Poetic Cognition

University Honors Program - Senior Project

Melissa McHugh

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
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Connecting the process of learning to knowledge creation can be dated back thousands of years, even as early as 4th century B.C. by the well-known Greek philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle believed that in order to justify knowledge of new theory, an individual cannot just speak the language of the theory, but rather must be able to realistically apply it to a study or situation. He was the first to state “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing,” emphasizing the idea that learning and the meaning making process comes from being engaged and active. Furthermore, Aristotle coined the term “poësis,” an Ancient Greek verb meaning “to make” (Whitehead, 2003). Thus, the word “poetry” became etymologically derived from poësis, perfectly describing the form of artistic expression that was poetic writing.

Aristotle felt that meaning and value was purposefully brought into being through the creation process of poësis. Therefore, by the action of simply doing and experiencing, we cross a threshold where one thing comes to be a representation of another; meaning has been created and is more readily recalled (Whitehead, 2003). Going back to Aristotle’s quote about learning by doing, it can be concluded that meaning and knowledge comes from the experiences of the new and unknown. When trying to derive a name for my UHP senior project, I crafted the title Poetic Cognition as a reflection of Aristotle’s belief in poësis, as well as a reflection of the overall more metacognitive thinking this project has engaged me in.

I was in a period of change when I entered college, trying to find the courses that interested me and the major I wished to pursue. I never really had an answer as a kid when someone asked what I wanted to be when I was older, all I knew was that I had a passion for photography and visual design when working on yearbook staff in high school. When I came to
college, I was hoping to find a passion for what I wanted to do as an adult as well as learn all I can in the time here. Through trial and error and learning about myself and my interests, I have successfully completed the best four years of my life thus far; I learned a lot, and made many memories from the countless experiences I have embarked on.

*Experiential Learning*

The practical ability to relate knowledge to experience was further developed into the notion of experiential learning. Experiential learning was first introduced through the work of John Dewey, an educational thinker and philosopher, who emphasized the idea of meaningful activity through learning and experience coinciding. He believed there was conflict between traditional education versus the more progressive ways of teaching and learning. Dewey felt traditional methods of teaching were best described as “static,” or teaching students in a manner that lacks detail on how ideas originated and how they can evolve over time. He questioned the traditional education methods of drilling and memorization which had been the status quo. Students would learn in school, but would be unable to apply their knowledge any further than the classroom environment; learning became forced, boring, and attention would only be given to “flashy” material (Dewey, 1938). Teaching following this traditional model had students simply regurgitate the material rather than understanding. Dewey believed there was a more involved and active way to engage students in knowledge making. His more progressive approach to learning was centered around a less rigid curriculum, which focused more on exploring structure, content, and various ways learning can be facilitated.

His belief of cultivating experiences to learning insisted that truly beneficial experiences would encourage both further knowledge creation, as well encouraging future reflection and
utilization of previous knowing that could be utilized in instances to come. More importantly, Dewey emphasized that learning should be relevant to students’ lives rather than disconnected in order to foster beneficial learning about life experiences. The experiential learning theory focuses on the idea that learning is constantly gained and added to through both personal and environmental experiences (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Experiential learning was seen as a cycle to Dewey, a process of constantly learning, trying, and undergoing review of the process as a whole, which in time lead to his strong belief in learning through doing.

Dewey’s (1938) ideas of experiential learning were later echoed by educational theorist David Kolb, who published his first piece on the subject in 1984, linking the ideas of experiential learning to actual learning theory in a more concrete fashion (Lewis & Williams, 1994). He too believed in constructing knowledge creation from experience, and further developed this framework into a four part process, known now as Kolb's Experiential Learning Model. This model reinforced his belief that using knowledge to fuel firsthand experiences contributed to a more successful learning outcome, in part due to self-reflection and gaining insightful understanding of real world experiences (Lewis & Williams, 1994). This could be further illustrated in examples such as work studies or internships, positions for students that provide real-world concepts and learning in a more concrete and applicable platform, rather than just reading about such experiences from a textbook.

Embodied Learning

Another extension of the experiential learning theory is the idea of learning through both experience as well as through embodied learning. Embodied learning can be understood as “the processes we use to act [that] subsequently subserve the processes we use to understand,”
(Kontra, Goldin-Meadow, & Beilock, 2012). Extending knowledge beyond cognitive and into personal, embodied interactions further reiterate both Dewey and Kolb’s passion for progressive teaching and learning styles as the more effective approach to facilitate the knowledge and meaning-making process as a whole. It is commonly referred to as action experience, or the idea that learning is progressed through the physical involvement and presence of oneself.

I have noticed through recent years that I learn best by doing something firsthand. Furthermore, I realized that by being actively aware of my involvement in learning and applying both my mental capacity as well as my physical existence, I look at individual experiences or events in my past as significant when it involved an action rather than passive learning. This idea of embodied learning goes hand in hand with the experiential learning theory, and further emphasizes the desire I have to live out life to its fullest to learn more about both myself and the world around me.

Through active interpretation and learning, I have found that I am better able to understand, interpret, and synthesize daily occurrences in my life by taking more time to fully absorb the moment and reflect on the experience afterwards. I feel the experiential learning theory effectively allows me to explore the nuances of my undergraduate education and learning, as well as the meaning I have taken away from each experience.

Traditional methods of teaching are often seen through high school, such as rote memorization and verbatim definitions in order to meet the needs of standardized curriculums and testing. When I transitioned to college, I noticed my learning become more active and engaged. The university succeeded in encouraging campus and university involvement and even fostered many opportunities that led to more progressive ways of learning. I have had the
opportunity to be more involved in my learning with activities such as a semester internship, Greek involvement, and honors courses that encouraged self-actualization and learning collaboratively with other like minded students. I now ask myself what have I learned, as well as how did I learn in order to grow from various moments in my college life?

**Introduction of Artifacts**

Reflecting on my time in college, I realize now that I have been involved in many moments of personal growth and learning about myself, as well as how I learn. The similar duo of theories, embodied learning and experiential learning, both help to form many connections in an individual’s life. “Embodied learning causes us to think in different ways about a topic,” as well as providing a drive for learners to ask questions, and in essence, think metacognitively, or to think about thinking (Science Choreography, 2011). Looking at some of the most engaging experiences from my college career, six different yet interrelated representations of my time at UNC Charlotte encouraged my experiential learning and provided insightful opportunities from which I was able to learn. My educational career holds true to Kolb’s theory of experiential learning as well as embodied knowing, in which I learn most effectively by actual doing. I am better able to synthesize new knowledge through hands-on engagement, the method of learning that is often more utilized in the diverse learning period that is college. These opportunities of learning about myself and how I have come to learn have arisen from academic as well as extracurricular and professional experiences.

Of the many assignments, involvements and events that have occurred in the past four years, I have identified the following six artifacts as the most accurate representations of experiential and embodied learning encounters of my undergraduate time at UNC Charlotte: 14
day sun movement observation project from Astronomy, 14 day Contemplative Art final project from my Honors Topic course, the first press release I wrote at my internship from my final semester in college, a photo of my old roommates and international friends in our apartment in Witherspoon, a t-shirt from my involvement with Habitat for Humanity and my badge of sisterhood in Chi Omega.

Looking at each of these radically different items, there seems to be a lack of connection. However, delving into my theoretical framework I recognize commonalities between these artifacts. They are most easily divided into experiences of individual learning and collaborative learning. Individually, I am able to identify moments where I learned more about myself and my creative expression, while working collaboratively I am better able to identify learning when surrounded by others. Although my various artifacts seem unrelated to one another, each of the item reflect the theory of experiential learning by proving moments where I have been able to realistically apply my knowledge to real world situations. This has only furthered my understanding and enjoyment of the learning process.

I believe I serve as an excellent example of Kolb’s theory. I have learned both individually as well as in collaborative group settings, and I can best take away new knowledge after being able to fully comprehend and reflect on what was said or done. I have always been better at learning when there is a degree of creative freedom or a more involved or hands-on aspect of trying to understand. Individually, I prefer to be more creative or “artsy” in how I try to approach learning. Assignments are given to all the students in a course, and sometimes creative freedom is allowed in how a problem is approached or material is synthesized by each individual. When given the chance to display my knack for creative expression, I flourish and
retain the memory of what I learned more thoroughly. For the purpose of this paper, I have divided my six artifacts into two sets of three in order to place them in the category of “Individual Learning Experiences” as well as “Collaborative Learning Experiences.”

**Individual Learning Experiences**

**14 Day Sun Observation**

In full disclosure, I have never been exceptional at math or sciences, or anything formula-based or computational for that matter. By taking Physics 1101: Introduction to Astronomy my freshman year in 2012, I was really challenging what I believed myself to be capable of. The final assignment in this course consisted of a time-lapsed project of observing the seasonal movements of the sun. Although many would not think of a physics-based course as having much creativity, the creative freedom and artistic guidelines of the project surprised me when reflecting back at the opportunity it presented. In this assignment, I had to select a location at the university where I could see far along the horizon, and also be able to return to as often as needed to make my observations. I chose the parking deck alongside the Student Union, a place where I could venture to throughout my 14 chosen days and remain undisturbed. I was able to sit here and peacefully render what I was observing on paper without the fear of being approached or questioned by onlooking students or staff.

The project consisted of various parts to complete the whole assignment, including a graphic or visual representation that we either photographed or drew by hand, as well as a write up of our findings and several lab report question responses. My final image ended up being a depiction of the skyline that I saw, with the times and dates scrawled in felt tip marker across the horizon on a horizontal line. I did my best to provide a scale of size and other minor details in a
key to help the reviewer, using arrows to symbolize the dropping point of the sun each day I observed. In the end, the project served as a visual display of the sun moving across the horizon in one direction over the course of multiple evenings, reinforcing the astronomy lesson that the sun slinks across the skyline as the seasons change.

The significance of this project enabled me to thoroughly explore campus and situate myself to be observant, as well as having opened my creative options for how I planned to present the skyline and illustrate what I saw. By being physically grounded, sitting and watching the solar display occur each afternoon for 14 various days, I felt my learning became more involved; I felt present. It further connected my analytical observations with creative expression, and allowed each student to draw our observations how we saw fit. The idea of experiential learning, as well as embodied learning, allowed the realization that my own individual involvement in the project as well as the approach to present my understanding of the lesson contested what I had thought science involved, and allowed me to explore my passion for space and astronomy on a level I could understand and tangibly work with.

14 Day Contemplative Art Project

I have always had a passion for the arts and the idea of using creative approaches for learning has always appealed to me. I always color code my notes, write various dates in different colors and take joy in making visual presentations or online portfolio websites. I chose my field of study in Communication Studies in order to use my creativity to target and best communicate with the Millennial age group in real world business plans. I have also had a long love for yoga and pilates for the strengthening and centeredness that comes from practicing both.
I had never thought of actual meditation and contemplating until I reached my third year of college.

As a student in the University Honors Program, we are expected to complete several required courses for credit to achieve Honors recognition. At this point in college, I still had to fill my Honors Topic course, but there was a variety of course topics to choose from ranging from structured and analytical to expressive and more open. I choose the section titled “Art as a Contemplative Practice,” with Professor Dalton. The course was developed around the idea of taking time to yourself to pause, reflect, and “just be,” while engaged in various artistic concepts, materials, and media. The structure and projects that were assigned emphasized the creative act of poïesis in order to foster focus, overall awareness and presence while remaining rooted in the experience of art making.

As I previously disclosed, I have a passion for art, art history, and the creative process in general. Being in my third year meant I was getting more busy with coursework and expectations and I had little time to truly appreciate my experiences for what they have shaped me into. The end of the semester project we closed this course with was a 14-Day Mindfulness Project. After being told basic guidelines of what was expected, we had full freedom to pick a contemplative art practice that helped us take a few minutes to ourselves each day.

I have always noticed that when I become bored or distracted in class, I have the tendency to draw flowers or repetitive shapes, or in other words, I just doodle. Doodling, although seemingly simple, is well known in the psychological field to be an excellent form of stress reduction while cultivating awareness and insight (Dalton, in press). In researching what I could do for my practice I discovered that the specific types of doodles I constantly illustrated in
my notebooks with had a name: mandalas. I then took it upon myself to compile 14 consecutive
days of sitting to myself, drawing whatever came to mind that moment, and illustrating the
mandala patterns in my head. The end result was a beautiful journal full of various shapes and
colors of flower-like images that progressed over the time of the project. The process was
cathartic and peaceful; I learned to appreciate being still and observing my breath while learning
to shut the rest of the world out for a few moments at a time.

This project encouraged sharing our individual processes of the project at completion
with our fellow honors classmates, which cultivated a vulnerability that demanded respect and
understanding between one another. American scholar Dr. Brené Brown defines vulnerability as
“uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure,” which was a result of discussing with other students
on the same academic level as myself (Brown, 2012). By being able to openly talk about how we
envisioned our works as well as the final motif or artistic rendering we chose to create, there was
beauty among the vast differences between one another's projects. I found a connection with the
mandala shapes and patterns and it is a recurring image I continue to use to find peace of mind.

Experiential learning was exhibited when we were instructed to think more
metacognitively. Through journals, assigned readings, and many in- or out-of-class artistic
assignments, the creative process was quite literally experienced and proved to cultivate a deeper
reflective process. Brown (2012) also believed that creativity comes from being vulnerable, and
that the process of creating and sharing why and how we created with fellow classmates
generates a deeper understanding of others’ thoughts and feelings while also allowing individual
expression. Many people take for granted the quiet that comes from being still and alone in your
mind, and after being in this course and getting to relate art to relaxation and self-realization, I felt more connected to both myself and the world around me.

*Press Release at Belles Creative*

By taking time to identify with myself and recognizing my ability to grow from the experience of the journal drawing, I realized after the fact that I like to pursue opportunities and assignments that challenge my existing knowledge and push me to grow and keep learning. Kolb’s experiential learning theory bases the idea of improved learning on students becoming involved or partaking in situations where knowledge can be both applied as well as further enhanced.

The effectiveness of Kolb’s theory first dawned upon me in this last year of college. The university requires students, particularly in the communication studies field, to participate in a semester long internship, paid or unpaid, either through the university or from an outside partnering business. I first saw the name of my current internship written across the screen on a Facebook post. A sorority sister of mine had shared news that her internship at a marketing and brand development agency called Belles Creative was looking for spring interns to bring in the new year. Consequently, I needed a double credit internship to graduate on time and with the expected credits; I had jumped on the opportunity and submitted a resume.

The name Belles Creative rang in my head for days following my application; it seemed like the perfect place to work and learn. I had interviewed for another internship that same morning of my interview with Belles. The competing internship promised a $2,000 paid semester of work and their staff seemed overjoyed with the idea of hiring me. However, my creative side felt stunted the second I walked into the other office. The grey walls and cubicles didn’t
symbolize the kind of position I was in search of, so I turned their offer down for the unpaid position with Belles. Their office was filled with familiar aesthetics, polaroids strung across the walls and glittering gold ampersand symbols on their desks with coffee. I felt more comfortable and my potential productivity felt nurtured in their more welcoming and contemporary style environment.

After being interviewed and accepted on the spot as their new intern, Belles Creative began to present opportunities to get hands-on experience with public relations and brand management work that would be expected of me in the professional world. I had completed the necessary courses to understand what was expected of me, but on my second day of work, I was asked to write an official one-page press release for a very important client, Pure Pizza, a local pizzeria in the Plaza Midwood area of Charlotte. I had not foreseen that they would ask me to immediately produce my first professional document in the few hours of me coming in on my second day. My supervisor’s high expectations and attention to detail worried me; I was not sure what I was going to produce, but I dove headfirst into the task and wrote what I could comprehend from the given information she wanted covered in the press release.

To briefly explain, a press release is usually a one-page document written for a client that highlights some form of important news or development, which then gets emailed and distributed among news figures, copywriters, and section editors in hopes that it will peak interest for them to write up a full story off of the release. Our client Pure Pizza had recently decided to hang a statement notifying its guests that they made one of their two restroom facilities a unisex restroom to accommodate LGBT communities, disabled individuals and single parents, among others. My topic was both controversial and alien to me until the moment it was assigned. I was
expected to base a professionally typed press release off of a brief news article that mentioned my client’s recent decision and I had approximately two hours complete the finished work. I recalled what I had learned from my previous public relations courses such as PR Writing and whipped up a press release for my boss, completely unsure if my formatting and writing style was even close to what was expected for this kind of writing.

After sharing access to my finished product, my supervisor’s reaction was simply “Where are you from?! And do you need a job?” I was taken by surprise when she said that it was perfect, and she submitted it for distribution. Overnight, my confidence changed. I came into work the next morning and learned that my first professional press release had gone viral. The document I wrote was picked up by ABC News, FOX News, Huffington Post, TODAY News and USA Today, to list some of the bigger names. I had given our client instant social media attention, and their page traffic had rapidly increased overnight following my press release. The experience was a professional learning moment, and I had to use my own prior knowledge and best judgement in order to learn what was expected of me in my internship.

After writing this press release, my boss was satisfied with the attention my work had earned both our client as well as our agency and she offered me a full time paid job after graduation. The doubt I had of my own skills taught me that I know more than I think I do and that I can call upon previous knowledge in order to grow and adapt to situations that present themselves to me. I can now come into work knowing that I can learn the unfamiliar or intimidating by just trying first, and using what I do know to help me improve, honing in on the key focus of experiential learning. Through the experience of my first “real world” job expectations, I realize now that I have a passion for my field of study, and that I will enjoy the
challenges and learning to come with the types of work I will get to do both at Belles Creative as well as whatever professional positions I will have in the future.

**Collaborative Learning Experiences**

Aside from learning as an individual and discovering how I have made lasting impressions on myself, there are times where my learning has been only further enhanced when working in collaboration with others. After recognizing the following experiences in my college career as enriching and beneficial to my education, I realized that I was not alone in these moments. Although I was still able to learn about myself and knowledge creation as an individual, I was surrounded by others for the remaining artifacts from my time at UNC Charlotte. These three experiences have both supplemented my learning as well as made for a collaborative experience I have shared with others, which changed the dynamic of the learning process by being a part of a team or group of other individuals with like-minded aspirations.

**International Floor at Witherspoon**

During my four years at this university, I can proudly say I have lived on campus for all of it. Three of those four years were spent in Witherspoon Hall, well known as the Honors, Levine, and International residence hall. My junior year at UNC Charlotte I had ventured into the unknown: I applied to live on the International floor and was assigned two roommates in my apartment that were from Germany! Being the daughter of a fully German mother, I was excited to spend the semester living together and befriending international students that were around my age. Little did I know the impact that one of my roommates in particular would have on me. I immediately became closest with Natalie—who I affectionately call “Nata”.
The artifact I am using to represent the friendships formed there is an image of my roommates and me in our apartment living room. The occasion celebrated in the photo was our other German roommate Ana’s 24th birthday, for which Nata and I teamed up to craft an elaborate birthday brunch within our apartment living room. We had invited all of our friends, and felt so proud of the celebration’s success. We shared our different countries’ birthday traditions and games, toasted one another with foreign languages of “Cheers!” and celebrated together as friends from across the globe.

I can say becoming close with Nata was one of the most enriching experiences I could have in Charlotte. From teaching her some modern “college-kid slang,” and even how to say some basic phrases in English (through her German accent), we bonded and spent hours on our apartment balcony together, sharing cups of hot tea or coffee every night and listening to my favorite types of music, which slowly became hers. We became a pair, seen together and studying together, as well as taking trips to the store or mall in my car since she was without transportation. The connection to my personal German background and Natalie’s heritage only reinforced our bond, allowing for inside jokes and idiosyncrasies shared between us.

This friendship was a significant highlight of college for me; entering college, I would not have guessed that I would be such good friends with such an unlikely acquaintance from across the world. Along with Nata, I gained a giant circle of new acquaintances by living on that floor of Witherspoon together; I now have friends that have gone back home to France, South Africa, Germany, Australia, Japan, and India, just to name a few. I still talk to these friends and connect with them over social media. This opportunity to live with Natalie and the other international students that all resided on that floor empowered me to break any cultural
differences we had. We ended up all forming long lasting friendships with one another that have only further fueled my desire to experience and learn all that I can while continuing my journey into the professional world and within the future friendships I will encounter.

Habitat for Humanity

After living on the international floor and experiencing Witherspoon’s close-knit group of diverse students I learned to better appreciate people’s differences, or more specifically, cultural differences. This ability to get along well and work together influenced my desire to be more involved and meet others with the same goals or aspirations. Looking through my collection of college experiences, I have been involved in a handful of groups and organizations. One of the more hands-on experiences I encountered through my undergraduate experience has been my involvement with Habitat for Humanity. Since my sophomore year, I have found myself going back multiple times to this single organization to become an involved citizen.

Last year, in Professor Arnold’s Honors Citizenship course, we had to select a service program we would want to commit to working with for the duration of the course. I naturally gravitated towards Habitat after working with them before and knowing the type of work to expect. We were asked to often define what it meant to be an active citizen. I was quick to define it as being a community member who wishes to give back to the city you live in, helping those who need it. I also saw citizenship as more than a definition, but also a set of cultural ideals, values and beliefs of working together for the greater good.

I believe the very act of building and creating that I love so much was further nurtured through my involvement with Habitat, and the connection of making something that benefits others made me feel like my work was important, rather than just a means to earn service hours
for a class. While other students would hate to get up at 6 a.m. to be at the job site in the cold, I was always excited to try my hand at swinging a hammer (which I may not always be best at) or laying down subflooring, keeping in mind the bigger picture of the house we could present to the future Habitat homeowner. Cold and early mornings were never my favorite (how many people can say it is?), but no matter the weather, I worked to remind myself that the service was going to someone in need, and that I was making a legitimate difference.

I remember taking the photo in front of my last build site before heading back to campus, and feeling like a true member of the construction team. I had helped put up the walls that would soon house a family who needed a place to call their home. In relation to the theory of experiential learning, I gained insight about hard work through the process and trial and error; if a nail went in wrong, we would yank it out and try again. I was able to discover persistence and the gratification of making a difference. Furthermore, I was able to serve my community through hands-on experience, which I feel is the most coveted way to learn of all.

*Badge of Sisterhood: Chi Omega*

Through being involved in Habitat, I met many friends and made many memories, but I doubt any college experience could replace the memories and involvements I have experienced through becoming a sister in my sorority, Chi Omega. Going Greek is *certainly* not for everyone, and I can admit I initially thought it would not be suited for me. I do not especially love pink, wearing bows in my hair, or always dressing in the typically stereotyped fashion of Greek life members. I made the leap into recruitment alone, without knowing anyone, and made it through the final round as a junior, also known as being a late rushee. Many girls around me were quirky and bubbly young freshmen who loved all things sorority and I honestly rushed to just find a
group of girls I could call my friends and create a home away from my real home. I wanted someone to be there to go study with, or participate in community service together, or even just be there to talk about my day.

I found a home in Chi O; I felt comfortable speed talking to these woman during recruitment about what I felt was important to me and why I wanted to rush so late into my college career—and they loved me for it. I was initiated and given a silver and pearl badge of my sisterhood officially in January this year, and can say it was the best decision I have made. I received over a hundred new “sisters,” and even found my closest friend, Julia. It was not about trying to become “best” friends with everyone, we all are there for each other when in need and we support our sisterhood and one another. I learned our symphony, or the written standards we abide by, and hold myself and my sisters accountable for being “womanly always, discouraged never.” I discovered how to be a leader, a mentor, and a good friend, as well as serving others and fundraising to grant wishes for the Make a Wish Foundation.

Chi Omega values being “lovable rather than popular,” and I felt that this embodied what I aimed for in my friendships and involvements within an organization. The experience of being a part of a group of women with the same values as myself truly reflects the embodied learning theory connecting to that particular experience. Our badge represents all that our sisterhood stands for, both past and present. I wear it on the upper left side of my blouse, connecting it both physically and emotionally with my heart, as a reminder of my ideals in making lasting friendships, placing “scholarship before social obligations,” and being thoroughly involved in life as much as possible. Experiential learning reinforces the idea that, through Chi Omega, I had
found a positive outlet to involve myself with, stressing the idea of collaborative learning with my sisterhood as well providing the opportunity for self-discovery and growth.

**Artifacts in Summary**

After detailing the stories behind my six artifacts, I have been able to recollect each of these pivotal moments and think back on how I felt, both at the time they occurred as well as how they have affected my learning process now. It has been an eventful and amazing four years at this university, and being able to complete this University Honors portfolio of what I have taken from my time in college has profoundly empowered me to apply my newfound knowledge on experiential learning. I observed that all of these moments I disclosed, as well as hundreds of others that will remain untold, each affected my life and my persona in an overall positive and enriching manner.

**Conclusion**

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard was quoted saying, “Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward.” I believe humans truly learn from embodied living and that through experience, we learn both new knowledge to prepare us for our daily lives, as well as knowledge from looking back on moments to grasp a better and more thorough understanding. The six artifacts I have chosen act as representations of personal growth, knowledge formation, and self-reflection that I found the most pivotal in my undergraduate career.

Taking what I have learned through school and from experiences that were bestowed upon me during this period, I feel that I have become increasingly more self-aware. After looking upon those six artifacts and the pivotal learning experiences they have provided me, I realize now that I have grown to be better at pausing and reflecting on experiences to take away
something from each unique engagement. These artifacts act as vehicles of learning just as the experiential theory alludes to; they are each separate experiences that ultimately have outlined my personal and intellectual development through my academic and professional careers. As I head into the future of my life, I plan to begin my new job, adjust to a new living arrangement, and take on adult responsibilities that I have not yet learned about from experience. I have certainly seen myself grow and gain new knowledge through the course of my four years at UNC Charlotte. The enriching opportunities I have had to learn and metacognitively reflect on how I have learned will be successfully applied to my future lived experiences. From this way of experiential and embodied learning, I will only continue to grow exponentially as an individual, learning all that I can about both myself and the world around me in the years to come.
References


