

The Arts and Civic Space: An Experiment in Community Education

FRANCES MCCUE

University of Washington

Background/Context: *While the arts are being elbowed out of school curricula, new community-based education venues for the arts are emerging in cities across the country. This article describes Richard Hugo House, an arts center for creative writing in Seattle, which attracts people of different ages and sociocultural backgrounds who participate in not only writing studios, but in a wide range of activities such as literary readings and plays. Hugo House also maintains a gallery, a café, and a “zine” library, an underground collection of almost 16,000 homemade magazines from around the world. It has come to function as a civic space for the arts that fosters in participants not only a range of real-life skills, but also a sense of democratic values.*

Purpose: *This essay explores the theoretical underpinnings of a community learning place for the arts and includes some observations about how people of different backgrounds, ages, and skill levels engage with an art form and how the art becomes a pivot of dialogue for a larger community.*

Research Design: *In this particular civic arts space, I am identifying traits that make the learning environment a vibrant and inspiring one. For example, at Richard Hugo House, we are able to ask: “What do people need as they are learning to write? What does anyone coming to an artistic enterprise need? How does she sustain her work and improve her craft?” and we can trace the responses to these questions through the experiences of particular students and their teachers.*

Conclusions/Recommendations: *Good teaching in this informal setting is idealistic and pragmatic: it gives voice to more stories, and more stories help us see the “what ifs” of the world. Teaching at Hugo House facilitates more than it instructs—it’s a process theory approach and our observations are grounded similarly—in action research. While good teaching lets more people be the tellers of their stories, it also helps to hone and craft them, making both the story and the telling of it culturally urgent. That, at its best, is highly democratic.*

In 1996, two friends and I decided to start a writers' center in Seattle. We were writers ourselves—I am a poet and my two friends are fiction writers—and we saw the need for a central gathering place for writing in our bookish city. While some writers lingered in the basement of Elliott Bay Company and others took courses at local universities, there was no unifying place where they could present new work to audiences, hone their craft, and instigate public conversations about cultural issues. Though we imagined a real place with interesting programs, we wanted to maintain an atmosphere of informality. We avoided images of squeaky chairs in university lecture halls and we dreamed of this new place as a sort of school not bound by age or mandatory attendance, or a library without all that quiet. We hoped that it would become a crossroads for people of different ages and backgrounds—a hangout, really, for writing geeks. In contrast to the escapist retreat centers in idyllic settings, we designed an urban place that provided both refuge to write and exposure to complicated urban encounters. We wanted to be in the city and of the city, so we settled into a hinge between the central district (predominately African-American) and Capitol Hill (artistic and gay).

Ten years later, Richard Hugo House is a real place—an old Victorian apartment house that was once a funeral home, then a theater, and now a writer's oasis. We have a café, a resource library, offices for local publishers, a “zine” collection of handmade magazines and production space, classrooms, and a big black box theater.

In the beginning, I imagined this literary arts space as a large room in the basement of a Grange hall. We would settle for metal folding chairs and a cardboard podium. But the idea took hold and the place became something larger. It started to tell its own story. Even now, as I look out of the window, I see a group of kids out in front. They're kicking gravel and talking to each other before a poetry slam starts. Downstairs, in the theater, a rehearsal for a new play has begun, one written by a local playwright. In the upstairs classrooms, two courses are in session: one on “Ecstasy and Irony” and the other called “A Pretty Wit.” It's a class on humor from a feminist perspective.

Before founding Hugo House, I'd been a teacher for ten years. But I was a writer too, and saw how the gifts of teaching and writing thrived on similar creative impulses. Like an educator, an artist is a purveyor of imagination. She trades in skills but leverages novelty and surprise. From simple materials like paint, musical notes, dance steps, or words come new compositions that rustle our senses and intellect into action. As Maxine Greene (1995) says, imagination “is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those . . . we have called ‘other’ over the years” (p. 3). An artist collects scraps of sound, image, movement, or

words and grows curious about their possible combinations. She's a scavenger who tapes things together and tacks them into the world. The process, like learning or teaching, allows the artist "to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions" (Greene, 1995, p. 5). Through a speculative posing of the question "What if?", both viewers of art and those who produce it can experience the world as a place that brings the senses alive and lets us see things anew.

The stock persuasions to keep the arts in our academic settings include: the arts are "vehicles for self expression," "methods of investigating other disciplines," and "a means of engaging difficult students." But why not consider the arts essential not because they teach us to weld or to draw a botanical depiction of pollination, but because the arts offer less practical and even more important skills. They teach us to be human, a notion difficult to measure with outcome-driven assessment. What's lost when the arts are elbowed out of the school day is the students' active encounter with sensory media that allows them to create something new, something not needed in a commercial marketplace. By learning to invent a problem and then to respond to it through paint, music, language, or performance, we all learn about the plentiful "as if" viewpoints that might enrich our lives. Maxine Greene (1995, p. 19) says that these "what ifs" instigate a functioning democracy. Seeing "otherwise" is a crucial perspective in the development of a healthy citizenry; we have the chance to imagine what it's like to be someone other than ourselves. In this way, appreciating and producing art teaches habits of mind and heart that connect us to the world.

Of course, the journey can be peppered with unexpected encounters. In her poem "The Tourist and the Town," poet Adrienne Rich (1993) describes the disoriented feeling of roaming an unfamiliar village and encourages her readers to turn from tourists to residents, to become familiar with the artistic possibilities lurking around us. We can amble as tourists through our lives, Rich (1993) indicates, until we isolate ourselves inside our flattened perspectives: "These clarities detached us, gave us form/ Made us like architecture." We are dulled by our opportunities and become as unanimated as silos. But, underneath such flatness, there is a howl waiting to slip from our throats. Our voices are muffled as if "no more/Bemused by local mist our edges blurred." In recognizing that "There is a mystery that floats between/The tourist and the town," we can see the alien within the familiar and the familiar within the foreign. That's the terrain mapped by art and it's the distance between a work of art and a viewer, between oneself and one's community. "And then the tourist and the town are one," Rich writes, and this is the condition of a community that absorbs the artist and her work: "Once upon a time/All

these for you were fiction. Now, made free/You live among them” (p.71).

As educators, we struggle to make things matter, in a personal way, to our students. We try to integrate the tourist into the town and erase the line between one’s self regard and the perspectives of others. Being immersed in a creative encounter teaches us all to pay attention, instilling a habit of mindfulness that softens the rigidity of what we come across in and out of the classroom. Things no longer live in black-and-white clichés; we see complexity and nuance where, before, we took things for what we might have seen only on the surface. More than anything, art tells us we’re alive; we have bodies, minds, spirits, and presences in some small corner of the world. We have thoughts, reactions, and intuitions about what we see. Art tells our culture, person by person, that our interactions with each other and with the world of things do matter and that the things we use to ornament the world *are* the world.

And so, art is inseparable from civic space. That’s why, in our communities, new places for the arts are emerging. People need venues within public life to make their voices heard. As the arts fade from schools, America is seeing new places arise where people can generate artistic material and respond to it. Like Richard Hugo House, these places resemble miniature towns and many of them are housed within diverse urban neighborhoods. Our old Victorian includes a café, zine library, resource library, classrooms, offices for independent publishers, a gallery space, and a theater. If Hugo House is a synecdoche, then it is one line in a long poem about how the arts waft into American community life. Instead of being passive observers, more people of differing ages and backgrounds are becoming producers of art, and they’re doing it in places outside school and home.

In the 1960s and 1970s, when community-based arts centers and corner galleries sprouted from neighborhoods blighted by joblessness and condemned buildings, these places triggered some urban recovery. SoHo, after all, was a battered and abandoned part of New York just forty years ago. In the 1990s, some efforts again used the arts to promote cultural tourism. The mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, fifteen years ago pushed a movement to provide artists with low-income housing and gallery space to entice drivers to exit the highway between Boston and New York. Similarly, education followed a trend to use the arts to push children through the “real” curriculum of science, history, and math, or as self-expressive ornamentation to the “basic curriculum.” The arts were an antidote; we placed our hope in them to cure what ailed us.

Civic spaces for the arts are vital not only because they invigorate cultural tourism (that’s the “useful” argument), but because their structures and activities closely resemble those within the creative process itself.

They help participants in the development of skill and novelty en route to aesthetic appreciation. The organic possibilities to showcase mastery, the emphasis on inquiry, the complexity of production, the quality of being a “pleasure production space,” the voluntary participation of people who attend—in these ways, places like Hugo House offer a portal into the creative process. They give us a civic space to contextualize a hunch and the resources and stimulation to follow it.

While art making and art appreciation funnel into measurable skills within an academic curriculum, they spiral outward in their impact upon creative and aesthetic literacy that evolves from informal and formal community-based dialogue with artists. Prying open the gap between an affective reaction (“I like this/I don’t like that”) and an open-ended inquiry (“How was this made? Why do I feel this way in the face of it?”) is what such interplay accomplishes. It’s an excellent model for thinking and acting within a democracy—avoiding snap judgments for the sake of reflective encounters. Instigating such experiences inside a formal classroom is difficult. Once inside a civic space, however, where the tourist meets the town in all of its authenticity, pat judgments fall to the wayside—It’s harder to say, “I hate that” if the artist is in the room. Instead of goal-obsessed, school-based arts curricula in which the central question is “What does this mean?,” artistic work in community venues focuses attention on “How was this made?” Even further, in an artistically inspired “pleasure production space,” one might even ask, “What can I make in response to this? And how will I do it?”

In making a piece of artistic work, an artist passes through different stages: immersion, surprise, deviation, research, and collaboration. It is the artist’s job to manufacture novelty. Necessarily, her process needs to welcome the unlikely and the unanticipated. The immersion she enters is a state of “optimal experience” or “flow.” Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1991) describes this process as one in which “concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems. Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted.” Along the way, the artist encounters choices. She’s called upon to make critical decisions. Sometimes, she’s pushed by the nascent material into taking a risk. As one young girl I know who was writing a poem at Hugo House put it, “My poem is stuck inside my head. I think the girl in the poem is me, but I want her to move around. She [her speaker] doesn’t get to go anywhere or talk to anyone.” This young writer found a limit (a lyric poem that reflected on an experience) and she encountered a call to risk, a deviation from her intended route. After a few more drafts she grew brave enough to make the poem into a story. She switched her images into prose and “the girl” began to walk and talk.

The pursuit of novelty—or of accident—is what Roland Barthes (1981) calls the quest for the “punctum.” The punctum is the rip or tear in a piece; the fissure that could be a momentary flaw also doubles as the place where the viewer feels the aliveness in the art. That’s what excites most artists, tethering them to long processes that often involve tedious spells. Barthes (1981) describes it as “that accident which pricks me (but also bruises, is poignant to me.)” (p. 35). It is the human fissure in a manufactured thing. Such a moment surfaces from the surprises an artist stumbles into along the way. “The hallmark of the creative encounter,” says Jerome Bruner (1979), “is effective surprise” (p. 18). Like Paulo Freire’s dream to toss the dictator out of the country by undermining teachers in classrooms (1990), Hugo House exists to help writers create their own methods of inquiry to explore what’s at stake in their writing and in the culture in which it exists. Teaching, as Bruner (1979) notes, “is a process that transmits culture but also one that provides alternative views of the world and strengthens the will to explore them” (p.117). If we’re going to offer “alternative views,” we’ll need idiosyncratic techniques to develop them and offbeat places to house them. The arts thrive in these civic spaces outside school and home and work.

“Often times,” Maxine Greene (1995) writes, “the extent to which we grasp another’s world depends upon our existing ability to make poetic use of our imagination, to bring the ‘as if’ worlds created by writers, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, choreographers, and composers, and to be in some manner a participant in artists’ worlds reaching far back and ahead in time” (p. 4). As urban neighborhoods attract a range of ages, backgrounds, and skill levels, community arts organizations offer these folks a different kind of learning, one driven not by the expectations of the institution, but by the artist who goes there. Though collaboration happens in schools, the camaraderie can sometimes be forced engagement arbitrarily designed by the instructor. It feels, at times, less authentic than dialog sought out by the students.

Richard Hugo House, this center for writers where I work, is a cross-roads where people of different ages mingle in activities as varied as a 24-hour Gertrude Stein-a-thon, a critical essay competition about Madonna, classes on healing through narrative medicine, readings by a Nobel Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winners, and annual festivals on themes like “Surveillance” and “Shelter.” During one of my favorite events—“The Brontesaurus: A celebration of the Brontes”—four teenagers took seats behind a long table, facing an audience. Each of them had a buzzer in front of her, and the stage looked like a parody of a 1950s “College Bowl” game show of clean-cut high schoolers competing over trivia questions. Instead of being dressed in ties and Peter Pan-collared blouses, these con-

testants were pierced, tattooed, and clad in flannel or leather. They weren't from prep schools. They lived in drop-in shelters or transitional housing and they sat on the panel assigned this topic: "Identifying the mental illnesses and pathologies in Bronte texts." When the emcee read a paragraph detailing Mr. Rochester's life in Thornfield from *Jane Eyre*, one of the panelists banged his ringer and shouted "Depression, major depression!" It was an unlikely way into the nineteenth-century text. This group absorbed ideas socially through informal, voluntary learning and it was fun.

As they do in a school, people pass through the halls on their way to the libraries, classrooms or the café in search of an organized event or open to an informal encounter. As a creative place, Hugo House nurtures a will for the alternative. In Shirley Brice Heath's extraordinary ten-year longitudinal study (1998) of at-risk teens who participated in after-school arts programs, the results confirmed that a high percentage of the youth went on to become highly functioning citizens. By coming together over a shared passion and creative process, we are all, children and adults alike, better able to navigate the complexities of contemporary life. By favoring curiosity over snap judgment and inquiry over expertise, a writer is better able to write, and a citizen is better able to act. The mimesis of these two enterprises is why community-based education, particularly in the arts, is so urgent. It's also why we're seeing a proliferation of vital enterprises like Hugo House turning up outside the usual sanctums of learning.

This is a new kind of teaching. It's both formal and informal because Hugo House is not—at least not officially—a school and because attendance isn't mandatory. In my work, I meet many people who write but don't know they're writers and some who say they are writers but don't write. Many of the real writers who really write are children. Writers of all ages, both the ones who write and the ones who don't, often don't know what they want from their written efforts. After all, the hardest thing about being a writer is also the most simple: knowing what your work is and doing it. Teaching is about facilitating these urgencies into language.

In a civic arts space, a teacher/leader cares for the writers and their development rather than clamping a template of curriculum over them. One can ask: What do people need as they are learning to write? What does anyone coming to an artistic enterprise need? How does she sustain her work and improve her craft? I prefer these questions to ones like "Can writing be taught?" There's no subject in that sentence. It's lonely and vacant, as if such a magical enterprise could not tolerate a real-life instructor. This kind of mystique doesn't help us reach those who want or need to learn. It's a democracy-killer too, all that emphasis on talent and

not enough on the wonders of making things out of words. I'm wagering that the more writers we bring into the world, the better our chances for the future of American letters and for the future of community leadership. Teaching writing gives voice to more stories, and more stories help us see the "what ifs" of the world.

I'm here, as a teacher and artistic director of a community place for the practice of writing, to help people develop their own writing processes. I want to elevate the practice of writing as a democratic act. Through the process of writing, all writers, whether beginning or advanced, learn to use the tools of craft. In other words, I don't force-feed budding writers the big horse pill of content, but instead help them cull strategies to sustain their work. When I say "teaching," what I really mean is "gamesmanship." I'm offering tasks that distract people into staying engaged with a process. Together, we invent little exercises that help us stay with our projects and drive into the darkest corners of our writing. And we're not doing it for a grade or an evaluation other than our own satisfaction with our own work.

More than anything in the world, I think, writers want close readers. Children in classrooms want good readers. So do lawyers embarking on mystery novels. Both attorneys and third graders want readers who get what they're up to. They want readers who tell the story back to them; they want their readers to find delight and surprise in the poem; they want to know where that happened. They want readers to want to read more. Sometimes they even want readers to crawl into the art-making machine with them and help them decide where to take the story. In many cases, this desire for close reading turns masochistic, especially in writers new to the trade.

"Be harsh," a writer said to me recently. "Go after this. Rip it up," she insisted, thrusting a doorstopper of bound pages toward me.

Surely, I suppose, I could do that. I could copy edit line by line and comment on how her prose wasn't yet ready for the *Atlantic* or the *New Yorker* or *Harper's* or *Granta*, or speculate about my own ideas for the work, but I just can't bring myself to be that kind of reader and anyway, was that really what she wanted? It's hard to explain to someone who is jamming the work into your hand, repeating, "Rip it up, rip it up," that she might not know what she wants. Plus, if I were to give her what she wanted, she might be unhappy with the results. We all want to hear: "It's perfect just the way it is. Send it off!" And yet, how unsatisfying that too would be. The rip-it-apart woman instinctively knew that things sometimes need to come apart to grow stronger. But then she didn't know how to make that happen; otherwise, she wouldn't have asked someone else to do that kind of work for her.

Art making is fragile, bound up with inspiration, experience, temperament, and a craft that consistently works to unbind itself from its own limitations. In his elegy for Yeats, Auden (1991) wrote:

Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
 For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
 In the valley of its saying where executives
 Would never want to tamper; it flows south
 From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
 Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
 A way of happening, a mouth (p. 247).

Auden wrote this just after Yeats died. It was 1939, and Europe was headed to war. The world had lost one of its most vital artistic voices and Auden chose to write: “Poetry makes nothing happen.” In a way, I think teaching makes nothing happen. At its most urgent pitch, we go mute in the face of trying to describe it. But if our students are making things, we can at least help those things “survive in the valley of [their] saying.” The *nothing* can become *something*.

The stages in making a piece of artistic work—immersion, surprise, deviation, collaboration, research—are also the qualities of good teaching in a community setting like Hugo House. In the end, “Ireland has her madness and her weather still,” but poetry lingers in the mist. It’s a wild alchemy, one filled with wonder and stimulation. At the end of the day, we emerge into the same weather. While our interiors shift, the outside world stays the same. Or so we think.

“Education is suffering from narration sickness,” Paulo Freire (1990, p. 57) said. This may be more true now than when he wrote it. We started Hugo House to center the act of telling stories into the civic life of Seattle. By opening a space that would allow an osmotic flow between the authority figures and the learners, we hoped to relieve some of the rigidities in education by starting with a place that wasn’t segregated by age or income, where attendance wasn’t mandatory, and where degrees and formal evaluations didn’t exist. It was a place where people could bring their own questions about writing and nurture other people while they kept working at the craft. My desire was to create a “pleasure production space” where personal narratives would be shared in a community (Pultinas, personal communication). New stories would surface and the ways they surfaced would be as diverse as their authors—through slams, performances, quiet staged readings, writing groups, in magazines and books. Here, as in any true learning community, students act as teachers and the teachers as students. Together, they inquire into a subject. In

writing, a poet or novelist alternates roles between being an editor and a generator of text.

In Freire's utopian classroom, the teacher constructs a problem to investigate. In writing, the writer invents, or sometimes confronts, the dilemma that will generate the artistic work. Since making art is an inquiry, art invents problems and then tries to tinker its way through them. In Freire's anti-banking approach (1990), students become "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher." The teacher is as capable of being transformed as the student. Both rely on the fact that human beings are constantly in a state of "becoming" (p. 74). "Dialogue," says Freire (1990), "thrives on a profound love for the world and for other people" (p. 77) Can teachers and practicing writers be so pure of heart? And what do writers want to talk about? What kinds of discussions will help them learn to improve their writing? Is this what writers also want—other people to talk to?

At Hugo House, non-credit, non-graded courses for writers along with other opportunities to produce and read literature make teachers into learners and writers into teachers. In our classes, we move teachers from the center of writing workshops or authority-laden critique sessions and usher in a dialogic curriculum. That doesn't mean that the teacher is passive; she is, instead, responsible for setting up a good question or "triggering town," as the poet Richard Hugo called it. To instruct beginning poets, Hugo made up a dying western town as a way to get things started. He imagined the town's characters and he populated the place with familiar things—images one might find in one's hometown—along with oddities, things you'd never find in a real town: a hardware store that sells only hammers, a mayor who never comes up for re-election, an annual parade attended only by dogs: these things could turn up. After the town takes on some issue larger than itself, its scaffolding might drop away. Like a stage set, the poem's centerpiece would be carried off and Hugo would carry on with whatever the real subject was.

The triggering subjects get things moving. We use them at Hugo House to help writers develop their craft and habits of re-tooling writing over a sustained period. This, we hope, will set up the discipline of staying with work over a lifetime. Projects become snapshots of the present, set into a larger scrapbook for reference. We structure everything we do on inquiry—exploring a subject, posing a question that engages. Then, we try to help people keep going.

Outside the scarcity of a school-based arts curriculum or the suffocating standards that the states are now imposing, it's easier, in a civic space for the arts, to favor inquiry over expertise and curiosity over judgment. A dialogic curriculum at Hugo House thrives on responses to an essential

question. Poet Galway Kinnell, for example, taught a course that asks: “How can we write poetry that sings without rhyme or meter?” We try to open the space for people who are barely literate and people who are highly accomplished in writing, and we try to engage them all. Creativity thrives on stimulation, and stimulation comes from unexpected places. That’s a good reason to welcome everyone and give each of them space at the table. Since we never know where the next great story is coming from, we encourage everyone. That’s a democratic act. Plus, it’s nice manners. And it opens up the possibility of being surprised.

When Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) described the carnivals of the Middle Ages, he said they were thrilling and vibrant because there was a “suspension of all hierarchical precedence” (p. 10). By shedding their traditional attire and donning costumes, people came to the carnival and experienced a sense of release. A writing class, or any art-making class, offers its participants the opportunity to imagine new worlds and try out new roles. No one needs to be cloaked with credentials or laden with expertise. Instead, the participants in a writing class might learn best when they can create a carnival or marketplace for the imagination.

Here are some features we’re seeing in Hugo House’s interactions around writing:

- Through Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space and other dialogic techniques, our community brings forth an inspiring, vibrant question or inquiry for a group of writers to pursue.
- In classes, the teacher/leader builds a solid scaffolding for the class. She investigates an “organized, systematized and developed ‘re-presentation’ of the things about which [the students] want to know more.” (Freire, 1990, p. 68)
- She opens space for new ideas to thrive by posing questions and not answering them herself.
- Rich dialogue happens between the participants in the class or program. They talk to each other more than the teacher talks or more than they talk to the teacher or to the person who initiated the event.
- There are shared terms about communicating responses to artistic work with an emphasis on “How was this made?”
- The teacher proposes a range of activities to engage different intelligences— kinesthetic, visual, aural, literary, interpersonal. The house

offers gallery spaces to post finished work and a stage and theater where writers can read their work.

- Inside jokes about craft and process emerge and that diction becomes particular to the class, event, or program.
- New writing happens in the classrooms, library, or café, and the triggers for it are layered and stimulating.
- The center feels like a “pleasure-production space” for informal, non-rote learning.
- Audiences for work in process develop ad hoc and dissolve when they need to.
- There are alternative authorities and opportunities to gather input on artistic work.

Just as living is constructed as we pass through time—much like a landscape might be constructed through the windows of a train passing through—so artistic processes and education should mirror that passage. Take, for example, the case of writing. In its sprawl, word following word, writing moves along, never truly fixed in the present. The creative act continuously adds layers of transformation. Because making things is mimetic of the way reality continues to invent itself, this may be what excites us about learning and making: that sense of transforming our own interiors and being able to act upon such transformation. The process is both responsive to the outer world and proactive in its trajectories from it. That’s one of the pleasures in being a writer and one of the joys in being a teacher. As a teacher, you can become a subversive in your own classroom. As a writer, you are crawling under language and tinkering with the bolts until its brokenness tells you something.

The best moments in my life as a student have to do with making something I had no idea that I could make. Sometimes that’s a conversation with people I love, and other times it’s a poem. I learn things that I was not prepared to learn; they fall into me while I am distracted by the bright lights of a really interesting subject and the distractions eventually become even more appealing than the original subject at hand. A place of learning is a gathering of intelligences (or distractions). Knowledge is what comes when you’ve constructed different ways of getting to what’s important for you to learn. But unless it brings you some pleasure, some feeling of internal connection—the way poems sometimes connect with

our most atavistic selves through the repetition of sounds—it won't store itself inside you the way the Auden elegy can strum our whole interior. That's what I hope for in teaching: to subvert it as a purely "helping" profession into a profession of curiosity. That way it can follow the tangles of a subversive heart—those tangles where poems are hiding until we're ready to go looking for them. Then, we can bravely set out and look for other people to share the journey. Oftentimes we can find these people in a community place for learning and the arts and that place may be on a street corner near you.

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FRANCES MCCUE is a poet, essayist, scholar and writer in residence at the University of Washington's Honors Program. Her publications include articles in the Seattle Journal for Social Justice, Nest Magazine, and The New York Times Book Review. Her book of poems, *The Stenographer's Breakfast* was published by Beacon Press. McCue is a public scholar—a writer who connects academic scholarship to the life of the region by working in fields as diverse as poetry, architecture, organizational leadership, education and Northwest history. Her MFA in Creative Writing is from the University of Washington and her doctorate is from Teachers College where she received a Klingenstein Fellowship. With two friends, she co-founded Richard Hugo House, a nonprofit center for creative writing in Seattle. She was the founding director there from 1996-2006.