (2009), "... homogenize(s) diverse populations, locations, and

situations," which, "in fact masks the real differences among groups, individuals, schools and locations, differences in resources, societal treatment, histories, and power" (p. 114).

Second, a focus on quantifiable results has shaped the educational milieu in such a way that energies are placed on raising test scores rather than producing significant and memorable learning experiences. Taubman (2009) puts it this way:

> We have arrived at a moment when students and teachers are subjected to a curriculum driven by disconnected multiple-choice questions or essay prompts that must be answered in a set amount of time and that have little if any relationship to problems, interests, or speculations that we might associate with thinking, erudition, creativity, or a curriculum animated by and responding to the flux of the classroom. (p. 17)

Third, with the connection of student test scores to teachers' job security, there is an increased focus on producing effective test results, often forcing teachers to develop and/or teach curricula that are test-preparation focused, and to forego what might otherwise be meaningful learning experiences because they are "untested." Taubman (2009) refers to these practices as producing an "audit culture" (p. 108). In such a system, according to Greene (1998), "at once, teachers and administrators are helped still to see themselves as functionaries in an instrumental system geared to turning out products, some (but not all) of which will meet standards of quality control" (p. 13).

Taken together, the emphasis on standardization, the privileging of quantifiable results, and the test-focused curriculum have produced what Elliot Eisner (1995) argues are "distractions." He notes that:

> Standards distract us from the deeper, seemingly intractable problems that beset our schools. It distracts us from paying attention to the importance of building a culture of schooling that is genuinely intellectual in character, that values questions and ideas at least as much as getting right answers. It distracts us from trying to understand how we can provide teachers the kind of professional opportunities that will afford the best among them occasions to continue to grow through a lifetime of work. It distracts us from attending to the inevitable array of interactions between teaching, curriculum, evaluation, school organization, and the often deleterious expectations and pressures from universities. (p. 758)

Considering the side effects of an overemphasis on standards, we developed lesson plan strategies that seek to counteract the standards- and testing-focused curriculum planning methods (see Uhrmacher, Conrad, & Moroye, 2013). In short, these strategies, which draw on the aesthetic ideas of John Dewey (1934), the arts-based curriculum of Elliot Eisner (2002), and the process philosophy focus as elaborated upon by Donald Oliver and Kathleen Gershman (1989), examine the ways in which the lesson planning process itself can be transformed into a meaningful experience not only for the teacher, but also for his or her students. We call our approach Perceptual Lesson Planning (a broad umbrella term under which a number of aesthetic approaches may be found), or CRISPA, which is an acronym that stands for six elements that teachers might draw upon to create the conditions necessary for an aesthetic experience. These

elements include connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement. We will examine these in more depth momentarily.

Recently, we held a Perceptual Lesson Planning (CRISPA) workshop for practicing teachers in Denver, Colorado with the intention of providing a lesson-planning model that would offer another way to think about curriculum development. Rather than focusing upon the standards and testing outcomes, we invited teachers to focus upon the experiences created for students. In this venue one teacher reported that she saw this work as a "curriculum disruption." Referring to her visual rendering (see Figure 1) of the lesson-planning process, she said, "all of this confusion here (in the middle) is the lessons that were learned here today (at the CRISPA workshop), it's the ***disruption*** in the lesson plan."

Figure 1. Disruption.

Her usage of the word "disruption," recalled for us Gilles Deleuze's notion of the "untimely"—something that interrupts "the tendency to sameness, uniform quantification, the fixing of all becomings through one measure or 'territory'" (as cited in Colebrook, 2002, p. 65). This teacher's quotation also drew us to examine the notion of disruption theories generally, and those circulating in the business world in particular (Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008; Dru, 2002), which we discuss below.

The purpose of this paper is to first report on the data collected and analyzed by a three-person research team from the aforementioned CRISPA workshop, and then to consider what disruption looks like in education. In this paper, we report on our most recent findings about the implications of this aesthetic approach in teacher lesson planning. While we believe these findings are important and that teachers and teacher educators ought to take note, we also discuss the theory by which we unpack our findings that we refer to as "curriculum disruption," a novel theory for the field of curriculum studies.

Background and CRISPA Overview

The idea of using the arts and aesthetic theories as ways to conceive of education broadly-speaking has been at the heart of the work of many of leading educators (e.g., Barone, 2000; Broudy, 1994; Eisner, 1985; Greene, 2001; Jackson, 2000; Smith, 2014) and constitutes an entire section in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman's (1995) classic tome, *Understanding Curriculum* (specifically pages 567-604). Further, two well-regarded academic journals publish research specifically attuned to such matters: *Journal of Aesthetic Education* and the *Journal of*

Aesthetics and Art Criticism. In the 1960s, the Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (CEMREL) created an aesthetic education curriculum for grades K–6 and it established eleven teacher professional development centers to support it. CEMREL defined aesthetic education as how "to perceive, judge, and value aesthetically what we come to know through our senses" (Madeja & Onuska, 1977, p. 3). Over the years various organizations (e.g., The Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Center, Young Audiences) aimed to bring the arts and an aesthetic education (albeit with slightly different definitions of the aesthetic) into elementary and secondary schools as well as into teacher education.

In accordance with such works, Uhrmacher has since 1993 been the faculty advisor to the Aesthetic Education Institute of Colorado[1] (The Institute), which has been co-organized by Think360Arts and the Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver. The Institute provides professional development for teachers (K-12) using the arts (generally dance, theater, visual art, music, and poetry) as a foundation. Today, many think of The Institute as providing an integrated arts approach to education through teaching-artists. The evaluations of the yearly summer workshops have generally been excellent. In fact, many frequently comment that the Institute transformed their lives (Uhrmacher & Bunn, 2005). Clearly, something important takes place in this week-long workshop.

We (a collective of faculty, DU students and alumni) have over time studied this Institute and its effects (see Perlov, 1998; Romero, 1997). Moreover, based on our observations and interpretations of the Institutes along with John Dewey's (1934) ideas on aesthetic experience, we developed a framework to understand and to create the conditions for aesthetic learning experiences (Uhrmacher, 2009). In short, our framework was built by observing, over a number of years, artists work with teachers on professional development. In various workshops, artists engaged practicing teachers in the creative process by having them participate in dance, theatre, visual art, music, and poetry. Our observations led us to discern a set of salient features that describe the interactions among participants as well as characteristics of the experience. We then took those salient features and compared them to John Dewey's ideas about the aesthetic experience, as he used the term in *Art as Experience* (1934). In our comparison of our observations with Dewey's theory, we identified six consistent elements that we suggest are aspects (or dimensions) of an aesthetic experience. Thus, when utilized or tugged upon, each dimension leads one to a greater possibility of having an aesthetic experience.

We should point out that in his characteristic manner, Dewey (1934) does not provide a specific definition to the term "aesthetic experience." Rather, he characterizes it in numerous ways. In one place, Dewey (1934) states:

> Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened
> vitality. . . .it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at
> its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the
> world of objects and events. . . .Because experience is the
> fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a
> world of things, it is art in germ. Even in its rudimentary forms, it
> contains the promise of that delightful perception which is esthetic
> experience. (p. 19)

Stated differently, Dewey (1934) notes that all experiences have the potential to be ordinary or extraordinary. When one's experience can be described as being fully present and

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[1] The Aesthetic Education Institute of Colorado has recently been renamed the Institute for Creative Teaching. Please see http://think360arts.org/what-we-do/professional-development.

riveted to the moment, when one's senses are heightened, and when one might describe his or her experience as having been "consummated" or fully complete, we may call that an aesthetic experience.

When we conduct our workshops, teachers get the idea about an aesthetic experience when we characterize it as one in which an individual may be transfixed by watching geese fly overhead beneath a blue sky, dotted with white clouds. As a kind of shorthand, we often refer to these as "wow experiences." We also note that since Dewey (1934) pointed out that any experience has the opportunity to become an aesthetic experience, then classroom learning activities have that potential as well.

Therefore, referring to the elements of an aesthetic experience, we note six ways that teachers may turn an ordinary activity into something truly memorable. These include connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experience, perceptivity, and active engagement—CRISPA (see Uhrmacher, 2009; Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, 2010; Uhrmacher et al., 2013).

Connections refer to the ways in which people become engaged with ideas, books, media, or materials in the learning environment. These connections may be intellectual, emotional, sensorial, communicative (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1991), and/or social. That is, students may connect with the subject matter at-hand cerebrally, viscerally, and through their senses. They may also relate to the topic by feeling an attachment to the time period (e.g., the Victorian era), culture, or through actual people (e.g., when studying math, one may connect to an understanding of actual mathematicians). One may also find a social connection to the class activity—social refers to the fact that sometimes we become engaged in an activity because of the people around us. Teachers who find ways to connect students to the curriculum in a variety of ways ensure that they stay engaged throughout the learning experience.

Risk-taking refers to students' opportunities to try something new, to step out of their ordinary routines. Researchers have pointed out that risk-taking may increase students' cognitive development, as well as their creativity, self-motivation, and student interest in subject matter, such as science (see Uhrmacher & Bunn, 2011).

Imagination refers to the manipulation of qualities or ideas. Imagination may be intuitive, in which a person has a sudden insight; fanciful, in which a person combines unexpected elements such as with a dancing tree; interactive, in which a person works with materials to yield a product; or mimetic, in which a person mirrors or mimics the creative work of another.

Sensory experience includes at least one person and a sensory interaction with an object or place. The student uses her senses to investigate and engage with the object in order to discern its various subtle qualities. Sensory experience also refers to a sensory-rich environment that enhances the student's experience. Obvious examples include math manipulatives or science experiments, but more subtle sensory experiences might include background music during a writing activity or using drums to play the rhythmic meter in sonnets.

Perceptivity describes a deepened sensory experience during which one thoroughly examines the object using one or more senses. The goal of perceptivity is to see or re-see in order to know more. In this case, the senses are used to directly know more about a particular object, such as a bird's nest. How are the twigs and leaves woven together? Might we distinguish various odors? What do the sounds of the materials teach us?

Active engagement requires students to fully participate in their own learning. This includes physical activity, making choices, and/or creating personal meaning. Teachers may, for example, work with students to create a menu for ways to represent their learning, or the class may work through an experiential problem, such as a role-play, debate, or simulation.

The six elements of an aesthetic experience might be used in a variety of combinations. Also, teachers might use them in the initial planning of their lessons, or in the moment to energize an otherwise bland or uninteresting class session. Regardless of when they are utilized, the elements of CRISPA can serve as intentional curricular choices that can increase the likelihood of students having aesthetic experiences during a lesson.

Methodology

Our previous research has investigated what the CRISPA elements look like in the classroom, and we have provided elsewhere vignettes of activities and student experiences[2]. The present study follows up on one of our unexpected findings that the teachers had "euphoric" experiences while engaged in curriculum planning with the aesthetic elements of CRISPA (Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009). To explore this idea, we asked two research questions:

- How do experienced teachers perceive and use the CRISPA elements?
- What do the elements mean to the teachers in terms of their professional work and lives?

We employed the research methodology of Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism, a humanities-based method, largely conceptualized by Elliot Eisner (2002) that aligns with our research in aesthetics and the arts. This method, which has been used internationally over several decades (Moroye, 2009), is a qualitative methodology designed to improve education (Eisner, 1997). The conceptual underpinnings of this method have been elaborated at length elsewhere (Eisner, 1997; 2002) and therefore we provide a brief overview of the general procedures.

There are four components to Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism (henceforth referred to as Educational Criticism), which are interconnected and serve to guide the researcher (Eisner, 1997). The first component is description, which is the actual portrayal of what the connoisseur(s) saw or heard. In this article we offer detailed descriptions in the form of vignettes of the one-day workshop as well as descriptions of the artifacts they created illustrating their experience with CRISPA. The descriptions are written in the first-person by the researcher who facilitated the workshop so as to provide an authentic account of the experience. Along with this description, we weave in focus group data that we incorporate in our analysis. We coded the focus group data to arrive at themes connected to the teachers' perceived outcomes of working with this particular model, CRISPA.

The second component of Educational Criticism is interpretation, which is our analysis of what we observed in the workshop and in the images they created. Our interpretations are woven into the descriptions of these two entities. The third component is evaluation, which connects to Eisner's (1997) idea that Educational Criticism should aim to improve education. We offer this evaluation after the descriptions and interpretation, sharing the ideas surrounding curriculum disruption. The fourth component, thematics, explains the concepts that emerge from the data. The themes that emerged in the present study came in the form of four outcomes caused by curriculum disruption.

Our data collection took place when co-author Bradley Conrad conducted a one-day, eight-hour workshop on CRISPA for practicing teachers. There were 14 participants, six men and nine women, with two African-American participants and 12 White. All of the participants were practicing teachers from a variety of districts and grade levels, including four elementary teachers, three middle school teachers, and seven high school teachers from an array of content

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[2] For examples of lessons plans and classroom vignettes that illustrate the CRISPA elements, we invite the reader to explore www.crispateaching.org and to review our previously published work, specifically Moroye and Uhrmacher (2009; 2010) and Uhrmacher et al. (2013).

areas. The teachers attended the workshop in response to an invitation to participate in a one-credit seminar at the University. All attendees were given the option to participate in the study and only those who agreed are included in the data analysis and findings. Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to bring in a lesson plan they had used in their classes that they would consider a typical lesson plan.

During the workshop, participants learned about Perceptual Lesson Planning (CRISPA). The facilitator introduced each element of CRISPA, one-by-one, supported with examples. They then solicited other examples from the participants who then applied the element to the lesson plan they brought to the workshop. At the conclusion of this exercise, participants compared their original lesson plan with the one they had altered with CRISPA.

At the close of the workshop, to both gather information and to model a CRISPA idea, Conrad asked participants to create a watercolor representation of their experience in response to this question: *What was it like to go through the process of thinking about lesson planning in these terms using the CRISPA elements?* After participants had time to create their picture, Conrad debriefed and audio recorded the process through an open-ended, 45-minute focus group during which he asked participants to explain what their pictures meant and how they conveyed their experiences. The focus group allowed participants to debrief a shared experience while exploring and explaining what that experience meant to them.

After the workshop, the other two researchers, Moroye and Uhrmacher, independently and then collaboratively analyzed the 14 watercolors and the transcript of the focus group discussion. Similar to the process outlined by Saldana (2009), we conducted two rounds of coding culminating in a third round of categorization and then subsequent thematic findings. The First Cycle (Saldana, 2009) coding consisted of independent descriptive codes focused on the experiences of the participants as portrayed through their comments during the focus group and the watercolors they created. We used such nomenclature as "lesson planning" and "experience of teacher" and "experience for students." We identified instances of corroboration and dissidence between the participants' verbal and visual representations of their experiences. In other words, we did not rely upon our own interpretations of the participants' drawings. Rather, we used the combination of their comments about their work with the images they created to more deeply perceive what the workshop meant to them. The Second Cycle (Saldana, 2009) coding, conducted jointly by Moroye and Uhrmacher, began with a comparison of our independent codes and resulted in refined categories of planning experiences: attention to the student experience; creativity; and professional transformation. From the categories the data took shape in the form of four thematic findings, which then informed our theory of disruption.

<div align="center">Presentation of Data and Findings</div>

We provide responses to our research questions by using, as educational criticism suggests, an artful representation of data accompanied by vignettes depicting the research setting and activities (also see Barone & Eisner, 2011). We then directly revisit the questions. We include a vignette in four parts written by Conrad, the facilitator of the workshop. Note that they are written in first person to reflect the participatory nature of the research.

Fading Malaise

> *The smell of coffee and a feeling of malaise emanates from a third-story university classroom as 14 teachers slowly file into the space where they will participate in a one-day CRISPA lesson planning seminar. One woman saunters in the room wearing gray sweatpants and a yellow hooded sweatshirt. She drags her feet*

through short steps, almost as though sleepwalking; she carries a paper cup filled with coffee to her desk, nearly spilling some as she sits down. Another male teacher slouches in the padded chair of his desk, staring blankly up to the ceiling, periodically nodding his head just prior to falling asleep. The lethargy in the room is almost palpable; there is hardly a sound in the classroom, save the sound made by my dry erase marker being rubbed against the whiteboard as I write the agenda for the day. There is a subtle irony to the listless mood in the room, as they signed up for this workshop to see how innovation and creativity might invigorate their lesson planning.

Serving the role of facilitator, I share with the teachers that they are going to go through each element of CRISPA, beginning with "connections", and in that process, they will consider each element before applying it to the lesson plans have brought with them.

"So the 'C' in CRISPA stands for connections," I begin. What do you think of when you think of connections?"

"They're like when you feel drawn to something or see something in another person or object that you relate with," a woman answers.

"Nicely said," I affirm before going into more detail on the types of connections one might make.

This definition is displayed on a handout and a PowerPoint presentation on the screen in front of the room. The participants are then asked, "Who has an example of what a connection might look like?"

"I think of music," a male participant replies. "So for example, I love the Smashing Pumpkins…the alternative rock band…and I have (loved them) since I first heard them. I remember hearing their song 'Today' for the first time on the radio, 1992. They speak to me."

"Great example. Now let's think about that with your lesson plan. Where is a place that you can help students connect with the material you are teaching? What kind of space can you create and/or activity can you provide to help them make a strong connection to the content of your lesson?" As the participants ponder the question, they begin to work quietly, looking at their lessons as they make notes, but in but a few moments, they begin to confer with one another, unprovoked, as a buzz begins to fill the room. The participants are then invited to share what they have done with a few people around them. One participant remarks, "This is a lot more interesting than what I had."

I then utilize a similar format to familiarize them with the "R", "I", "S", "P", and "A" elements of the CRISPA acronym, examining and then asking the teachers to apply other elements of

the acronym to their lesson plans. There is a gradual crescendo in the room as participants talk excitedly about what they have done, periodically calling the facilitator over to get feedback or just share. During the peak of sound and energy, people are sprawled about the classroom, many having left their desks to sit on the floor or at a few stray chairs that were resting in the corner of the room. Participants now talk excitedly of how much better their lesson plans are than they were before.

Disruption

After a few hours of working through the ideas as a group, I invite the participants to visually illustrate what this experience of using CRISPA with their lesson plans was like. They do this by using watercolors, crayons, or markers on a small canvas to symbolically represent this experience. After working diligently, some with slow intention while others as if in a fit of creativity, I announce, "OK, if you could come to a logical stopping point, I want to hear what this process was like for you. You may comment on the picture, I'd love to see the picture, or you may not. What is it like to go through the process of lesson planning using the elements (of CRISPA)?"

*After a brief silence, Sarah offers, "You know I tried to display it in my picture here (See Figure 1), but it's almost like the calming of the sea and in lesson planning, everything is part of it. All of this confusion here is the lessons that were learned here today, it's the **disruption** in the lesson plan. I think you have these rainbow colors here that show it putting everything together to blend. We have this neutral color here where it's all satisfied and together to be as one."*

Curriculum and Disruption

In the process of analyzing our data, the above quotation struck a chord that we believe warrants further attention. In short, the participant is saying that CRISPA is the disruption in the lesson planning process and the plan itself. Although we did not have the opportunity to interview the participant later to see what exactly she meant by her usage of the term, her quotation provided the material to propel our thinking and interpret our data from a fresh viewpoint.

Disruption often refers to something negative, such as when we say that the students are disrupting the class, meaning that learning is not happening. But disruption may also be used in a positive way, as a force that blocks a diatribe of power. Disrupting the discourse in order to focus on a set of new ideas and issues and to get at root causes of problems as opposed to perceived surface matters has been a point of discussion for postmodernists (Graham, 2011), race theorists (Blackmore, 2010; Writer, 2008), feminist scholars (Fine, 1992; Shinew, 2001), and those concerned with curriculum (Iseke-Barnes, 2009; Munroe, 1998; Sleeter, 2009) and teaching (Stone, 1996).

Often the writer's goal is to disrupt theory and practice with the aim of social justice. For some, such as Foucault, who said, "I take care not to dictate how things should be," the writer's purpose is achieved once such a disruption is surfaced (as cited in Graham, 2011, p. 664).

Foucault "wrote provocatively to disrupt equilibrium and certainty, so that 'all those who speak for others or to others' no longer know what to do'" (as cited in Graham, 2011, p. 664). While the goal of disorientation is meaningful for a variety of purposes, our data suggest that disruption can be further theorized. In particular, we wondered if the disruption the participant noted was one that stopped at disruption, or if it was an experience that led to something else.

To explore and interpret our data, we turned then to works in the business literature, where the notion of disruption is receiving a great deal of attention and is even being applied to education. For example, Christensen, Horn, and Johnson (2008) point out in their observant and creative text, *Disrupting Class: How disruptive innovation will change the way the world learns* that there are two types of innovation: sustaining and disrupting. Christensen, with his colleagues (2008), applies these two notions of innovation in the business world to the field of education. Briefly, sustaining innovations support and improve the performance of a product: airplanes should fly farther, computers ought to process faster, and cellular phone batteries might last longer (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 46). Disruptive innovations, however, do not provide an advance in improvement:

> Instead of sustaining the traditional improvement trajectory in the established plane of competition, it disrupts that trajectory by bringing to the market a product or service that actually is not as good as what companies historically had been selling. Because it is not as good, the existing customers…cannot use it. But by making the product affordable and simple to use, the disruptive innovation benefits people who had been unable to consume…the product. (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 47)

The authors point out that the personal computer is a classic example. PCs eventually replaced the large, expensive mainframes created by companies such as IBM. While initially personal computers such as the Apple IIe were not as good as the mainframes, they appealed to a new constituency: children in schools instead of corporate executives. The rest of the story should be well known (if not, see Isaacson, 2011).

From this point of view on disruption theory we would note that CRISPA was not about creating an improved lesson plan in the sense that it would necessarily yield a more efficient, standardized lesson to meet state objectives. Rather, CRISPA is about disrupting the improvement trajectory and offering an innovation: it can, among other things (explained below) enhance creativity. Also, its new constituency is the teacher him or herself and not administrators or others who wish to dissect the teacher's commitment to state standards and objectives. This is a significant disruption to curriculum as it is currently contemplated and utilized in education. Scripted curricula like the Springboard program, Everyday Math, Success for All, and Open Court, just to name a few, have become increasingly popular in schools as a means to meeting the demands required by standardized testing (Milosovic, 2007). These curricula, which remove the teachers from the curriculum making process, transform teachers into curriculum implementers. Perceptual Lesson Planning is a clear disruption to such a perspective and (re)places the teacher at the heart of curriculum work.

Jean-Marie Dru (2002) offered another viewpoint on disruption theory in the field of advertising. From his perspective, disruption is built upon on a three-step process: convention, disruption, and vision. Arguing that disruption differs from 'change' generally and simply something 'new' in particular, Dru (2002) suggests that disruption is about changing the rules of convention and offering a new vision. For example, Absolut Vodka "positioned itself as a

fashion brand rather than a spirits brand. It resisted the conventional approach of relying on the product's provenance and heritage" (Dru, 2002, p. 20). *Convention*: the premium quality of a spirit brand lies in its provenance. *Vision*: Absolut is about a fashion brand. *Disruption*: Transform the bottle into an icon, and build a territory around who drinks it and where (Dru, 2002, p. 24). A key point we learn from Dru (2002) is that disruption has vision—or to put it another way, what happens after the disruption?

Post-Disruption Reflection and Response to Research Questions

To review, our initial research questions included:

1) How do experienced teachers perceive and use the CRISPA elements?
2) What do the elements mean to the teachers in terms of their professional work and lives?

As data analysis progressed, our findings have led us to consider the responses to these questions in terms of what happens when the lesson planning process is disrupted. It is important to note that none of these directly relate to improving student performance on standardized tests, though they may. More importantly, these possibilities focus on what has largely been ignored in the standardized testing movement – the actual educational experience for students and for teachers. The four possibilities revealed as themes from our data, which do focus on educational experience, include that the CRISPA disruption:

1. Enlivened the experience for teachers of planning their lesson.
2. Enhanced attention toward the student experience in the classroom.
3. Provided the possibility for creativity by students and teacher (tools to be creative).
4. Provided the potential for transformative experiences for teachers that change the way they view themselves and their professional responsibilities.

The first theme is a response to our first research question that sought to understand the teachers' experiences with CRISPA. The second, third and fourth themes relate to the second research question that sought to ascribe meaning for teachers' work and lives. Let's return to the vignette and take a look at the discussion in the classroom with an eye towards these four possibilities.

Enlivened Experience of the Teacher and Enhanced Attention toward Student Experience

Responding to the woman who notes disruption, Beth adds, "I have something similar to you but backwards. Mine started off neutral, kind of gray and white, and that's how I thought of the lesson and I thought, 'As I learn more possibilities and incorporate more senses and perception and stuff… then it turned into this other side.' I thought it made everything more vivid and experiential."

Tom then shared, "Mine exploded and then there were some products maybe in the same shape but have more facets that are by themselves. (CRISPA) really helped an awful plan; the ultimate goal being adding all of those different experiences for the students and for us."

Stuart added, "My original lesson plan was predictable, black and white, orderly, before it traveled through the gray area where it was less predictable, kind of messy, but much more interesting that led to the light of what I ended up with."

After a long pause, Lisa said, "This is my picture and the black part is the void in my mind and my boring lesson plans;

they're still kind of jagged around the edges and this is the white space where I'm still thinking about things and things are still coming together in this beautiful symphony of colors; I definitely felt that today."

These quotations illustrate two of the dominant themes that emerged from these data: enlivenment of the experience of teachers and enhancement of attention toward the student experience in the lesson. As noted in previous studies, using CRISPA changes the way teachers characterize their experience of planning a lesson. The process of applying the elements to their content is intrinsically rewarding and meaningful. Further, the teachers noted that they focused more deeply and intentionally on what students would be doing during the lesson, thus enhancing their attention to the learning experience. This is a shift from those who focus on how a learning objective might be met in a test, essay, or even an activity.

The experience gains equal ground with the standards and content. As Mark discussed his watercolor he says, "I did mine through my students' perspective. Over here is the fact that we have to create meaning; obviously it's not constrained, it's outside. There's lots of colors, lots of sensory stuff going on, beautiful birds. The student here is not on fire, but he's full of passion." While Mark focused on the ways in which students will make meaning, Marcie reflects on how she can take an existing "core" lesson and view its new possibilities:

> Mine went with the black hole of our system. The lesson has always been there and will always be there. It's surrounded by everything you can put into it; the different colors, different ideas, different thoughts that kind of surround that core lesson that you might be teaching but give opportunities to teach your students.

Although not all quotations are included in this manuscript, we note that in several instances, the teachers shared that their lesson plans were enhanced by CRISPA in some meaningful way. Second, the teachers not only spoke of the enhancement of their students' experiences made possible by CRISPA, but also commented on the enlivenment of their own experience using the model. One participant describes the experience of creating the lesson plan with CRISPA as a symphony of colors, adding that her formerly mundane lesson plan had come to life. Along with this the mere transformation of energy in the room is a clear testament to the enlivenment felt by the teachers. Despite arriving in a somewhat listless way, both the energy and the physical space in the room were very much altered by the CRISPA experience; a real disruption.

Post Disruption Creativity and Transformation

> *The participants talk animatedly about what they have done. Though most of the participants did not know each other prior to class, one would hardly be able to discern that if he or she were to walk into the room at this point. Playing the role of facilitator, I again prompt the participants to share their images and their experiences from using CRISPA on this day. "Other folks, talk about the process and how it was for you."*
> *"Mine shows how I was in the dark and now I'm in the light," Karen says* (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Dark to Light.

Two participants sitting near her nod their heads in agreement, one of whom is Eleanor. She says: Mine is real literal, because that's how I am, but I don't consider myself to be a particularly creative person, like that isn't something for me that is a talent of mine; no one's ever really told me I'm creative. And I know there are lots of different ways to be creative, which is what I appreciated about (the workshop)… But for me, it's a really difficult process to strive for and I've worked with some crazy creative teachers who I adore, and I've tried to implement some of their practice in the classroom. But I feel like it's a challenge for me to be creative. So I really appreciate being here today. For me I have these pictures of arrows pointing out of my brain because I feel like it really stretches my thinking and it's a really reflective and time consuming process for me, it's not something that comes naturally. But having these tools presented to me, it all just sort of came together. I don't feel like I have to pull these ideas out of thin air. You can go through these certain avenues to put it all together and having all of these reflective questions or these reflective tools is really helpful to me. And it's not about me being creative but it's about creating spaces for my kids to be creative. So that was really a perception shift for me today.

Karen and Eleanor's comments point out that while some teachers learned how to enhance lessons, others had a deeper response. Karen believed that something changed in her; she saw her work in a new light. Eleanor had a similarly deep realization that she, too, could be a creative teacher. CRISPA gave her the tools to achieve what she had often seen other teachers do well—design and implement creative lessons. In particular, she realized that she can take the focus off of herself and focus on what her students are doing. We suggest that this response is a transformative one—that for some teachers this curriculum disruption shakes them to the core and changes their beliefs about themselves and their own teaching.

The conversation continues with Marvin who comments on the value of creativity. "I was thinking about creativity and how it helps solve problems and how it's important for us to help students

be creative because, I always think about how in a small way we are teaching the future doctors, the future scientists, people who are going to create the world that we live in. I always think of it as protecting the world that we live in or preserving the world that we have and so it's important for us to be creative as educators and to be the people who are creating the environment through which students can be creative."
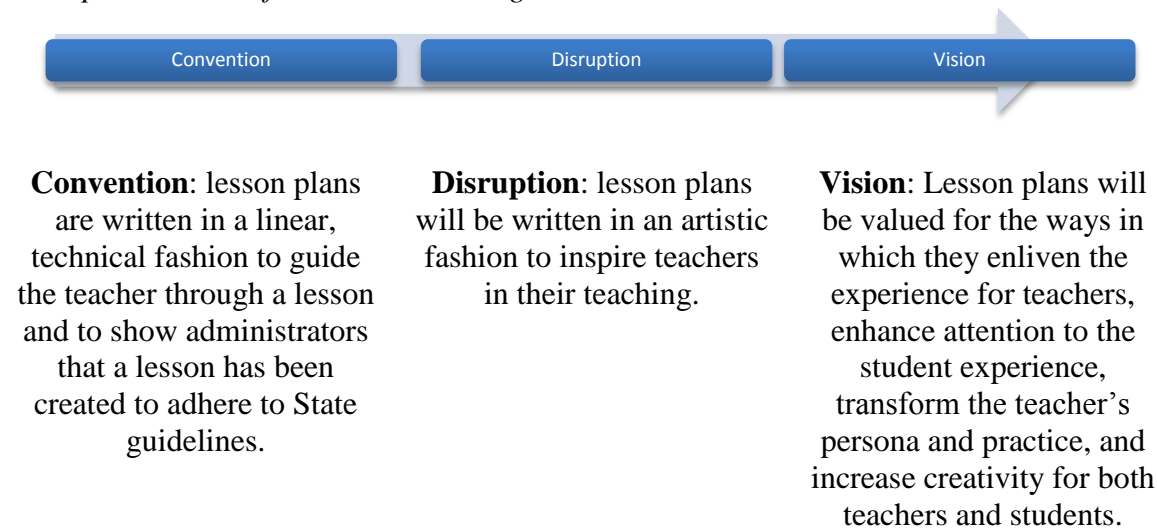
> *Finally, Barbara holds up a picture that prominently displays a light bulb, offering, "This is us, being encouraged to think outside the box and this is me with a light bulb, which this class helped open my eyes to what is possible."*

We note that our data suggest that CRISPA encourages creativity. In multiple cases the teachers shared how their lessons began as static, boring, or mundane before being transformed creatively. Not only did many find that their lessons were transformed, but they were as well.

Themes and Discussion

What might we take away from our stories about teachers using CRISPA in the lesson planning process? First, we note that CRISPA offers a disruption, which encourages us to re-think the aims and processes of lesson planning itself. This is not only a deliverance from the historically common approach of teachers completing lesson plans for the purpose of submitting them to administrators, but is also quite a leap from the teacher as implementer of scripted curriculum model. To better illustrate this point, we utilize Mary Dru's (2002) three-step disruption process, which includes convention, disruption, and vision. Here convention refers to general practices. Disruption refers to a break in the practice. And vision refers to providing ideas for new practices.

Table 1
Disruption Process for Lesson Planning

Convention	Disruption	Vision

| **Convention**: lesson plans are written in a linear, technical fashion to guide the teacher through a lesson and to show administrators that a lesson has been created to adhere to State guidelines. | **Disruption**: lesson plans will be written in an artistic fashion to inspire teachers in their teaching. | **Vision**: Lesson plans will be valued for the ways in which they enliven the experience for teachers, enhance attention to the student experience, transform the teacher's persona and practice, and increase creativity for both teachers and students. |

Second, Dru (2002) distinguishes high and low level disruptions. The latter shifts attention of the brand within the market while the former "displaces the entire market" (Dru, 2002, p. 60). In our view, CRISPA is a high level disruption that aims to change the market, or in

educational terms, alter the purpose, meaning, and outcomes of a lesson plan and its attendant consequences.

Third, we might view curriculum disruptions as occurring in one of three (nonhierarchical) ways. To begin, there is a *technical* breakthrough, often carried forward by research that allows curricularists to reform the field of education. The most recent brain-based research might fall under this category in that it helps us tinker with current educational designs to maximize human potential. In this category, convention is altered. The second type might be called *cultural* in that some curriculum proposals aim to embed new cultural ways of thinking and acting. Culturally responsive pedagogy might be an example of this approach. In this category convention is shifted from one viewpoint to another. Third, there are some discontinuities or disruptions that might be termed *ontological* in the sense that they break with convention altogether and form new visions (Oliver & Gershman, 1989). CRISPA lesson planning is an example of this third mode in that it overturns the general stated purposes of lesson planning altogether.

Limitations and Future Research

As indicated in the methodology section, one of the three authors was an active participant-researcher in the study. As workshop facilitator, it was his role to provide an engaging workshop for the teachers. Therefore, we recognize that his enthusiasm for the CRISPA model may influence the findings. However, the independent data analysis by the other two authors offers some buffer to his interpretations and therefore strengthens the positive findings. Further, each participant was influenced in different ways by the CRISPA elements, and some had stronger positive feelings than others. Such positivity may be in part attributed to the classroom environment and collective enthusiasm, but it is also corroborated by previous studies (see Uhrmacher, 2009; Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, 2010).

Future research would certainly want to challenge and explore the positive reactions by the teachers and may also explore teachers "reentry" into their conventional teaching practices. How are these practices perceived by administration? What experiences do students report? The most "negative" comment from the participants in the present study was that the process was time-consuming. Would she continue to use a meaningful but time-consuming model? Would the process become less time consuming with further practice? While beyond the scope of this report, such explorations would add understandings to the CRISPA approach.

Another potential limitation to the study exists in that the researchers did not look specifically at the actual lesson plans created in the workshop. Our previous research has specifically examined lesson plans, however, which yielded data that led to this study (see Moroye & Uhrmacher, 2009, 2010). As such, we were interested in exploring teacher experience given that we have previously collected data on and written about the lesson plan product. A future study considering both the experience as well as the product may be revealing.

Conclusion

The present study explored and analyzed the experiences of 14 teachers as they encountered a novel approach to lesson planning. While the findings of this qualitative inquiry are not intended to be generalizable, they do add to the confluence of evidence that Perceptual Lesson Planning (CRISPA) may serve as a curriculum disruption for many teachers. By analyzing their experiences and presenting them as vignettes, we provide forms of anticipation that may serve other scholars and practitioners interested in creative educational processes. Further, we have argued that curriculum disruptions as such have the potential to re-envision education on various levels.

In our introduction, we cited several critiques of standardized education. As a result of the present study, we then argued that a curriculum disruption such as CRISPA might disorient standardization in a way that (re)places curriculum development power in the hands of teachers, rather than to outside sources. Our purpose here is not to argue for or against standards or predetermined educational outcomes. Rather, we are considering the notion that standards-based approaches to lesson planning might have unintended consequences. As such, this study was designed to create a space for teachers to experience lesson planning that privileges experience over standardized outcomes. We believe that the notion of a curriculum disruption—whether CRISPA or something else—provides the possibility for re-visioning educational aims that not only honor the experience of teachers, but also of the students and communities they serve.

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