


IN KIND: INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR SELF AND OTHERS

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Abstract

Under the influence of devised theatre and improvisation, feminist disability methodology and critical play theory an artist survives the flight between inclusive and design to playfully create new artistic design possibilities in inclusive media and in distribution across digital spaces. Questions are considered around the possibilities of accessibility not exclusively as an act of translation but as an act of aesthetics, an artist's responsibility to audience inclusion and the intrinsic qualities necessary to develop and push forward accessible initiatives in media and art practices. Additional outcomes include the learning and sharing of valuable practice lessons through vulnerable witnessing and 'self-inclusion experiments' that contributed to keeping the artist sane inside the Ivory Tower and in finding recommendations for the teaching and practice of Inclusive Design in the future.

Keywords: inclusive design; devised theatre; feminist disability methodology; artist-led research

Dedication

This is for my brother Duff, who was there when I hit bottom and listened when no one else could. His sharing of experience, strength and hope pointed me away from the problem and towards solution. I will be forever grateful.

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It is about the thin line that exists between the fate of Icarus, who-burned rather than touched by fire-‘felt the hot wax run, /Unfeathering him,” and the fates of those artists surviving the flight.

Kay Redfield Jamison

Introduction

I am a working artist without an undergraduate degree. One day in May, two years ago I was asked if I would like to get a Masters in Inclusive Design. I said yes. This paper is the storied account of my experiences inside University entwined with the academic requirements of a Major Research Project. While I agree that substantiating my arguments is a way of lending credence to my thinking by lining it up with what scholars have been thinking, separating me out from this paper would be akin to erasing me from the experiment of inviting people with lived experience into advanced degree programs. Apparently researchers are often trained to hide their relationship to their work. I can't imagine that I was invited in to hide. Therefore I will be using the practice of referring to myself as I throughout the paper, thereby locating myself, as artist, within the research process as driver for the transformation offered.

The Ivory Tower

I was invited into the Ivory Tower.¹ Admittedly this is an inaccurate and antiquated idiom. However, it does provide a visually stunning symbol of

¹ If you are in an ivory tower, you are in a place or situation separated from life and its problems. idioms.thefreedictionary.com

elitism. This in turn allows me the pleasure of picturing myself as I sneak through the dungeon door, left open just long enough to begin making my way up the relentless concrete staircase to this moment. That door was held open by Jutta Treviranus, the director of the Inclusive Design Master's Program at OCAD University in Toronto and countless unseen others who somehow agreed to bend rules and loosen regulations to wave me into this experiment. As I understand it, I was invited into the program because of my lived experience as a person with a disability or two. For the purpose of simplicity let's call me a dyslexic voice hearer.² I would prefer to be considered as someone living and thriving with brain injuries brought on by trauma, however I have no proof for this instinctual framing of my own experience with my own brain and that discussion far exceeds the scope of this paper.³ I believe I was also invited in because of my work experience as a professional theatre and media maker often with activist intentions. I am also a director and deviser of collaborative theatre making experiences with

² I consider dyslexia a blanket term for information processing differences. My dyslexia involves fractured thinking, difficulty negotiating forms, idea and letter reversals, divergent thinking, needing to see words in color to be able to retrieve them, an inability to remember difficult pronunciations and spellings, fractured reading and sometimes an inability to separate out the emotional connections to knowledge. This means I see and feel the people I may be reading about. As far as being a voice hearer this is a way of de-psychiatrizing the term auditory hallucinations. I think of this as an internal hearing difficulty. I have many people speaking in my head at all times. I have learned many skills to negotiate with them. Most days, they are like a radio playing in the background. Stress and lack of sleep increases their volume.

³ More information may be gleaned from the project In Kind by Chicken Army. Contact chickenarmy30@gmail.com

marginalized communities including, but not limited to, persons with disabilities. With these qualifications I was likely brought in to support the idea of diverse participation, one of the guiding principals of inclusive design.

On the IDRC (Inclusive Design Research Centre) website Treviranus writes:

Inclusive design teams should be as diverse as possible and include individuals who have a lived experience of the “extreme users” (as coined by Rich Donovan) the designs are intended for. This also respects the edict “nothing about us without us” without relegating people with disabilities to the role of subjects of research or token participants in design exercises. To support diverse participation and enable the design to be as closely linked as possible to the application, the design and development tools should become as accessible and usable as possible. This dimension does not denigrate the skills of professional designers but calls for those skills to become more accessible and for the design process to become more inclusive of diverse designers and consumers.⁴

In hindsight, when accepting this invitation, I believe I only saw the word inclusive and gave very little thought to the meaning or implications of the word design. All I really know is that Jutta Treviranus had a limited number of tickets for people with lived experience who did not meet the academic requirements for a graduate program. She decided to give me one of those tickets. I have never seen my ticket, but like to think of it as being similar to the golden ticket the little boy Charlie finds in a chocolate bar that takes him into Willy Wonka’s candy factory.⁵ Things work out well for Charlie. He ends up escaping poverty and running the factory. I am not sure what my ticket will do for me. So far, my ticket has taken me on a turbulent

⁴ [http://idrc.ocad.ca/three dimensions that best explain the practice and principles of inclusive design](http://idrc.ocad.ca/three_dimensions_that_best_explain_the_practice_and_principles_of_inclusive_design)

⁵ Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. 1971 Paramount pictures. Adapted from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl

and beautifully outrageous flight between inclusivity and design, here and there, and methods and madness. I have landed, after quite a trip, in a complicated place of hard-won gratitude. The greatest accomplishments of the last two years are as follows: the surprisingly satisfying feeling of obtaining a degree; and the slightly ironic self-recognition of the value of my own lived experience, particularly in how innovations for belonging can come from not fitting in.

MRP Motivation

Halfway through the program and in the whirl and hum of new knowledge and theory, I am in heated discussions with myself and sometimes one or two other program cohorts about the exciting promise and frustrations of Inclusive Design. We share experiences of methodological divides, philosophical schisms, personal disconnects and artistic exclusions. As the deadline for filing our major research projects looms, we entered the second summer intensive. The intensive was a brief lesson in art history and a chance for students in Inclusive Design to make art. I feel a bit like someone who cooks for a living being in a class about boiling eggs. This gives me great empathy for how designers in my design class may have felt about all my beginner questions. I make the decision to say only one thing a day and listen for the rest of the time as an experiment in trying to include myself and to continue learning how to include others. Even with that decision, I

struggle to keep an open mind. With the emphasis on famous artists, I feel it is a missed opportunity both in the chance to expose people to the work of disability artists, and in teaching creative practices like improvisation, that could be practically linked to design work. I think a lot about Keith Johnstone, the founder of Theatresports and my improvisational theatre teacher for eight years.⁶

A discussion starts around the question of who is responsible for making art and media work accessible. One position in the debate is that inclusivity is not an artist's responsibility, but rather the obligation falls to producers, galleries or broadcasters. I had already been contemplating ideas of personal versus producer responsibility in making art and media that is inclusive and accessible. As a practicing new media and theatre artist I had received a MITACS grant that spring to research ways of playing with interpretive tools and how they might be built into an installation/performance as narrative, backstory, dialogue and description. The resulting project, *Me on the Map*⁷, had an overarching question: what are

⁶ I was a member of the Loose Moose theatre Company in Calgary between 1980-1988. All my theatre training was received here for free. Keith invented Theatresports a competitive improv format but I also worked with him as an actor and director and was encouraged to write.

⁷ Along with my creative partner Adrienne Wong and producing company, New World Theatre, we were commissioned by the Vancouver International Theatre Festival to create a multi-module, interactive installation/performance about civic living and civic responsibility sourced from real kids' experiences. It is hoped, that by using the methods discovered with this research the project will stand as an example for the creative potential of inclusive productions when it premieres at the 2015 Vancouver Children's International Festival.

the intrinsic qualities necessary to develop and push forward accessible initiatives in the arts? I began to wonder if I could play through my personal art practices with inclusivity in mind. Perhaps I might discover ways for differently abled people to experience art, creativity and story, not as an act of translation but as an act of integrated aesthetics. What forms or tools could I work in that were inherently more inclusive? How could I make the work more accessible to all? How could I challenge not just the dominant narratives around inclusion and accessibility but the dominant structures that these stories are often formatted into? Could innovation result from unintended consequence?

Purpose

The principle objective of the *Me on The Map* research was to find meaningful play in working with what is often dubbed as ‘assistive technology’ (captioning, audio description and tactile guiding). In critical play theorist Mary Flanagan’s words, we hoped to “unplay and rewrite” the idea of assistive technologies (Flanagan 12). We would do this by creating new rules of play to make inclusion part of the creative development process rather than hastily added on translations of original experiences or art. Some important work has already been done in this area, notable in the animated series *Odd Job Jack* that ran on The Comedy Network from 2003-2007. Unlike traditional audio description that simply describes visual events (Pedersen

and Aspevig 28), audio description is used in the series to relay events from a first person perspective. The Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) was involved with this project through their CulturAll initiatives. These initiatives also sparked the Stretch Project that engaged over 600 high school students in creating works on inclusion that were inclusively designed in almost every medium and media.⁸ Unfortunately, funding ran out for the IDRC's CulturAll programs in 2007.

For the *Me on the Map* project I piggybacked on the intent of these projects to make accessible, on-line media more creative. I researched current and free applications and software programs and developed scenarios through this research. Like the Stretch program, we were highly successful in not only familiarizing children with the creative use of assistive technologies, but also in the subversion of traditional methods of 'text first and interpretation later'. These successful approaches, workshop plans, DIY tools, discovery games and training methods will be accumulated in a playful kit called Community Led Inclusive Creation Kits (CLICK) and shared as an Open Education Resource (OER), under the Creative Commons agreements.

I was pleased by the results and motivated by future possibilities for real world implementation. However, I did feel constrained by the 'testing' of tools for the children to use. There was a certain amount of progress in repeatedly testing to arrive at the best methods, but the focus on taking

⁸ <http://stretch.idrc.ocad.ca/>

notice of what was emerging from what already existed made me feel removed from a creative intuitive flow that may have discovered a more integrated method of tool and expression (Sajnani 82). I prefer when the tool's function can impact the story in a project. In traditional text-centric theatre, you write a script and everything else is designed around it. I don't think of story as the center of things. Objects or spaces or people or sites suggest ways of working to me and affect what material is generated. I like to take in all the parameters and let them inform the story. In this way, I am more like game designers who media theorist Henry Jenkins's describes as less storyteller and more narrative architect (Jenkins 121).

Perhaps because I come from an improvisational background, I make things with what I have and with where I am. Improvisation is sometimes described as the aesthetic of being in the moment (Sajnani 79). In *Something Like a Drug, the Unauthorized Oral History of Theatresports*, in response to the question, "what is your favorite game?" I answer, "Starting from nothing. Going out there and having someone throw something at you." (qtd. in Foreman and Martini 147). For me, it is not so much about creating the conditions for improvisational play, but in remembering that spontaneity is the natural condition of the human mind and not a separate state that somehow has to be arrived at (Vaneigem 167).

I had also been thinking for some time that this notion of a lack of responsibility on the part of the artist could be why the aesthetics of a piece

often suffer when accessibility features like captioning or audio description are added or when curators try to make work accessible and end up with nothing much more than clumsy translation. Some wonderful work has been done at the National Gallery of Canada with regards to looking at accessibility art solutions with the means of creating transformative experiences for patrons rather than simply versioning visual art into other modes (Sweeny 240). I had an artistically upsetting experience with accommodating translations into my film *Sanity for Beginners*,⁹ commissioned by Kickstart Disability Arts¹⁰ for their Wide Angle Media Festival. Translations were added in post-production without my input; I didn't see or hear them until the film's first public screening. Some of the captioning was badly timed, full of errors and often out of sync with the action of the film. The audio description was full of assumptions such as, "the woman is upset" or "the man doesn't seem to notice" and didn't seem to do what good audio description can do. A skilled audio describer can not only describe the visuals on the screen, but also how the visuals inform the soundscape. They can also pay attention to the meaning that silences are meant to carry in a film (Fryer 210). The audio description was also done in a voice that was more appropriate for an animal documentary than a 'mocumentary' about mental

⁹ *Sanity for Beginners*. A film by Jan Derbyshire. Squidthinks Productions 2012.

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/KickstartDisabilityArts>

health. Carrying this experience into the Inclusive Design program and coming up against the positioning of an artist not being responsible for making their work inclusive peaked my curiosity about why captioning and audio description aren't part of an original artistic expression. Why are these tools always hastily tacked on at the end? I recognize that this comes from a 'better than nothing' philosophy as these tools are innovations that have improved accessibility to film for blind and deaf persons but the techniques have largely gone unchanged or unquestioned for a long time.¹¹

Now, every time I create a new media or theatre experience, I feel the tension between the responsibility to make my art accessible and the aesthetic sacrifice that making the work inclusive seems to bring. It's an uncomfortable positioning that pulls at both my artist and my activist sides and in the end neither is satisfied. This is why I needed to ask myself the following research questions:

- 1) Can I become responsible for making my work as inclusive as possible without sacrificing my narrative and aesthetic goals?
- 2) Can I include accessibility tools as creation tools from the beginning?

¹¹ Although many technological solutions had been tried, it was the Television Decoder Circuitry Act (TDCA) signed by the first President Bush in 1990 that really made captioning available. The goal was to have most of the television sets in America caption-capable by 2000. While the TDCA did not mandate the sale of televisions with captioning chips, Zenith started delivering them with built-in decoders in October 1991, and other manufacturers followed (Barnes 2009). Audio description allows persons with visual impairments to hear what cannot be seen. It began as a formal practice in the 1970's. (Synder 2005). Some cinemas chains like ODEON offer audio description for all their movies. <http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/quote.html>. The AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) didn't suggest making Audio description mandatory because of the perceived expense. <http://www.aoda.ca/>

Scope

I was grateful for the chance to explore these ideas through research methods and theoretical frameworks of my choosing. Situating and narrowing down the scope of this research was one of my favorite parts of being an invited guest in the Ivory Tower. I was led to the discovery of academic papers, a reading treat previously absent from my learning plate. I have read over 600 papers in the last two years wandering into divergent fields such as gaming, participatory design, political advocacy, storytelling, design fiction, accessibility, disability justice, feminist studies, pedagogical studies, implicit activism, film and media research, feminist geography, universal design, translatology, art-based research, design research methodologies, auto-ethnography, empirical research, utopian design, games for social change, critical play, improvisation and research, collaborative theatre practice, computers as theatre, creative inclusion, e-learning, e-entertainment, interactive video, accessible technology and disability art, to name a few. Within my MRP, I was less interested in the latest innovations in digital space - because digital tools change so quickly - and more interested in locating myself and my practice inside realistic parameters of theory, method and ethics. This I hoped would move me toward being able to share my learning and knowledge acquisition both inside and outside academia. I also discovered that the idea of chasing something entirely new led me to feeling like I was already too far behind in the game so I decided to bring

what I know best to the project: improvisation. I would bring forward spontaneity as an important tool of innovation bolstered by the following academic writing:

When the one economic constant, ironically, is instability; when all aspects of our lives are driven by exponentially quickening technological change; and when education is increasingly under pressure to train people for jobs that by the time of their graduation are often no longer needed, it is increasingly the case that the best performances – human, corporate, or technological – are improvisational. (Knowles 4)

By relying on my improvisational training I made a decision to practice ‘response-ability’ to the conditions I found myself in. My scope of research would bring into focus the characteristics of my devised theatre and improvisational work, my ethics in feminist/disability theories and frame my methods in Critical Play.

Devised Theatre and Improvisation

In the most general sense devised theatre can be described as the creation of original work. It is more closely related to live art and performance art than traditional theatre. Characteristics include a commitment to multimodalities (specifically lending weight to movement, sound and visual technologies as that traditionally given to text) and by extension to performances that are not lead by a singular vision or authorial line. (Heathfind and Goldberg qtd. in Perry 67)

By slightly tweaking these commitments to reflect parameters of inclusivity to be found in digital media-making platforms and apps there is potential to affect aesthetic and accessibility values. The multiple modalities I considered had to increase the inclusivity of a piece and not be limited to

sight only, although I ended up making a few exceptions to this rule when the artist trumped the activist. Devised theatre is also known for a “plurality of processes of experimentation and sets of creative strategies rather than a single methodology” (Perry 65). In one way or another I can trace every experimental process in playing with the chosen modalities back to my improvisational theatre training, which is really the spontaneous design of scenes and/or characters. Keith Johnstone taught that all ideas are good ideas meaning that the most obvious next step or unoriginal offer is good enough to move forward, followed by the next simple choice and on and on. I believe to this day that just following my mind where it goes produces my best work. Schiller wrote of a ‘watcher at the gates of the mind’ who examines ideas too closely; he said that in the case of the creative mind “...the intellect has withdrawn its watcher from the gates, and the ideas rush in pell-mell, and only then does it review and inspect the multitude” (qtd. in Johnstone 79). Schiller also said that:

...”uncreative people are ashamed of the momentary passing madness which is found in all real creators...regarded in isolation, an idea may be quite insignificant, and venturesome in the extreme, but it may acquire importance from an idea that follows it; perhaps with other ideas which seem equally absurd, it may be capable of servicing a very serviceable link.” (qtd. in Johnstone 79)

An improviser’s basic training is to accept what is offered, to not block or say no to what is given and to say yes enthusiastically (Johnstone 43). This is the closest explanation I have found at this point in time for how I accept

ideas coming to me. With the new tools I was working in my research I just tried to say yes. Conversely, these acceptances of ideas makes it difficult for me to chose and proves one idea's worth over another. In an early design class we were given an exercise to keep coming up with first start ideas until we ran out of ideas. It was amazing to watch as my cohorts and I came up with scads of ideas. Then we were asked to pick the best idea, the one with legs, the one that could really solve a problem or fill a gap. I froze at this point.

If at the start of any improvisational session, whether performing or using improvisation to generate writing, I would never start by listing all the possible ideas first and then choosing the best one. For me, this discounts the alchemy of unimagined discoveries that comes by just beginning and seeing what collisions of self and current conditions will create. I fully relate to Keith's experience with his own teachers, substituting ideas of design and designing with the follow passage from his book:

[My teachers] wanted me to reject and discriminate, believing that the best artist [designer] was the one who made the most elegant choices. They analyzed poems [designs] to show difficult real writing [designing] was, and they taught me that I should always know where my writing [designing] was taking me, and that I should search for better and better ideas. They spoke as if an image like 'the multitudinous seas incarnadine' could have been worked out like the clue to a crossword puzzle. Their idea of the 'correct' choice was the one anyone would have made if he had thought long enough."
(Johnstone 179)

There may have been room in class for the way I chase ideas, but imagined or not I felt the presences of the ‘watcher at the gate’ and began to have doubts about staying in the program. I couldn’t seem to frame my design thinking by identifying a problem or gap first. If I frame my thinking in terms of chasing a wilder curiosity, I often find myself moving towards ideas with an intuitive grace that is not entirely my own. For example, with my creation company, Squid Thinks, visually impaired artists and I created a series of experimental performance works entitled *Installing the Text*. We designed theatre sets to be navigated by touch only that were then made public to writers who wrote inside these haptic spaces. In a journal entry I observed:

My writing inside these spaces, through no concise choice of my own, seems to rely much less on any kind of visual metaphor or description of place and has become more concrete in descriptions of feeling states and references to other senses like sound and is much different than anything I have penned before.” (qtd. in Derbyshire 2)

I didn’t start this project by thinking about the problem of privileging the sense of sight in theatre practice. I had been watching my blind friend navigate a space one day and this combined with her unfulfilled desire to act brought us to the idea of building tactile sets.

It seems like an irrational difference to quibble over: to frame something as a problem and design for that, versus chasing a curiosity. Perhaps this was nothing more than my need to find familiar language inside

the field of design that I knew nothing about. However, I lacked confidence in my own experiences inside an academic institution and felt inadequate and ill-equipped when I couldn't write up the processes or steps to my thinking. It is not that I wanted to argue that one way was better than the other, but rather that I needed to work in a way that made the most out of what my imagination can construct. This is not the way of listing rational steps or methods first. Fortunately, there was enough flexibility in the program to allow me to trust my own way of learning as a way of reaching design curriculum goals. Inclusive Design education will hopefully continue to model what program director Jetta Treviranus knows to be true:

Dropout and marginalization are at least in part due to our overemphasis on inflexible standards of perfection – both in the curriculum and in the students we strive to produce. If our goal is to optimize learning for all learners we must recognize that learners learn differently. There is neither a single take on learning nor a best way to teach a concept. Learning outcomes research shows that learners learn best when the learning experience is personalized to their learning needs. Learning breakdown and drop out occurs when students face barriers to learning, feel disadvantaged by the learning experience offered or feel that their personal learning needs are ignored. (Treviranus. 2010)

I would have become a failed experiment in inviting diverse learners into advanced degree programs with out Treviranus' willingness to walk the talk. Because I was allowed my 'own take' on learning design concepts, I had my confidence back in tow as I approached the experiments of inclusive media making for my Major Research Project.

Every morning I worked on this project, I would pick a new tool and just start playing around with it to see what it could do. Eventually something connected to the theme I was holding in my head and this would feed the next step with the tool and that would feed the next part of the piece. My methods would emerge from a return to the basics of improvisational theatre training with Keith Johnstone:

The stages I try to take students through involve the realization that 1) we struggle against our imaginations, especially when we try to be imaginative 2) we are not responsible for the content of our imaginations; and 3) that we are not, as we are taught to think, our 'personalities', but that the imagination is our True self." (Johnstone 105)

Feminist Disability Studies

Where to find a way to substantiate my lived theory with scholarly theory was another conundrum. It could be argued that my art practice is part of a generative disability arts movement¹² that has developed as a new genre to give expression to disability experience and re-imagine embodied difference (Chandler 2013). However, framing all my work as work created as a person who lives with a disability marginalizes both the way I think of my work and the audiences it may or may not reach. It also denies a

¹² The disability arts and culture movement grew out of the disability rights movement in the late 1970s/early 80s (Gorman, 2007) marking a shift in the disability activism from securing legal rights for persons with disabilities to aesthetic concerns about the representation of disabled people. Disability arts and culture is now an integral 'arm' of both the disability rights and justice movements. Chandler -Project Revision presentation 2013

principal of Inclusive Design that disability is a matter of current conditions and not a personal trait.

The IDRC (Inclusive Design Research Centre) reframes disability within the design context. Rather than a personal characteristic or a binary state (disabled vs. non-disabled), disability is framed as: a mismatch between the needs of the individual and the design of the product, system or service. With this framing, disability can be experienced by anyone excluded by the design. (Treviranus 2014 IDRC)

Another inseparable thread of traits and conditions contained within and surrounding my experiences is the fact that I have lived all my life and created all my work from inside what is recognized as a female form.

Although many other labels apply, queer and mother and woboy¹³ to name a few, I would have to say unequivocally that my lived experience is of the feminine variety. By being in the experience of the feminine I purport to be a natural born feminist.¹⁴ Of course this identity also marginalizes my work but as Keith Johnstone taught me if you spontaneously improvise in front of an audience or on paper or in design for that matter you have to accept that your innermost self will be revealed. He went on to say that this is true of all artists and I would boldly add, all people.

¹³ Woboy is a term I use to describe tomboys who have grown - up with no need or desire to deny the woman they have become while maintaining a playful, rambunctious, adventurous attitude usually seen in boys (Jan Derbyshire Woboy Digital story for Project Revision 2013)

¹⁴ This does not mean I pretend to understand academic feminism as defined by Kim Q. Hall as “a complex and contradictory matrix of theories, strategies, pedagogies and practices. One way to think about feminist theory is to say that it investigates how culture saturates the particularities of bodies and meanings and probes the consequences of those meanings.” P.15

If you want to write a 'working class' play then you better *be* working-class. If you want your play to be religious, then *be* religious. An artist has to accept what his imagination gives him or screw up his talent.¹⁵ (Johnstone 112)

I could argue that my imagination is feminist and my mind is rationale injured or logically disabled. These labels however are forced notions, an attempt to think about my mind in a way that doesn't suit my mind. Perhaps I would have done better if the surrealists¹⁶ from the early twentieth century had risen up to become the new world order.

In *Critical Play*, Mary Flanagan writes about surrealist art and literature favoring unconscious and irrational methods for creating art. In their manifesto they wrote that, "Surrealism is not a poetic form. It is a scream of the mind, finding itself again and it intends to desperately crush its shackles with artificial hammers if need be" (qtd. in Flanagan 89). I was attempting to navigate the schism between the word inclusive and the word design; to bounce around in that space using the skills of improvisation that can include, "openness to uncertainty, an attunement to difference, and a certain aesthetic intelligence in order to feel, track and organize what emerges over time in relation to one's own experiences and others (Sajnani 82).

¹⁵ Add of course this never stopped him from writing about women or in saying to me that I improvised more like a man. (Taking the lead in stories, playing both sexes and things in between. With an added wink emoticon here if I could)

¹⁶ The Surrealist's movement emerged under the leadership of writer, artist, and organizer André Breton during the 1920's. He wrote the Manifesto of Surrealism in 1924. (Flanagan 89)

Hammering anything, artificially or otherwise, was not my intention. I was therefore encouraged, and simultaneously overwhelmed to discover the emerging academic field of feminist disability studies. In league with Inclusive Design principals, a feminist disability theory denaturalizes disability by unseating the dominant assumption that disability is something that is wrong with someone. Feminist disability theory also includes critiques of exclusion and oppression in terms of gender, class, sexuality, race and ethnicity (Hall 1). To academically support my personal integrity inside the strategies and creative choices I was making in my work, I drew on the ways disability feminist theory engages several of the fundamental premises of critical theory:

- 1) That representation structures reality;
- 2) That the margins define the center;
- 3) That gender (or disability) is a way of signifying relationships of power;
- 4) That human identity is multiple and unstable;
- 5) That all analysis and evaluation has political implications. (Hall 18)

Critical Play

With the proven practices of devised and improvisational theatre, called to task by disability feminist theory, I needed to find a method and philosophy to contain both practice and theory for my way of working. Mary

Flanagan's design actions and methods outlined in her seminal work, *Critical Play: Radical Game Design*, draws heavily on what other artists have done in the creation of games and play. Her words and thoughts seemed to grant me permission to be a 'playful disruptor' in how I would approach 'designing' more inclusive media (Flanagan 14). In repurposing the model of iterative design Flanagan notes that, "critical design methodology requires the shifting of authority and power relations more toward a nonhierarchical, participatory exchange."(Flanagan 256).

To me, the most liberating addition to iterative design in Flanagan's Critical Play Method is the inclusion of values to the category of design goals. The rest of the steps were questions I posed to myself as I attempted to frame my work as a game I was playing. However, I did need to dance up and down some of Flanagan's steps as my process quickly veered away from this looser but still formal sequence of design. Instead I found myself playing critically inside her ideas and philosophy as a way of igniting my confidence to work the way I had always worked. It could be argued through Flanagan's work that I was attempting to "create a social relationship between accessibility and media art "(Flanagan 5). There was a need to create an environment of play towards restructuring the way things are usually done. I was pushing towards new artistic and design possibilities through improvisational play with tools and themes. In Flanagan's work I found the needed praxis to lend critical credibility and a sense of academic rigor to my

process and the results. In other words, Flanagan's design methods allowed 'for a variety of play strategies' and gave me hope that I might be taken seriously in my play (Flanagan 20). By approaching the design requirement as a game space with rules, I would create what Flanagan describes as a "system for imagining what's possible" (Flanagan 51).

I imagined creating a rope woven from the twines of Devised and Improvisational theatre, Feminist Disability Studies and Critical Play. I stayed connected across piece to piece and considered these practices, theories, methods and methodologies as part of my work and play space. I was inspired to think this way by learning about the practices of Constant¹⁷, a non-profit association for art and media, based and active in Brussels since 1997. Constant works in the fields of open source, free software and cyber-feminism and considers "reading theory as a workspace, as an hospitable space and above all, reading means for us also to put theory at the stake of reality and practice."(Rassel 2).

Method

Despite my best intentions and loftiest goals, I couldn't learn software or basic coding fast enough to build an activist game centered on themes of self-inclusion and necessary exclusion. In the end I had to settle for creating what Flanagan calls a situation of meaningful play (212). This turned out to

¹⁷ <http://www.constantvzw.org>

be a blessing in limitations as I was finding a way to design from what I know best. I came to think of what I was going to do as playing improvised games with myself in digital spaces where I would define the 'asks for'.¹⁸ These games would not be games in the most codified definition: 'a system which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules that results in a quantifiable outcome' (Salen and Zimmerman 23), but a series of improvised games as defined by Flanagan as: "Games (can be) thought of more productively as situations with guidelines and procedures." (253). The reason behind loosely framing my methods as improvised 'games' is that while there are rules in improvisation the playing is open and forgiving; there is an implicit structure but less of a need to win or lose. In fact Johnstone's training involves a lot of positive reinforcement and learning to not think of failure as failure. In his own description of his teaching experience in normal school in the UK Johnstone writes the following:

I taught the boys that were considered failures and nothing would induce me to write them off as 'useless' or 'ineducable'. My 'failure' was a survival tactic, and without it I would probably never have worked my way out of the trap my education had set for me. I would have ended up with a lot more of my consciousness blocked off from me than now. (Johnstone 21)

He carried this philosophy into his training of improvisers encouraging us to see failure as a tactic for creative success and not as a personal trait or

¹⁸ Often in Theatresports you ask for something from the audience to start a scene or a game. Typical 'asks for' are locations or occupations or objects or sometimes a person memory or favorite line for a book. There are hundreds of asks for on a list that continues to evolve.

demeaning label. In his training we were taught to become comfortable in not knowing what comes next, that the mind would always provide.

I am at my best when I am spontaneous and playful and generally outside of authoritative structures and/or gazes. I thought if I could construct games or meaningful play spaces with a few basic rules, I could keep the making separate from the looming requirement of having to produce a Major Research Project and subsequent paper. It worked. By deciding that play was possible, I was free to make first and then apply critical thinking later, and not the other way around which is not possible for me.

Case in Point

Recently, a digital story of mine was critiqued and presented in a disability studies class at the University of Toronto. The lecturer, Eliza Chandler, said the following:

Jan Derbyshire is a Canadian disability artist, actor, director, comic, and filmmaker working in Vancouver and Toronto. Derbyshire identifies as having lived experience with hearing voices. I am now going to show a digital story created by Derbyshire entitled Value Village (2013). This short features a close-up image of Jan who is playing, tapping, and shaking pill bottles as she tells their story. The film ends with Jan looking directly into the camera, holding the pill bottles pressed against her forehead, as she poses her final question to us, the audience. Derbyshire's film presents new possibilities for beauty in difference and new ways of knowing difference. In this short, Derbyshire appears to be joyfully tapping and shaking the pill bottles to create an up-tempo beat. She is singing a light and fun song. Glitters, sparkles, and sequins appear. This delightful video shares a promising story about how the world could be "a more beautiful

place”, a story that is told to Jan by objects. The story in this video is told from a space of alterity, offering an alternative pedagogy from a non-normative knowledge source (hearing voices). Mrs. Green’s story is put on offer because of difference, the experience of being able to hear stories from objects. The ascetics Derbyshire gives us are productive in the most creative sense. Joyfully presented, this story is also political in a way that is in line with disability and mad politics. Derbyshire is playing with bio-pedagogical scripts for how we should manage and control the experience of hearing voices. Through telling Mrs. Green’s story, which was told to her by prescription pill bottles filled with sequins, Derbyshire is presenting us with another way of experiencing, and orienting to hearing voices. In this space of alterity, hearing voices and experiencing mental difference are not responded to with the need for cure, treatment, containment, or control. In this space, Derbyshire is suggesting that when we allow ourselves to live with difference and attend to what this life with difference teaches, we might arrive at a “more beautiful place”. (Chandler 2013)

I did not set out to produce this meaning. I simply found some pill bottles full of colored sequins at Value Village. I decided to play with them, see what they had to tell me, and run the computer’s camera at the same time. I set a parameter of three minutes and played again and again. If you had asked me to design a ‘bio-pedagogical script’ reflecting ideas of management and control within the experience of hearing voices, I would have failed. Yet this is how the classic iterative design method asks me to start.

State the Problem: The under representation of non-stereotypical narratives around hearing voices.

1. Set a design goal – Devise a three-minute digital video questioning the bio-pedagogy around a person living with difference (i.e. the experience of hearing voices).
2. Develop minimum rules and assets for project – pill bottles full of sequins, 3 minutes max, one continuous shot, and lighting effects.

3. Prototype –manipulates pill bottles and sees what happens. Record attempts.
4. Revise – adjust lights, changing shaking and tapping methods.
5. Repeat.¹⁹

It is relatively easy to frame this experiment as non-dominant narrative creation in a digital media space, after the fact. This design framing however does not take into account that the playing or improvising was running through the lived experience as a voice hearer²⁰ stored and retrieved in my brain. It would be impossible to measure what exactly was influencing the playing, yet I would argue that what ever that ‘immeasurable’ quality is, ends up as an essential part of the design process and the resulting artifact.²¹

In hindsight my design process might be framed something like this:

State the Problem: What problem? Look at these pill bottles full of sequins. They’re so pretty and they make a sound when you shake them.

1. Set a design goal – Ummm.... Play?
2. Develop minimum rules and assets for project – I’m not sure but look how they look under my desk lamp. And,

¹⁹ Traditional iterative game design model. (Flanagan 255)

²⁰ Using the term ‘voice hearer’ is reclaiming the experience of hearing voices from psychiatry that refers to hearing voices as auditory hallucinations and it’s usual associations with schizophrenia.

“In traditional psychiatry, voice-hearing is little more than a neurochemical glitch, to which the only proper response is medical, pharmaceutical treatment and by this definition voices are incapable of carrying any meaning that is useful to the hearer.” (Smith 12)

²¹ Although remarkable insights about brain function and sensory-motor control have come from the more subtle and neurologically based uses of the behaviorist logic, it has ultimately only further postponed the problem of explaining the relationship between mental experience and brain function. (Deacon 45)

ummm...they make me feel like singing. I should just turn the computer camera on.

3. Prototype – What the hell. I’ll record a few plays. Shall we say 3 minutes max?
4. Revise – Play again. I wonder what happens if I do this? Or this? Or this?
5. Worry. How will I ever frame this theoretically?
6. Stop worrying. Go back to playing.
7. Repeat steps again. Skip worry. Record.
8. Play and Record
9. Repeat.
10. Pick your favorite. The one where the immeasurable quality comes up with a line at the end – “I wonder if the world might not be a much more beautiful place if we were prescribed sequins instead of pills”.
11. Send to Eliza Chandler to frame in academic theory.

What is clear to me is that play was a necessary tool that served my imagination as a child and continues to serve me well as an adult.

Anthropologist Brian Sutton-Smith, an esteemed play theorist, defines play as, “ an activity that is fun, voluntary, intrinsically motivated, incorporates free choices/free will, offers escape and is fundamentally exciting” (qtd. in Flanagan 4). I did not design the experience of expression in *Value Village*; rather it felt like it designed itself through play in what Sutton-Smith suggests is play’s potential to “provide a working model of species variability by incorporating mental feedback that keeps a species flexible in evolution”

(qtd. in Flanagan 5). In my working play, I believe I am a species in motion, flexibly evolving designs for more inclusive media in digital spaces. However, I was encouraged to believe that there must be patterns of choices and creative behaviors in the way I work that could be traced.²²

Around this time, I attended a Twine game²³ workshop put on by Forge AKIN arts collective.²⁴ They put up a picture of a completed Twine game showing boxes of text and the lines or twines that linked them. I felt like this might be what my thinking looks like. It was certainly a better model for this than any of the other design models I had seen. The numerous text boxes were out of order with links sometimes clear across the page. I loved how everything was in disarray during the build but when you played the story the links revealed things in a logical order. This was really the traceable moment, the inciting incident in my 'how do I design' movie. Here was a positive model of divergent thinking that ended up making sense. The negative connotations of divergent thinking are often associated with the mental state of mania where a person tends to exhibit pronounced combinatorial thinking. In studies, several researchers have shown, "both

²² This thinking began when I audited the class Critical Play taught by Emma Westecott who would become my MRP supervisor. Her encouragements through Flanagan's writing lead me to consider that 'simple rules can generate complex, emergent and intelligent systems.' (Class notes February 2013)

²³ TWINE is a program that lets you generate stories that are interactive, like choose your own adventure stories. TWINE is an open source tool created by Chris Klimas. www.auntiepixelante.com

²⁴ www.akincollective.blogspot.com

writers and manics tend to sort in large groups, change dimensions while in the process of sorting, arbitrarily change starting points, or use vague distantly related concepts as categorizing principals” (Jamison 107). Twine reframed the chaotic thinking that others have called my madness. And unfortunately, as Tanya Luhrmann an anthropologist at the University of Chicago writes, “psychiatric knowledge seeps into popular culture like the dye from a red shirt in hot water” (qtd. in Smith 20). I may not have been able to lay out my processes of work/play in a recognizable model of design iteration, but I was beginning to see that there truly was potential for the method in what others have called the madness.²⁵

I brought a story I had already written to the Twine workshop. It started as a free-fall writing exercise from a prompt in a contemplative writing class²⁶ asking - how did you get here?²⁷ I rewrote the story as a TWINE story.²⁸ On a huge chalkboard wall I had painted in my living room I wrote the words or phrases that I’d used to link up the Twine story.

²⁵ “There is a method to his his madness’ is an idiom traced to a line in William Shakespeare’s play Hamlet that reads, “though this be madness, yet there be method in it.” It has come to mean that although someone seems to be behaving strangely there is a reason for his or her behavior. <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/there's+method+in+madness>

²⁶ I had signed up for a contemplative writing course to combat all that academic reading and writing that had me feeling a bit out touch with my own writing voice. Contemplative writing is free-fall (or automatic writing) followed by meditation to learn to abide by the creative process with all of its ups and downs, resistance and flows and essentially if we creativity to really work in our lives. (Miriam Hall 2013) www.herspiral.com. I have used it as a way of improvising on paper for decades.

²⁷ See Appendix A for text of short story.

²⁸ <http://www.philome.la/Chickenarmy30/how-you-got-here/play>

I would think of the words and phrases as language that may or may not have passed through my mind during the five sleepless nights I sat by my brother's hospital bed in October. How I made the decision to use this moment in time as creative inspiration is an untraceable moment. I can attribute it to some factors like Keith Johnstone 's idea to just use what comes to us as the best idea combined somehow with that the difference between my brother's position in a institute of health and mine in an institute of higher learning. This was definitely an active theme of wonder in my head at the time. Also, I was running out of time and needed to pick something to get on with the making. This curiosity for finding expression about where my brother and I were in our lives motivated me to find and use new tools for making more inclusive media. This had been what was missing from the explorations in the *Me on the Map* project; the simple mechanics of learning the tools had become harder to me when not attached to purposeful play and not so much the idea of an outcome, but the motivation of expressing story, ideas and emotionally charged moments through making.

Once the story was down as a TWINE game and the links were up on the board, I began to investigate tools that were learnable by me in less than 3 hours, free, and preferably open source. I later gave myself a \$20 budget because I got so excited about how much easier some of the paid apps were

to use, specifically the animation app Animation Desk²⁹. Later still, I succumbed to using a free trial of VideoScribe³⁰, an expensive Whiteboard animation tool, because I was motivated by the inclusive possibilities of recording live writing and drawing. The tools or apps also had to suggest some sort of inclusive delivery. For the purposes of my project I defined this as formats that could be delivered through email and took under 5 minutes to experience. It is important to note that I wasn't looking for tools that could caption or provide audio description. I was looking for creative tools that afforded greater accessibility to people who are deaf or blind. I didn't want to translate or augment an original form. I wanted to challenge my own privilege to create in mainstream forms and my 'text centric' and visual preferences. I didn't know what I was looking for. I had also been thinking about old forms of media that are more accessible like radio plays and silent film. I wasn't considering embedding text (which I discovered later) or more creative ways to caption, like using cartoon bubbles inside a video which I also discovered in the process. Although I wasn't able to share anything digitally that was tactile, some of my thinking took tactile form like the interactive, giant blackboard and several analog versions of Twines one of which was made from cardboard, thumbtacks, yarn and bits of paper.

²⁹ **Animation-desk**.kdanmobile.com

³⁰ www.sparkol.com/products/video-scribe

I accumulated a list of tools that I thought afforded a greater sense of inclusion. I gave myself three days to look because I was aware of the trap of falling down the rabbit hole in search of the latest and greatest technology.

Tools Used

- Video scribe – free trial software
- Garage band – software included with MacBook Pro
- Animation Desk – iPad app (\$3.99)
- Frameograph – free stop-motion iPhone app
- Mozilla popcorn – open source media creation tools
- Peanut gallery – silent movie creation software, Google Chrome
- PowerPoint – included with MacBook Pro
- iMovie – included with MacBook Pro
- iPhoto – included with MacBook Pro
- Computer camera – Macbook Pro
- Camera and video recorder – iPhone
- Voice recorder– iPhone
- Twine game – open source software
- Ink and rubber stamps
- Paper and envelopes

I also have a habit of accumulating objects, toys and discarded games from thrift stores. In the middle of projects I often relax by going to used-

goods stores to turn objects over in my hands and see what they might have to say about what I am doing. Some of the things I handled and 'listened to' that became part of these pieces included:

- Two South Park big head plastic characters
- MoMa for Kids - design building templates
- Playmobile - toy cow and chickens
- Play it by Ear- The First CD game
- Pink rubber bouncy ball
- A ball of twine

I also allowed myself to use any images from my cache of iPhone videos and photos, and shot some new video with embedded text when that idea came to me.

In the 45 creation days, I would start by sitting on the couch with my coffee and looking at the words on the blackboard. Sometimes this would lead to pulling out some toys or games or objects. Then I would choose one of the tools I had on my list. More often than not the tools suggested the first step of where an idea wanted to go. Using the improvisational rule of saying an enthusiastic yes, I just accepted and followed the tool's lead. In the silent animation *Prairie Schism* for example, I drew a brown line first and that led to the creation of the word prairie in a series of brown lines. As this was happening I was reminded of a family story. In Hanna, Alberta my relatives would always tie a rope from the house to the barn so they could make their

way back and forth during harsh winter blizzards. I chased that story with drawings for this piece. I kept generating pieces this way, creating one every two or three days and sending them to the jury³¹ as they were made.

Only once did I use previously written text: I wanted to share some specific material on rules for involuntary commitment in psychiatric facilities. I knew I wanted to deliver these in a playful way, so when I came across the option of cartoon speech-bubble captioning in Mozilla's Popcorn media makers, I released the information in a video of 'talking' chickens scratching in a farm yard.

I was conscious of trying to keep the artist employed only in chasing her curiosity and imagination. Perhaps the discoveries would lead to new forms of accessible media. Perhaps there would be a traceable method or larger purpose, perhaps not. This could not be the artist's concern. I was equally aware however that I was in the Inclusive Design program and would have to answer to ideas of design and so I reluctantly agreed to also cast myself in the role of a vulnerable observer.³²

To keep the artist and design researcher separate in my mind I chose an alternate name for my artist: Chicken Army. This name came off the top of

³¹ I had chosen sixteen people to receive the pieces. Sixteen is the same number of people that sit on a grand jury.

³² I thought of myself as a vulnerable observer and later searched and found work done in anthropology about vulnerable observers. This was one small example of my experience in university where I would come across things that I felt like I knew or process or philosophies that mirrored my experience or expressed things I'd once thought.

my head while contemplating two things I couldn't imagine pairing together (not unlike Inclusive Design). I loved this name and pictured a large army of chickens marching with me, full of fear and looking hilarious in our mocked seriousness. I was reminded that my humor has always been able to lift me above and beyond my fears. The fear of having to turn all of this into a paper was considerable. Chicken Army did much to assuage those fears and to not deprive the design researcher of the results of the exploratory work, in which only the artist could engage.

How the pieces were delivered

I was also playing with larger questions of accessibility involving how my work is delivered to an audience. Live theatre, the area I work in the most, is still inaccessible in terms of built environment and in the use of augmented translation tools like captioning and audio description. Theatre is also guilty of economic exclusion in terms of ticket prices or in the privileged tradition of show times, which are often impossible for many people of difference to be able to guarantee getting to on time due to transportation problems or due to episodic illnesses with limits that vary from day to day. Distributing the pieces digitally answered some of these concerns but I didn't like the thought of the pieces just randomly floating in cyberspace. I decided I needed to at least feel an audience out there. This parameter did not come to me before I started the pieces but only after three pieces had been made. The

audience focused the project timeline and held me to delivering pieces every two or three days.

To be playful with the idea of audience, I invited 16 people (the number in a grand jury) to receive the pieces I created. I sent out an email explaining that they would receive random pieces and not to expect order and not to expect sense. When the pieces came to an end, I would send a certificate and they could decide whether or not to sign it. Signing this certificate would certify me sane. I made it clear that I would not ask them what they thought the pieces might mean or not mean. I made a clear request not to ask me questions and not to correspond with the artist, Chicken Army. I just needed to know someone was on the other end of the rope. I also wanted to be responsible for the design delivery that was an essential part of this MRP. My program director, my academic supervisor and my outside advisor were included as three of the jury members. Rather than deliver all the artifacts at once, they too received them one at a time. I didn't know how this would play out, only that I set a time parameter of 30 days that I later expanded to 45 days.

How the theme was chosen

The haunting of having been certified insane more than once definitely followed me into academia. Although I have spent the last 14 years diligently trying to repurpose my mental differences into assets rather than

liabilities, there is still sometimes an outsized fear that shadows me. I fear that someone will find out the particulars of my past - my psychiatric labels - tap me on the shoulder and say, "Excuse me, here are your paper slippers. You are wanted back on the ward." Having learned that transparency is often the best shield, I made the decision to disclose my disabilities to my cohorts and instructors in the program. Instead of feeling empowered, shame caught up with me and pushed me towards self-exclusion. What remains interesting is that this move towards a time of necessary solitude ultimately increased my self-advocacy skills and connected me to a larger world of researchers and professors interested in generously sharing their expertise. I then allowed this expertise to melt in its own way into my lived experience.³³

The feeling I had of having to work hard to appear normal wasn't going away. In fact this urge became particularly acute as my brother had just had emergency surgery and ended up back on the psychiatric ward of a hospital. The anesthetic had triggered a severe manic episode. He remained in the hospital until April 1, a total of 5 months. Though his symptoms of mania had subsided, finding housing for him was difficult, as he'd already lost his jobs and apartment due to his lengthy hospital stay.

Both my brother and I have been diagnosed with schizophrenia at various points and manic depression at other points. The schism in

³³ Jutta Treviranus, Emma Westecott, Sue Biely, Sambhavi Chandrashekar, Carla Rice and Eliza Chandler were a few of the academics to have profound influence in making this MRP possible.

understanding how I was in such a place of privilege and my brother was in such a place of disempowerment did not escape me. The exact points that led to the idea of making a game out of my need to be certified sane certainly came in an untraceable way though these juxtaposed conditions. The fragmented story pieces were deemed pieces of evidence for jury members to make a decision about whether or not to certify me sane. After delivering all of the pieces I was going to mail them each a certificate that they could sign or not sign. The jury members, who served as an unseen audience, were set up to be judges or in my mind, the kindest mental health review board I could imagine. In reality however, these were people who believed in me, have championed me, love me and who support how I deal with and make the most of what I call my injured brain. Choosing the jury members was an essential part of my method. I needed to know that there were others along the rope from point a to point b that wouldn't let go. They were there every morning when I picked up a new tool and mulled over the linked words from the Twine stories. They were there as I listened to my toys and games. They were there to receive the fragmented pieces. They were also there in the afternoons as I read difficult papers and shyly began to peer through the scope of my research. They were whispering, "Stay loose, and let everything move through you. Make pieces now and know that even as you do this, the paper is coming to you." In the end we created 30 new media and text pieces together and wrote this paper.

It was a feminist strategy to create a community of support and a happy accident in disability art in the timing of being introduced to the practicalities of Twine. In Twine I saw the beginnings of a possible positive representation of fragmented thinking. I was also thrilled by the discovery of the distributed delivery of the pieces through email. This provided a more accurate, although perhaps more frightening and out of context way of showing how the mind may actually work, or, more precisely, a playful representation of how memory and story come to us.

Fractured thinking has been appropriated by psychiatry as dangerous and unproductive. We have become frightened of things that don't make sense right away. We seem to need to know where we are going before we go and to have everything we could possibly need in our suitcase before we travel.³⁴ Tangential thinking can only be good if it eventually makes sense. Even if you haven't been labeled schizophrenic you have likely experienced what is called 'word salad'. This is a streaming of freely associated words that have no logical connection. Gregory Bateson wrote that schizophrenics live in metaphors that they seem to take literally (qtd. in Stanislav 12). I have experienced this kind of thinking; listening to the psychiatric diagnosis makes me fear it, listening to the whatever it is that drives creativity inside me makes me hear this, "There is purpose here, be patient, and wait for the fool's gold. Yes that's right, the fool's gold. When you show this to some

³⁴ A sign I saw in a design professor's office once read "Design without strategy is just Art".

people they will tell you it has no worth, but you know you are one of those people who will make something of this.”³⁵ At the end of the game of delivering 30 fragments of expression, I discovered an alternative ending. I did not need the jury to sign a certificate of sanity for me. I could certify myself sane. I made myself a certified sane wallet card and signed it. Then I sent each of the jury members a certified sane wallet card for themselves, signed by me, should they ever need it.

Discussion

In total thirty pieces were made. What follows is the list of what was made in the order that the pieces were distributed. The tools or software or technology used to make each piece is also recorded.

Table 1. Inclusive Media Pieces

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
Letter of Invitation	January 9, 2014	Text only	MS Word	An invitation to participate
Super Chicken	January 13, 2014	Traditionally captioned video	Amara open source captioning software	Original series song and video captioned.

³⁵ Words from my journal. Dated. November 2013. Also from the same date: “My experience with many designers is that they throw out the fool’s gold too quickly because it is not the idea that will make them rich or cool. I need to open my mind and heart to more designers.”

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
To whom it may concern	January 15, 2014	Audio MP3	Garage Band and iTunes	A multi-tracked oral letter between many selves.
Letter assignment	January 17, 2014	Text only	MS Word	An explanation of what jury members would be asked to do
Prairie Schism	January 20, 2014	Silent Animation	Animation Desk	Holding a rope during a prairie snow
How you got here	January 22, 2014	Branching narrative game	Twine open source software	An interactive story about being with my brother in the hospital
Not the end	January 25, 2014	Silent animation Moma buildings/South Park figures	Frameograph free stop-motion app	A cardboard city collapses on two bobble heads but they survive.
Of Sound Mind	January 27, 2014	Sound Play Audio MP3 Play it by ear-CD Game	Garage Band, iTunes	Multitrack sounds and voices as a sample of inner head noise.
Things chicks should know	January 29, 2014	Cartoon speech-bubble-captioned video	Mozilla Popcorn open source media making software	Barnyard chickens explain the mental health act.

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
A small bear story	January 31, 2014	Text and audio	PowerPoint Talking book	The story of how one polar bear killed another polar bear at the Calgary Zoo.
Sanity for Beginners-episode 1	February 3, 2014	Audio	Garage Band, iTunes	A humorous podcast on being sane
Lost World	February 5, 2014	Silent film with text cards.	Peanut Gallery free Google Chrome app	A film about a failed experiment to include dinosaurs.
Neon Prayer	February 8, 2014	Silent video with embedded text	iPhone camera	Text scrolls across the window of a manicure store
You and your tethered ache	February 10, 2014	Five-story branching narrative game	Twine open source software	Small personal stories of insanity and its history
Something Happened	Delivered at various times, randomly distributed	Text and audio version MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	Twine story in traditional form
Pink Rubber Ball	Delivered at various times, randomly distributed	Text and audio version MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	Twine story in traditional form
Shoebox	Delivered at various times, randomly distributed	Text and audio version MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	Twine story in traditional form

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
In the worst of it	Delivered at various times, randomly distributed	Text and audio version MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	Twine story in traditional form
Who builds this world	February 11, 2014	Silent video embedded text	iPhone camera Type on computer screen	A partially lit difficult to read screen asks who builds the world
Fish Love	February 13, 2014	Silent video Embedded text	iPhone camera	Fish swim behind glass with Love written on it.
Ship of Tears	February 14, 2014	Audio MP3	Garage Band, iTunes	A story of finding other people crying in the city
Crust	February 15, 2014	Video Embedded text Audio	iPhone camera, iPhone voice memo, Garage Band, iTunes	A story told aloud with moving pictures beside text about an old man on a train.
Sanity for Beginners Episode 2	February 16, 2014	Audio MP3	Garage Band, iTunes	A humorous podcast on being sane

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
Mrs. Green Or Value Village	February 18, 2014	Captioned Video – captioned by Producers in post production	Computer camera and microphone desk lamp.	Direct camera address musing on idea of being prescribed sequins instead of pills.
Funny but not so funny	February 21, 2014	Live capture handwriting and drawing	Video scribe whiteboard animation software. Free 7-day trial.	A story that appears as handwriting and drawing about the presence of trauma.
With or without you	February 23, 2014	Silent Video/embedded text	iPhoto, iMovie	Silent story of images and woround brother and hospital.
All that Kafuffle	February 25, 2014	Text Audio MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	Further connecting stories and ideas around sanity and insanity
Dear One/Reverse Forward	February 26, 2014	Text Audio MP3	MS Word, Garage Band, iTunes	A small note concerning the media pieces and their rumored connection to an MRP

Piece	Date Delivered	Materials and Form	App/software used	Description
Closing letter	February 27, 2014	Handwritten note, laminated wallet card, ink and hand stamps, envelope And postage stamp	Ink, rubber stamps, pen	Note explaining self certification and certified sane wallet card
Credits	February 27, 2014	Video/embedded text	iPhone camera	Video shot of movie theatre projector rolling credits

The pieces were accumulated in order of delivery into an eBook created with the app Book Creator. This will be made entirely accessible and distributed at a later date. The breakdown of the inclusive media pieces worked out to be the following: six interactive narrative stories; five audio-only experiences ranging from podcast spoofs to full sound plays; two silent animations and one with embedded text; four captioned videos, with one traditionally captioned, one with silent film title cards, one with cartoon speech-bubbles embedded on the video and one as recorded live captioning; five videos with embedded text; one video with embedded text and matching audio; three text-only pieces and five pieces were distributed in both text and audio versions.

Artistic Implications

I have and will continue to share the ways of working I discovered for myself in hopes of engaging an artist's responsibility in creating more accessible media. This will likely be done by using these techniques in future projects and attempting to get these projects into mainstream media and art arenas to start conversations around innovating new forms of accessible media. Another unforeseen conclusion was the creation of a new performance form called Shbookow by the artist Chicken Army.

A Shbookow is part book and part show. One of the great things about a book is that you can put it down whenever you want to. A show is hard to leave, but you can always leave a book and it really is just between you and the book. What's the book going to say? But with a show (especially if it's one of those super-intense, one-person shows where it's just the performer glaring at you) it can be almost impossible to leave. But I must confess to loving shows, because the storyteller is right there in your face, and because of this aliveness there is much more emotional risk for all involved. The performer risks the weight of an emotionally compacted story that they must tell in the same way, show after show, all while being just slightly larger than life. The audience risks unexpected emotional turns and perhaps a reaction or response bigger than they bargain for in a public setting. This can be very difficult for people, the containment of intimacy in a crowd. So I thought, how could we get the best out of a book and the best out of a show? Shbookow!

The pieces of the *In Kind* Shbookow can be requested for distribution in various ways. The Shbookow can be received through email and experienced as an eBook, or you can ask Chicken Army to come and perform the pieces for you in the order they appear in the book or in any order you like. You can also request just the selections you like. There can be time for questions or no questions, there can be discussions or not. The Shbookow can be read one-on-one like a bedtime story, or to many people in any place with a big screen and enough room, or anything in between. The Shbookow can come to you and you can pay with a bowl of soup or by bartering things like pens and paper, transit passes, frozen casseroles, pink rubber bouncy balls or a day trip to the country. You can also sell tickets to raise money for the pauthormer (performing author). Anyway, Chicken Army doesn't want to have to explain everything. It's called a Shbookow and it's written and performed by a pauthormer.

If you are among the multi-sense privileged, you will be able to decide from the many forms offered to you. If you aren't, *In Kind*, the Showbookow is ready to undergo creative alchemy to be customized into a performance and into the making of an artifact that you can visit time and time again. The Shbookow however, is not part of the Master's Research Project (MRP). It was essential for me to keep separate the design implications and the artistic implications of this MRP. The Shbookow will not be measured against any system of academic rigor. The individual components within the project have

been discussed in this paper as new or repurposed forms of accessible media and the question of how this approach might inform a more inclusively designed media practice has been addressed, but the components that comprise the whole of *In Kind* will not be subject to any attempts of meaning-making or even criticism of say, for example, the use of run on sentences.

The Shobookow, *In Kind*, is a gift from Chicken Army to Jan Derbyshire and to those who received the individual components. These same people, perhaps unknowingly, served as inspiring hands along an imagined and huge stretch of red rope that was used to navigate the artist through the research to the writing of this paper. Chicken Army was definitely on one end and Jan Derbyshire on the other; whether they are in fact the same person or they simply traded off duties somewhere in the middle will remain an undiagnosable mystery. *In Kind* the Showbookow was the result of the chasing of pure curiosity to fuel the research of new and repurposed processes of media-making, and as such does not have the goal of delivering direct knowledge, but aspires to serve as inspiration rather than innovation and as a maker of new questions, rather than a container of theoretical answers.³⁶

³⁶ If you interested in experiencing *In Kind*, the Shobookow, please contact Chicken Army directly at chickenarmy30@gmail.com

Inclusive Design Implications

The *In Kind* project revealed that not only is it possible to create aesthetically pleasing accessible media, it is easy. No original software or apps were created but many existing free apps and software were discovered. In what could be called an (app)ropriation of digital tools as site-specific creation spaces, inclusive media pieces emerged that were thematically charged by the tool itself. In thinking about digital creation tools as places for devising experiences of story, I coincidentally became aware of how simple the solutions to being more inclusive can be. Methods found for use in the project's short pieces have great potential for being used in longer forms. I am excited about embedded text in video where necessary words are part of the shot. This was achieved by finding on-location signs or words or by writing text to be included in the shot. These techniques have already sparked a documentary script about Inclusive Design. In addition, the script will be written as audio description first and then translated into visual form in a video.

Working with the audio-only pieces allowed me to question the hierarchy of senses that in culture and art still places vision at the top. I returned to the past world of radio plays where rich, inclusive environments of sound and story captivated the imagination. Further investigation needs to be done into the artistic possibilities of audio description. While I think audio description can enrich the experience of a sight-dependent event, it seems

limiting to think of the sighted world as the only place to find imagery or nuance or indicators of emotion (qtd. in Derbyshire 6).

None of the more inclusive forms I've used are original or involve the creation of new technology, which suggests that surveying what already exists is important in innovating new uses and applications. Treviranus' idea of "piggybacking accessibility possibilities on what has already been made," (class notes 2013) is a simple and provocative idea that needs to be remembered especially in Design's approach to chasing after the next best thing. Increasing access to free ways of making in digital spaces will give us the time to contemplate how the technology might best serve story or experience particularly for personal narratives that remaining missing from public views.

Inclusive Art & Design implications

I have heard that art can sometimes explore the boundaries that design will later mine. What can my lived experience as an artist and activist bring to the field of inclusive design? It has been my experience that even in design, thinking needs to look good. There seems to be a need for aesthetic pleasure even in how thinking is manifested in the visual realm. Even the chaos seems controlled in the use of sticky notes or card sorting or collage. Perhaps I am suggesting that we try to look good too soon, that our need for categorizing happens too quickly, that we would be well served in learning

how to stay in the land of tangential thinking, perhaps feasting on a whimsical bowl or two of word salad. I am suggesting a temporary tossing of spontaneous ideas separated from any dressing of what we might call common sense. This dish is often considered to only be the food of artists. I wonder: Is there a way to recognize the artist in each of us and listen to what they might have to say about design without giving up all the expertise and lived experience we have all worked so hard to achieve? Is there a way to not have to be pure poet but perhaps renew our poetic license to drive ideas home, not by becoming a better driver, but by stepping out of the car and running around in the field of wildflowers for a while, barking at the moon? Do designers leave divergent thinking too quickly because this kind of thinking is sometimes framed as madness and people are afraid to go there? If you get out and run into that field of wildflowers and bark at the moon, will you ever come back?

In trying to understand the more regimented processes of design that claim to be loose and forgiving, I wonder if design could be the field that attracts artists who fear going insane.³⁷ The philosopher Foucault talks of madness as an invented idea and surmises that we have a tendency to ignore the positive, real elements as it is presented in a society. He asks, how did our

³⁷ For a long time I have been noodling around with the idea that there is so much labeled insanity because we need to reclaim as 'normal' the full spectrum of human emotions but after design school I think we also need to work hard not just the reclaiming of the emotional spectrum but also at reclaiming the full spectrum of the imagination, especially the messy bits. Even mess in design school is designed.

culture come to give mental illness the meaning of deviancy and to the patient a status that excludes him? (Foucault 105). I suggest that this framing keeps us afraid of our wilder imaginations where truly important ideas lay in wait. I think ideas of madness have co-opted the very natural states of spontaneity and play that exist in every person regardless of age. I believe that we are personally responsible to ourselves and to each other in continually reclaiming spontaneity and play and to reimagine what is often perceived as mental illness as mental health.

It is in this area, holding onto expertise and letting go at the same time that I may impact the field of inclusive design in the future. The experiences of creating more inclusive digital media from my current conditions of self and present circumstances and in using art to inspire design revealed a desire to create a model for others to use. I wonder, however, how much of the making of models reshapes the clay of creation into recognizable academic pots posing as containers for systems that cannot truly be known? The ease with which I put the playful work of creating the Value Village digital story into a common design framework worries me; and with this I reveal my skepticism towards developing a model after the making. Therefore I suggest that what I am offering is less a model and more a metaphor or imagined artifact that can lead one into a method of making. That said, I feel slightly fraudulent in offering this inside an academic

institution; perhaps like a person who loves to fly attempting to explain the principals involved in aerodynamics with no real foundation in physics.

R.O.P.E.

Think of a rope made of many twines. This rope is unique to you, in this place and in this time, and this rope will lead you into the work you need to do. This rope will provide you with some security in working with divergent thinking.

- R.O.P.E. could stand for Radically Owning Place and Experience.
- R.O.P.E. could stand for Rumpelstiltskin Ono Patch Ember.
- R.O.P.E. is homage to Alfred Hitchcock's film³⁸ of the same name that was all done in one take, because life is all in one take.
- R.O.P.E. stands for however you can make the acronym work for you.

If you don't like acronyms, R.O.P.E. is just a rope, in this imagining made from many individual twines.³⁹ The R.O.P.E. will lead you into what Mary Flanagan calls a 'reimagined space for critical play' (Flanagan 12).

³⁸ ROPE. A Film directed by Alfred Hitchcock, Adapted by Hume Cronyn from the play by Patrick Hamilton. Warner Brothers 1948

³⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VKHNSdpLyg>

How to make an imagined R.O.P.E.

STEP 1 – Imagine a ball of twine in your hand. Cut several lengths of twine in your mind. Each piece of twine represents a current condition of self or circumstance: bodily and mental conditions, random theories, real life happenings, worldly concerns, trivial matters, major issues and specifically-chosen influences from academic theory or lived experience running through your life at the time you begin to make or design something. You may not be aware of all the twines, it is just important to know there are many twines and they will all connect to your design whether you want them to or not. My R.O.P.E at the time of my attempts to make more inclusive media included the following twines: critical play; radical game design; feminist disability studies; inclusive design; devised theatre and improvisation; and my on-going life conditions as a mother of a grown daughter, as a partner to my lover, as a student, as a director and theatre maker, as a writer, as a daughter and sister to a brother in the hospital, as an achiever prone to self-pity, as an artist in a design program, as an ex-mental patient trying to think of herself as a divergent thinker trying to find logical ways of expressing ideas that would garner the completion of a Master’s degree.

STEP 2 - Wind the twines together into a thick rope. No matter what your twines are, this rope will be strong enough to hold you. This is your rope for this session of tangential thinking. Tomorrow you may switch some twines out or add some new twines, but for this session this is your rope.

STEP 3 – Trust your ROPE. As an experiment believe the rope is made up of exactly what it needs to be made up of at this moment in time for this purpose. It may be stretched to its limit, you may feel like you are hanging onto a thread, but you're not. You are hanging onto your rope and it will be there to guide you. You don't need to go looking for another rope, or a better rope, everything you need is here. This is how I have always started projects. I don't go looking for something to tell a story about or some feeling to feel creative about I just start holding on to the rope of what I am and where I am and let it guide me. I trust that the rope is attached to something and just because I can't see it doesn't mean it's not there. In the prairies they tied a rope from the house to the barn so they could find their way back and forth in the worst of blizzards. This is often what tangential thinking can feel like but the rope will get you to where you need to go. The rope won't protect you from the elements or the extremes and you may have strange imaginings but it doesn't mean that you can hold on to what you know be this engineering and/or poetry or design or mothering or knitting. All of these things have come together for you to use at this place and in this time. Trust the rope. Keep moving.

STEP 4 – Start moving down the rope. Picture in the distance something you can't see. It is whatever you need to get done. It is already done and waiting for you. You just have to get to it.

STEP 5 – Keep holding onto your rope and go wherever your mind wants to take you. Do things that feel crazy, whatever that is to you. Perhaps talking out loud while coloring in a book, or writing ideas on the side walk, or making a thinking hat, or playing with kid toys or bouncing a ball or playing hide and seek with your self. Whatever it is, be messy and weird. If it really is a product or innovation you're after, you will find it. Don't worry. You won't get lost. You have nothing to lose. It's all in your rope. Just play at being spontaneous. Hold onto to your R.O.P.E. and let go all at the same time.

Next steps

Accessibility Aesthetics

This thesis is invested in furthering ideas of accessibility in digital and real-world spaces not exclusively as acts of translation or inclusion but as acts of integrated aesthetics. It does so: by creating transformative experiences for patrons of new media and art that challenge the visual dominance of these fields (Sweeny 2009); by reversing translation processes, for example writing the audio description of a film first and then supplementing with visuals; by returning to and investigating older forms of more inclusive media such as radio plays and silent films with and without embedded text.

Spontaneous Curriculums

This thesis hopes to develop a curriculum of improvisation in the teaching of inclusive art and design supported by the theory of critical play: by reimagining places and structures for play inside academia and design; by continuing a deeper investigation into my own collaborative and improvisational creation methods to further possible application to other learning scenarios and to impact thinking in other fields particularly design and research.

Flexible models for co-design

Next steps include work with artist/designers and community members to find ways of demystifying the design process and integrating the values and knowledge of lived experience through collaborative ventures out in the field; by finding agencies and non-profits that need digital and accessibility solutions and forming working groups here loosely based on the Tetra Society model but driven more by community participants; by encouraging the completion of design ideas by non-professionals in Hacklab situations; by developing pay-it-forward models with professional designers where 1% of their salary is donated to a fund to pay non-designers. This would be structured in a way to provide additional support for people on disability benefits; by develop learning modules to train people up towards full participation in design.

Artist Led Innovation

To continue expanding the aesthetic possibilities of accessible art: by challenging artists to reconsider creative parameters in their works through open gallery calls of film and theatre commissions; by facilitating conversations and workshops around inclusive art; by having competitions where artists receive money and/or residences for contemplating and actualizing more inclusive art and media.

Method to the Madness

To continue to reclaim and advance ideas of artistic temperament over definitions of madness; by continuing to read and think deeply and write about how ideas of madness co-opt our mind's very natural state of spontaneity; by OCAD University becoming the first Art & Design school to have "The Office of Artistic Temperament" - where students, free of the fear of diagnosis, can check with fellow artists (alumni) about their work and feelings and the pressures of school.

Personal curiosities

To stay situated as an artist flying between inclusive and design: by further investigations into hyperlink narratives as positive representations of fractured thinking and as a way to greater inclusion, not just of different learners but also of different teachers; and by continuing to experiment with

the possibilities of distributed delivery of digital stories and the potential for creating art/activist communities.

Art-Based Research

To continue questioning the ethics of art-based research, particularly participatory projects, by bringing questions for consideration to researchers: If we make our livelihoods on the stories of others, what do we owe them for their contributions? Can we bring people with lived experience in closer and closer to the beginning of projects, even at the grant-writing phase? Can we model transparency as a way of bringing a more democratic process to co-design and collaborative projects?

Conclusion

When this opportunity of the Golden Ticket to enter University presented itself, I was driven to accept by an ego-based desire to have some sort of official recognition of my intelligence. I had attempted university on five separate occasions in the past; I would do well for a semester or two, only to become overwhelmed and over-stimulated to the point of dangerous abstractions. I had yet to learn how to take responsibility for the workings of my mind and to find ways through my dyslexia. I gave up on the idea of completing a degree but repurposed my learning by going to university bookstores, seeing reading lists posted for courses I was interested in and reading the books myself. I know many people through circumstance or

condition that educated them in this way. Of course this kind of learning does not have to be legitimized in any form, and I knew that by agreeing to come into the ivory tower, I would be asked to do things a certain way. I accepted this challenge by trying to choose curiosity over fear whenever possible.

This is not to deny the overwhelming fear I sometimes felt, particularly when faced with the academic need to corral divergent thinking in convergent forms. The primary differences in these thinking styles is aptly described below:

In tests of convergent thinking there is almost always one conclusion or answer that is regarded as unique, and thinking is to be challenged or controlled in the direction of that answer.... In divergent thinking, on the other hand, there is much searching about or going off in various directions. This is most obviously seen when there is no unique conclusion. Divergent thinking...is characterized....as being less goal bound. There is a freedom to go off in different directions.... rejecting the old solution and striking off in some new direction is necessary, and the resourceful organism will probably succeed.” (Guilford 145)

When anger showed up to mask my fear, I confess I even looked up an old favorite, radical feminist quote: “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”(Lorde qtd. in Grillo 16). I didn’t really want to dismantle the Master’s house because with the gift of age, I have become aware that the low self-esteem I still occasionally suffer from can and has convinced me to step back from challenging opportunities I may well have been able to pursue. I wanted to be able to do what was asked of me in the form it was

asked in. However, I was overwhelmed in lectures and over-stimulated by conversations with too many people in class and could not seem to ask the questions I needed to ask. I found it impossible to stay in class. I went into Jutta's office to give her back the now soiled and tattered Golden Ticket. She told me a story, in which she considers herself both the rider and the horse.

When Jutta was about 12 years-old she bought a horse for \$20 and saved it from a glue factory⁴⁰The horse, an Appaloosa, had a big scar running up it's hind quarters from a run in with a car. The horse scared easily and wouldn't go anywhere near the road. For years, Jutta would just run the horse closer and closer to the road until finally the fear dissipated and the horse could not only run close to the road but down the middle of it, if an occasion called for it.⁴¹

The story kept me included; the lady behind the big desk told me a story. I was going to be fine. One of the principals we had been taught in Inclusive Design is one-size-fits-one. Here was my first living example of that principal. The storyteller that I am needed a story to make sense of things. Jutta suggested a plan that included a mix of classes and of self-motivated study, a model I easily embraced and excelled at, as it mirrored my own high school experience.⁴² That independent learning saw me through to getting a MITACS grant for the *Me on the Map* project to work with children to

⁴⁰ Dead and dying horses are often said to be "sent to the glue factory." Why are horses good for making glue? They have a lot of collagen. Collagen is a key protein in connective tissues (cartilage, tendons, ligaments) as well as hides and bones. It's also the key ingredient in most animal glues, as it can be made into a gelatin that's sticky when wet but hardens when it dries. http://www.slate.com/articles/life/explainer/2012/02/what_do_horses_have_to_do_with

⁴¹ Told in the office of Jutta Treviranus @ October 29, 2014. Verified March 5, 2014.

⁴² Bishop Carroll High School in Calgary, Alberta offered a unique program that allowed students to work at their own pace in an individual environment.

research the design of an interactive play model for an inclusive city. The learning curve for the MITCS grant, the road to getting REB approval, and the eventual research with the kids was an incredible experience. This endeavor led me to searching out experts and professors that I would not have had exposure to otherwise. In being permitted to move through my own process of learning, I met and exceeded all the requirements of a design course. I will be forever grateful to Jutta's foresight and flexibility in this matter. I feel compelled to make note of how important this flexibility is because often people who need accommodations are thought of as not being able to do the work required. I simply repurposed the work with respect to my own processes and found the motivation I needed by attaching the learning to a real world project. In this way, knowledge and innovation emerged as I did things brand new to me, supported by people who were willing to answer my many questions. By being given permission to exclude myself, I could stay a part of. I could repurpose my anger and fear not by not by tearing down the Master's house but perhaps as an artist suggesting some gentle ideas for remodeling a room or two.

I will continue to situate myself as an artist navigating the space between the words inclusive and design and to stay in the deep thinking I have been privileged to cocoon myself in at OCAD University. That said, if a diverse student base is to continue in the Inclusive Design program, a space of increasing flexibility needs to be created to hold all of us; from the most

traditional academic achievers and instructors to those of us invited in with the rich knowledge of lived experience. This will take time as the early experiments have proved to be a bit risky to non-traditional participants and frustrating to those for whom the system and its rules work best.⁴³ New blood coming into an old body that has only ever had one type of blood can experience agglutination;⁴⁴ it gums up the works if you will and the transfusion of new blood is seen as the cause of all the trouble. In time maybe the blood type this body needs will change to something new and with this change, the tolerance and effectiveness of this experiment will pay off with new and vital models of teaching and learning of Inclusive Design.

Towards this hopeful model, currently being experimented with in the real life lab at OCADU, there will be room for many kinds of research and methodologies. Design education will involve critical play and a mutual respect for art and science. Innovations will be found both through wild improvisations and by approaching problems theoretically. Inclusive design students will not just generate products but will innovate new and thoughtful inclusive processes of participatory research, co-design and education. Some of this work is happening but the competitive container of higher education

⁴³ We outsiders ask a lot of questions.

⁴⁴ For a blood transfusion to be successful, ABO and Rh blood groups must be compatible between the donor blood and the patient blood. If they are not, the red blood cells from the donated blood will clump or agglutinate. The agglutinated red cells can clog blood vessels and stop the circulation of the blood to various parts of the body.
<http://mrverhees.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/blood-clotting-and-agglutination/>

that the program finds itself in unwittingly promotes the isolation of process and learning through the age old calling that screams - to be successful, you must be the best, the first and the brightest.

Although I hate the segregation the term often brings, I am an artist.⁴⁵ I am markedly different from most of the achievers in my class. For me success is not pointing towards some pinnacle at the top, be it a new job or a better grade. Success is remaining curious and letting things find their way. Sometimes in the creative work of my MRP approaches I tried didn't end up being what I needed them to be at the time, but I don't think of them as failures. If I did there would be so many creative failures in my life that I wouldn't continue. Success has to be measured for me in each moment that I manage to choose curiosity over fear. Perhaps this could be the programs new moniker, Inclusive Curiosity. Is it the word design that weighs down the possibilities of the qualifier Inclusive? In design there is much talk of 'fail early, fail often' but the implication is that eventually this must lead to an original and unparalleled success for the failures to be of any worth. Using the word failure immediately removes any trying from play and brings shame to the possibility of transparency because who wants to talk of failures? Would it be better to call the program Inclusive Arts? Keith

⁴⁵ "We see the artist as a wild and aberrant figure. Maybe our artists are the people who have been constitutionally unable to conform to the demands of the teachers. Pavlov found that there were some dogs that he couldn't 'brainwash' until he castrated them, and starved them for three weeks. If teachers could do that to us, then maybe they'd achieve Plato's dream of a republic in which there are no artists left at all." (Jamison 78)

Johnstone writes, “You have to be a very stubborn person to remain an artist in this culture. It is easy to play the ‘role’ of artist but, actually to create something means going against one’s education” (33). After this experience, I disagree slightly with Johnstone. I think you must always fight to feel the worth of your contributions as an artist especially inside institutes of higher education; but education itself is not the enemy. The enemy is in having to compete inside education. Johnstone wrote:

Normal schooling is intensely competitive, and the students are supposed to try and outdo each other. If I explain to a group that they’re to work for other members, that each individual is to be interested in the progress of the other members, they’re amazed, yet obviously if a group supports its own members strongly, it’ll be a better group to work in. (112)

Jutta Treviranus echoes similar principals in her descriptions of Inclusive Design that include recognizing diversity and uniqueness, employing inclusive processes and tools and considering the broader beneficial impact.⁴⁶

When I made the decision to continue navigating what I felt to be the very real schism between the definition of the word inclusive and the definition of the word design, it became clear that within that space I would have to answer to myself and chase my own curiosities and not respond to the competitive ideas of teachers or students. After my university experience, I am thoughtful about this schism and what feels to me to be a

⁴⁶ <http://idrc.ocad.ca/index.php/resources/idrc-online/library-of-papers/443-whatisinclusivedesign>

missing piece of theory and practice inside the program. The history of the Inclusive Design program is that it was mothered into being when the Assistive Technology Research Centre moved from the University of Toronto to OCAD University and became the Inclusive Design Research Centre. The program took the same name but with this neo-liberal leaning towards an economic model of inclusion, the history of the use of assistive technologies and its connection to disability rights and justice is all but missing. It is not that Jutta is remiss in bringing in diverse speakers or that she fails to pose provocative questions. It is more in the disconnect introduced by the idea that disability is a condition and not a trait; this perspective somehow ignores the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, for example, thinking that having your vision temporarily disabled when the sun hits the bank machine screen is the same as living life with limited vision or no vision. This faulty logic leads people to test systems for unseeing persons by wearing blindfolds. This is nowhere near being able to replicate the way a blind person navigates their way through digital spaces. While it is tricky ground trying to define the fluid conditions of disability, the rich wisdom and repurposing abilities of persons who live with conditions outside what is considered the norm are desperately needed in inclusive design. We need the visibility of persons with disabilities as instructors, and students and as part of co-designing teams with students and at the IDRC.

While Inclusive Design is a less charitable moniker than Assistive Technology it is still a name associated with designing for the margins. In this renaming the business model is supported with the idea that by designing for the margins we all benefit. However, the concept of margins still implies outsiders, and as it stands now those outsiders remain for the most part outside of having any say in designs purported to 'assist' them. The answer can't be in inviting everyone into the program, but rather in repurposing our privileged learning to go and access those living the experience of difference.⁴⁷

Ideas of Eccentric Design⁴⁸

I am thoughtful that design is very product oriented and even in the Inclusive Design program, the pursuit of individual innovation was selected over collaborative processes without exception in our cohort. This may be partially due to the emphasis on individual MRP's. From what I understand, most people in my cohort used some form of participatory research but ironically I did not. I could not resolve a personal ethical dilemma.

Participatory research at times brings people with lived experience in at the

⁴⁷ This of course moves beyond the social model of disability based on two premises: 1) social conditions convert an impairment into a disability, not the impaired person; and, 2) the focus of efforts on behalf of those with a so-called disability should be rooted in respect for their personhood, i.e., on their ability and right to make their own, autonomous, decisions as to how they are to live with their so-called disability, and not on the impairment per se. That is, it is not the "welfare of the handicapped" that is at issue, but "the human rights of people with disabilities" (Charlton 115)

⁴⁸ A collision of words for an area of discipline that came to me as a result of other's ideas swirling around me.

beginning of a design process. However it is rare that these people are credited as co-designers and they are seldom paid. Every collaborative art project I have ever devised paid people a living wage and gave them credit as co-creators. It will never be enough to overlook these things if we are to claim the potential of Inclusive Design as a valid field of difference within the field of Design. This is particularly true around our exposure to participatory research as currently more talk than walk. Live questions remain on how and why we need do this differently and inclusively.

I am thoughtful about the possibility of a field of theory and practice modeled loosely on the generative practices of disability art called Eccentric Design. Eccentric design playfully reclaims the idea of outside the center. Could the Inclusive Design program be a place to develop this field? Or are the constraints of academia too tight to allow what could be a magic alchemy of eccentric lived experience meeting design? Could new methods and models be found where the people being designed for are being designed with? Could these models be economically equitable? Imagine people with disabilities lending designers their history and accomplishments in the moves through the continuing battle of legislation and law changes to reimagining representations. Imagine design inside and not separate from the cause of disability justice. Imagine 'extreme users' termed 'eccentric users' to denote those users who have their own way of doing things. This

term echoes the goal of one-size-fits-one.⁴⁹ Imagine designers hungry to learn the processes and models of eccentric design where cultural practices are customized for the people doing the designing. Standard hours or teaching methods or certifications are replaced with more informal, work-at-your-own-pace workshops or skill sharing sessions where eccentric users are paid to come in to share what they know with designers. Imagine designers with disabilities trained in non-traditional ways, that can express their thinking and ideas in such a way that designers want to access them.

By jumping in name from Assistive Technology to Inclusive Design did we skip over and lose potential methodologies and theories for eccentric design? Could we have found the 'ethical and critical frameworks' in which to funnel inclusive design ideas? Could we have found a way of working within specific cultural and political contexts that explored all the limitations, possibilities and openings of dis-sign and dis-signers?⁵⁰ What alternative methods and models could we know by purposely making the design space eccentric? I know ideas are closely linked to the intentions of Inclusive Design, but we need to be continually playful with how to best present these ideas in ways that are what Catherine Frazee⁵¹ calls subversive, seductive

⁴⁹ Jutta's play on the one-size-fits-all idiom to express the ultimate goal of preference selection in the digital realm.

⁵⁰ Dis-sign and dis-signer are words made up by me.

⁵¹ Catherine Frazee is a disability scholar and activist and an active member of the Inclusive Design Institute, a world wide collation of inclusive thinkers and makers in association with

and surprising. At the very least, I passionately hope that we find a better way of framing non-disabled inclusive designers as allies rather than experts occasionally testing their designs or having conversations about their designs with persons with disabilities. These persons with disabilities are usually not paid for the acquired knowledge of their lived experience except with a perfunctory \$20 gift card.⁵² Economic equity is essential as is working to change the rules of ODSP so people receiving disability benefits can move in and out of employment without fear of losing their benefits.

For me, there is a sense of entitlement and an unacknowledged place of privilege in design that claims a certain aesthetic expertise that I have yet to make peace with. Even in Inclusive Design vision is still at the top of the hierarchy of senses whenever we begin a design. I wonder what would have happened inside the program if we had been asked to design interfaces or experiences as if the margins were the center of the page. If we had each been paired with an eccentric user and co-designed with them. Parameters are known to invigorate creativity and increase innovation and while fear would have been present and palpable, starting with a site that could be sound only or designing an interface that was controlled by just a blink may have kept us in touch with the deeper, human need for inclusive design. Why

the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University. Retrieved from notes from the Go-To- Meeting session with Catherine Frazee. Moderated by Jutta Treviranus. April 3, 2014

⁵² This is considered an ethical practice in design research.

not design for the smallest point of entry in the center of the page and watch as concentric circles ripple out to include all? This would also do away with the derogatory term of designing for the margins.

I am also thoughtful about the seemingly overwhelming need in the free economy to try and make sense of things. And that 'sense', in terms of capitalism, means monetization. The primary question driving innovation is: How can this make money? I am stating the obvious as a way of asking myself and others: If making money is the only thing that we allow to makes sense, how much of what the imagination has to offer is forever relegated to useless nonsense? As a child if you picked up an empty Kleenex box and first turned into a car for a Barbie Doll and next slid it over your hand and made the sounds of a monster as you played Hammer Hand Man and then put it over one ear and made up the voice of a sports announcer on the transistor radio, did you stop and say - this isn't getting me anywhere? Or - how can I spin this into the next billion-dollar idea? Or in a more positive vein, but equally pressured - how will this save the world? It is my contention that no one needs to know how to return to play more than 'professional' innovators, and no one needs to know the conditions of their own lives more than professional designers. These are the people who are building our world and our digital spaces according to their specifications. Perhaps having a sense of our own constantly changing conditions of self and circumstances could lead to a more equal playing field in co-designing with so-called non-

professionals. Perhaps thinking about playing with ideas could remove the judgment inherent in the language of 'trying and failing' with ideas. Perhaps staying in continuous conversations about the material world and its pressures could lead us to happy mediums where money is concerned: where economic scarcity is replaced with economic equanimity. This in turn could keep us in touch with heartfelt values like generosity and compassion.

If Inclusive Design as a practice is to continue moving beyond intention and into impact, can we formally acknowledge the need for inclusive design to recognize, as a principal, that we are all in this together? There are no margins, just small points of entry that when activated ripple out as increasingly inclusive circles. There are no extreme users just eccentric users doing what they do. We are all on the same blank page trying to write and rewrite a better story for everyone. Can the nurturing and respect of the wilder imagination that comes before and during innovation or product creation be recognized as an essential methodology of Inclusive Design? In a recent lecture to Inclusive Design students, Catherine Frazee, a disability scholar and activist said, "(in) thinking about inclusive design, it seems to me that as a discipline two of the most rare attributes of the human character come together (that of) generosity and imagination".⁵³ Inclusive Design as a discipline can agree to write, say, design and otherwise indicate

⁵³ Retrieved from notes from the Go-To- Meeting session with Catherine Frazee. Moderated by Jutta Treviranus. April 3, 2014

these ideals loudly and often. And as Catherine Frazee encouraged, we can hold fast to these first impulses.

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Appendix

Playful Recommendations for The Inclusive Design Program

- Rejoin the words art and design whenever possible
- Rename the program Inclusive Art and Design. This will attract a more eccentric mix of artists and designers.
- Require all in class presentations by students and teachers to be accessible. Learning these practical skills could carry on as an educational initiative as each return to the real world.
- Create Eccentric Art & Design course- Combines spontaneity and divergent thinking training through improvisation and free fall writing with critical play theory. With acquired skills applied practically in public art and design projects between students and real world people that impact the representations of disability.
- Reject the term extreme users and replace with eccentric user
- Reject design for the margins and replace with design for entry point
- Introduce agreements of inclusivity specific to each cohort
- Refer to students as artist/designers
- Rethink summer art intensive to focus on: creating conditions of play; spontaneity as a natural state of mind; creativity and tangential thinking as part of art and design; play before product; art as away of finding discoveries later mined by design; art as a way of being in touch with conditions of self and circumstance; art as creating conditions for cultural conversations; art to create collaborative experiences, inclusive practices of art and design
- Actively seek out professors, instructors and students with disabilities.
- Consider a unit on the histories of use of assistive technologies as opposed to the histories of innovations. (Hendren)
- Develop Rules for Allies - consider the need to acknowledge the need for Allies and the rules that might apply. Look to the Idle no more movement for leadership here. This is a tricky task with the fluid definition of disability.
- Consider Field Teams -At least one term of collaborative design where students are attached to real world institutes or service agencies or schools and involved in co-design. Perhaps attached to outcomes desired by the IDRC.
- Consider strategies of collaboration between the program and the IDRC. I know this is a desire that hasn't been worked out.
- Improvisation for artist designers -Consider on going options of weekly improvisation classes with both writing and performance

options available for persons with disabilities and students or staff of IDRC.

- Speakers -Consider the importance of continuous exposure to disability artists and activists to balance out the weights of Inclusive and Design
- Artist Designers into community - repurpose hack lab idea as initiatives that take students out into field with their own expertise to teach those who cannot afford formal school.