

BRICOLAGE

YOUR QUICK-START D.I.Y. GUIDE

*To the Nuts & Bolts of a Powerful New Approach
for Research, Learning, & Writing
for High School and Early College Students*



by Vanessa Paradis

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To the Nuts & Bolts of a Powerful New Approach
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Cover photograph by Vanessa Paradis. "The Nuts and Bolts of Bricolage." Photographed May, 2009, following the "Yard Search Treasure Hunt" which had yielded the silver yin yang talisman now used as the Paradis Publications logo, above.

WARNING!

This book will make you

THINK DIFFERENT!

(click on the link!)

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What You Will Learn

- Secret writing tricks best-selling authors use (but don't want to admit)
- An introduction to “fourth dimension research”
- Treasure Hunting with “the gods”
- A new, easier, and more fun way to write
- How to get “behind the facts” and find hidden information
- How to use the Deep Web and other hidden sources
- How to make even the duller topics fascinating
- How to develop your creative abilities and inherent genius
- How to improve your focus and ability to stay on task
- How to read between the lines
- Creative ways to include music in your learning and why it’s important
- How to use and improve your intuitive abilities for learning, research, and writing
- The “nuts and bolts” of bricolage so that you’re prepared for the next level
- Creative ways to “put the pieces together” (bricolage)
- A unique and individualized process for research and writing that works for you
- The skills needed to move to the next step of word magic
- BONUS! Free samples of A+ papers included

Introduction

A critical pedagogy that constructs knowledge and formulates action based on eros with its drive to alleviate human suffering serves as a counterpoise to the empire's positivistic thanatos. (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 100)

This book is not a book about the mechanics of research and writing; there is an overabundance of books on the market for those topics. This book is about a creative research process that, when you become skilled using it naturally, will greatly improve your research, writing, and critical analytic efforts and synthesis (something teachers and college professors love to see). Thus, as you learn this approach and gain practice, you will improve your grades on papers in high school and college. Because, ultimately, it is a complex process, you might initially try it out just for fun to pick up some of the important knowledge, skills, and sub-processes, and then try it out on a more formal, assigned paper. Another effective approach is to write in a daily journal as you practice and refine the processes, and use material from your journal to write a weekly blog. Even if you only use some of the processes for your research and then fall back on your standard writing approach, the practice will improve creativity and synthesis of information, which can lead to advanced knowledge production and better writing.

As a brief background, in 2008 I had been researching “critical pedagogy” (a method of teaching that incorporates political awareness and “social justice”). I was interested in applying it to online courses in order to make online learning more interesting and rigorous. During my research, I happened to come across educator-philosopher Joe Kincheloe’s critical theoretical work for a new, more holistic, less ideological way of engaging in learning and research. Kincheloe had completely transcended the limitations of “critical pedagogy,” and “critical thought” as so many educators practice these, by incorporating a multitude of theories, including complexity and chaos theories. His work was definitely far ahead of the traditional approaches, which intrigued me. And to be honest, when I first read his work, it felt like “coming home.”

Ultimately, he had created a new, superb process for learning referred to as **bricolage**, but it is not your ordinary “postmodern bricolage” which typically produces confusion and chaos, and fails to adequately analyze. This “critical complex bricolage” is something totally new and empowering, something that productively makes use of the very confusion and chaos we are confronted with daily to help us construct something new, creative, and very powerful.

From the moment I first encountered Kincheloe’s work, I could instantly see that his theoretical concepts had the potential to completely transform education, how we define ourselves as human beings, and how we construct our world—efforts that, given the current state of the world, is of the essence. And since encountering his work and studying it closely, I realize how even more chaotic than ever the world and its information have become and how fast everything is changing today, thus it’s more important than ever that people acquire the rigorous skills he’s recommended. As a result, I continue to study and apply his theoretical work

in a multitude of venues. There are many ways to apply it, but in this book, I'll focus on helping students in high school and college learn some of these new aspects of bricolage and new ways of dealing with the masses of information we are increasingly being bombarded with, in order to help them improve their research papers.

After coming across Kincheloe's work my life almost instantly changed. For reasons I'm still exploring, my life became "magical" almost from the moment I came in contact with Joe (as he preferred to be called, over "professor" or "doctor"). I ended up working with him, at his invitation, after having engaged in discussions with him and some of the researchers on a professional networking site he had established, and began contributing by writing blogs about technology and online learning. I also had the opportunity to meet him in Vancouver, Canada, on July 31, 2008, when he traveled there for an engagement from the east side of Canada where he was living.

Over the next five months, he generously provided guidance, helping me learn his *critical complex bricolage* process during our conversations on the website discussion forum and through emails (I later added to his designation in order to further distinguish it from other lesser applications of bricolage and to better represent the totality of his theory, renaming it the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage*; [Paradis, 2013](#)). Sadly, right after I wrote the proposal for my doctoral research in December, 2008, in which I would be applying his theory, he passed away suddenly and unexpectedly from a heart attack while he was on vacation in Jamaica during the Christmas holiday. I was devastated, but was determined to continue forward with the research I had begun under his tutelage. At that time, I felt his work was doomed for the "dustbins" of history, but at the same time I determined I simply could not allow that to happen. I was in for some amazing surprises, however.

Soon after Joe's death, I experienced first-hand his theoretical conceptualization of multidimensionality and fourth dimension research, a gift from the cosmos and from Joe, himself, I had believed at the time, and I still believe today. It has completely altered the way I view life and death. I began to experience two overlapping, but very genuine "realities." One was the dull, crazy, everyday highly limiting and often even violent reality; the other was regularly demonstrated by the very type of magic Joe spoke of so often in his work: "As a child I wanted so desperately for magic to be real. . . . and I observe and practice magic everyday" (Kincheloe, 2006a, p. 13). Thus, I was *magically* being given instructions from "the beyond" to engage in what has been referred to as "**treasure hunting**," a creative introduction to learning the skills I needed for his bricolage. In addition to being sent out on a treasure hunt that had me landing in the nearly forgotten, but very sacred Kings Valley, I had been asked to buy a metal detector to search my back yard for a diamond ring. I was actually given quite extensive information as to why the diamond ring had ended up in the yard. At that time I was also writing personal blogs about my experiences and was heavily and even viciously criticized by a few members of the "greater" academic community for connecting Kincheloe's works to treasure hunts (as well as to "quests," the "golden chalice" and other terms that had cropped up), a word of warning should such magic come into your life and you dare reveal the jealously guarded secrets about these things. This is just a glimpse of "fourth dimension research."

However, despite complaints, Joe Kincheloe, himself, used such signifiers as “treasure hunts,” “journeys,” etc., throughout his work and he had specified a fourth dimension research as a process for his form of bricolage—and my work is greatly influenced by his theory and writing. Admitting that his work is “transgressive,” (p. 1), he states, “I am constantly thinking in terms of process, patterns, and themes. . . . sometimes I’m sure I come across as a weird agent to many, as I look for these ‘**cognitive treasures**.’ . . . Don’t get me wrong, I’m a phenomenologist that values an experience for its own sake and I think it’s essential that I go along with the existential ambience of the moment. Sex, I can assure you, constitutes one of those phenomenological moments. But I’m never too far away from the postformal **treasure hunt**” (pp. 132-133).

I seemed to have inherited Kincheloe’s transgressive attitude toward the status quo as I pushed forward with my work, always feeling I had his active support, even though he was not physically present, at least not according to the standard perception through the five senses and as can be evaluated by traditional, politicized science. Yet, indeed, I felt that he was present.

Kincheloe’s *critical postformalism*, as is explained later, is a higher order form of thinking, a higher consciousness, and can result in an extreme creativity, which he assures us that we can all develop. **Treasure hunting** turned out to be a really fun way that helped me begin to learn to think in different ways by introducing me to “Hermes” the god of communication and learning how to make multiple interpretations of various clues provided—skills needed for developing a critical “postformal” (higher order) way of thinking—plus I really did find **treasures**! There has been so much magic and so many treasures in my life the past five years that when I write about Joe’s work to help other people apply it in their own lives, there is no way I can leave them out. As I write, particular experiences come to mind and since they enhance an explanation and demonstration of his theoretical work, I add them into the discussion. It just can’t be helped and besides, I hope it makes what could be a dull, drab academic discussion far more interesting. As it turned out, my dream, as was Joe’s dream, is that everyone who wishes to learn to experience such magic in their lives. With work, it can happen. That’s the hitch though; it does take conscious effort and Joe has never hidden that fact and neither shall I. But there’s nothing that says we can’t make it a lot of fun while we’re learning the complex processes involved. Thus, I am sharing the basic process I used to develop and apply my research skills academically and how the bricolage process essentially has expanded now into every dimension of my life. Everyone should experience such joy as I know Joe did also because he has expressed it throughout his work—and now as I do as well.



Thus, when I was handed down this yard search **treasure hunt**, I dutifully searched my back yard for the diamond ring, as had been suggested (note that it was suggested and in no way am I ever ordered to do these things from the cosmos). My motive was less about owning a diamond ring and more about wanting to “prove” that I was communicating with “someone” even if I could never prove who that someone is. However, instead of finding a diamond ring during my yard search **treasure hunt**, I found the handmade silver talisman

shown in the photo, which I now use as my logo. Much later, during my research, I discovered that the talisman is a profound symbol representing many sacred things: It's an initiation gift into the Divine Wisdom Knowledges, a symbol of the Alchemical Marriage, a representation of the joining of the yin and the yang for new creations, and since I had found it on Mother's Day it was also a Mother's Day gift. I have yet to perform a thorough bricolage study on the talisman.

Miraculously and synchronistically, a diamond ring was delivered to my front door only two days later by my neighborhood **handyman** who I had asked to come over and do a few minor repairs in my home. He had broken off his engagement (just as the message from the cosmos had informed me), and he was unemployed and needed some cash. I had interpreted the ring to be a special gift for me signifying my "marriage to Joe's work" as I had expressed in a blog I had written about it. In reality, it signifies Divine Marriage, a sacred union between two souls who share a profound love for each other. I knew that somehow Kincheloe had a hand in this magic, since he often speaks of both "magic" and "treasure hunting" in his work. If anyone were to develop these magic abilities to compel a handy man to deliver a diamond ring, it would be him, in my thinking. He even defines **bricoleur**, the person who engages in this **bricolage** (and what you'll be learning) as:

a **handyman** or handywoman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task. Some connotations remind me of the chicanery of **Hermes**, in particular his ambiguity concerning the messages of the gods. If hermeneutics came to connote the ambiguity and slipperiness of textual meaning, then bricolage can also imply the fictive and imaginative elements of all formal research. (Kincheloe, 2004b, p. 1)

As you can see by the definition, bricolage applies to many handy man or handy woman types of **D.I.Y.** tasks, although, I can assure you Kincheloe has developed the theory for some additional applications. Here, we will be applying it to a **D.I.Y.** form of research, learning, and writing. Thus, as I moved forward with my research, I found that the "fictive and imaginative elements" encoded in his definition above were cropping up everywhere and they serendipitously always connected to Kincheloe's work (but I usually found this correlation after I experienced these magical events).

Fictive simply means it's not fiction, nor is it yet fact; it has been conceptualized from our imagination, such as scientific inventions and "million dollar ideas," but the idea is, if we get this figured out, we actually create those scientific inventions and million dollar ideas. As an example of the correlation (creation) of my cosmically-guided treasure hunts with Kincheloe's **bricolage**, in his work he speaks of "**the nuts and bolts of bricolage**." In his 2005 article about **bricolage** in which he has taken the theory to a more advanced level, he writes: "For the past several years, with the help of Norm Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, I have been working on the extension of their concept of **bricolage**—a multimethod mode of research referenced by a variety of researchers but not developed in detail. On one level, **bricolage** can be described as the process of getting down to **the nuts and bolts** of multidisciplinary research" (p. 323). Thus, here he has discussed one level of bricolage, which is the topic of this book—the basics—and and will get you started with the process.



I find it humorous, a very funny gift, perhaps from that delightful and comical god, **Hermes (?)**, that my exploratory **treasure hunting** had not only yielded the symbolic yin yang talisman shown in the photograph above (have I been initiated into a secret society?) but also many nuts and bolts. The photo on the left and on the cover of this book was taken in 2009 when I was first introduced to **treasure hunts**; these are some of the actual nuts and bolts I found in my back yard.

The point is, however, that as multidimensional critical complex bricoleurs, we can create something spectacular out of the proliferation of ordinary information. We can create our dreams even with limited resources; thus, this process is not reserved for the elite.

Kincheloe's more advanced conceptualization of bricolage takes it far beyond the "nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research" and he has expanded it to be a multidimensional process, but we do all have to begin somewhere, so I'll save more advanced applications for another book. Although as just described, I will also pull in some of my fourth dimension research processes to begin introducing them.

Thus, this Quick-Start D.I.Y. Guide begins with the nuts and bolts in order to introduce some of the methods and the multidimensional critical complex bricolage process. The more the various skills and processes he recommends are practiced, the more new processes and ways of applying them will be discovered, and the more natural it all becomes—and the more fun research and learning become. Amazing new information is discovered, new perspectives revealed, and new ways to apply it all become illuminated. While my own exploration has brought me so much joy, it doesn't mean that I am not still confronted with problems to solve and questions to answer, and I'm not always successful (there often are not solutions and sometimes we need to abandon a quest for another time). But the difference now is that I have a powerful new process for approaching the issues that come up in my life and I realize that even if there has been no monumental change in the moment, my work will make a difference. Complexity and chaos predicts this with the theory of the butterfly effect:

Sensitivity to initial conditions is popularly known as the "[butterfly effect](#)", so called because of the title of a paper given by [Edward Lorenz](#) in 1972 to the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) in Washington, D.C. entitled *Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil set off a Tornado in Texas?* The flapping wing represents a small change in the initial condition of the system, which causes a chain of events leading to large-scale phenomena. Had the butterfly not flapped its wings, the trajectory of the system might have been vastly different." [Wikipedia, Chaos Theory].



Source: <http://berto-meister.blogspot.com/2010/02/secret-life-of-chaos.html>

ACTIVITIES

To ponder: Do we have “free will”?

Watch the video [here](#) and do some additional research. What do you think?



Lucas Jennis' engraving published on an alchemical emblem-book entitled *De Lapide Philosophico* (1625) [Public Domain]

So, with with what I have interpreted to be Supreme guidance that continuously emerged during my studies, I completed the first leg of my research. I learned much and experienced much magic. I have produced a 500+ page dissertation about the process, written as I was engaged in my own process of learning it. For those who are ready to delve into it more deeply my dissertation along with additional information, including references to Joe's work is available to access free on a website I've established in his honor, www.joekincheloe.us.

For now, I wish to introduce you to at least some of the amazing aspects of his theory that you can use for your own research and studies immediately to get you started on the road to this very powerful and enjoyable form of research. I hope this book helps you see how

much fun it can be to research a topic you're interested in, maybe even passionate about, that can make a difference in the world, and that inevitably will have some "magic" (synchronicities) pop into your life. I have found that the more I study Kincheloe's form of bricolage, which, as I have stated, I have renamed the **multidimensional critical complex bricolage**, the more I have realized the wide range of applications it has. He had contended that learning this is a lifetime process, thus, we will always find new ways we can use it, whether it's for education or for daily problem solving or for entrepreneurship and starting a new business or for creating almost anything we can imagine. But we all must begin somewhere—by learning what he has referred to as **"the nuts and bolts"** of bricolage and quickly moving on from there to more advanced applications. We do not want to be stuck like the Ouroboros, spinning in circles. This book, thus, will get you started, and if applied well, will help you improve your writing and achieve A+ papers. While you might not be able to answer complex questions definitively or even come up with viable theories, the more you engage in this form of research, the closer you'll get. As Einstein is noted for saying, the more perspectives you engage, the stronger your theory (Kincheloe, 2004). And I am still learning too, so the mere writing of this book will actually take me forward from where I am currently in my understanding.

Once you've completed the recommended reading, writing, and practice presented here and tried it out on a few papers, you will be ready to move on to the next levels. Everything needed is on the website, www.joekincheloe.us to guide you with the more advanced levels; be sure to read his books and articles that apply to your specific purposes. I'll also be writing additional books to present more examples that take the process to higher levels than in this book. I will announce their availability on my website, www.paradispublications.com.

The Purpose of Education

Educational purpose cannot be separated from social justice, human liberation, self-direction, resistance to regulation, and the fight for freedom. (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 17)

As can be seen by the quotation, Kincheloe's idea of educational purpose greatly surpasses the notion that we simply get a degree or learn what we need to in order to get a job. There is that aspect, too, for many, but we can make our educational experience so much more meaningful. In fact, Kincheloe actually wrote two books dedicated to vocational education—and as he does with all of his concepts, he greatly expanded what vocational education should be about. There is much we can do to make education more relevant to all areas of our lives. We can also make a difference in the world during the process. Kincheloe's multidimensional critical complex bricolage provides a process for achieving all of these goals.

As I mentioned in the introduction, Kincheloe's theory expands the mundane notion of bricolage as simply a one-dimensional approach of using different methods and seeking perspectives from multiple disciplines or subject areas. In his work, he's formulated a whole new way of thinking that involves setting aside our beliefs and presuppositions and freeing our imaginations. We are always seeking new perspectives, different from our own, to see what we might uncover or create through our interaction with them. His new way of thinking is a very complex topic in itself and was developed out of using the bricolage (but it's also a process you will develop the more you engage with his form of bricolage). He had initially titled this new way of thinking "postformalism"; in his later work it evolved further and he refers to it as the *critical psychology of complexity*. It represents that we can develop our thinking abilities (no matter what age we are) beyond the construct of the "formal" stage of reasoning, a theoretical upper limit as had been presented in Piaget's theory of developmental stages. It also transcends restrictive aspects of "formal" education processes by encouraging forms of learning and sharing knowledge outside of the established and boring "norms" of standardized education, thus freeing up our imaginations and creativity. He best describes it as an "emerging Dionysian notion." He states:

Dionysius was the Greek god of wine and an orgiastic theology that rejoiced in the power and fecundity of the cosmos. Dionysian ways of knowing involved activities that liberate and inspire human beings with a divine creativity, as they connect them to the life force of the cosmos. No wonder I was viewed as dangerous—these Dionysians were a subversive crowd to run with across the boundaries of time. Such an unsafe transhistorical gang was transgressive but, interestingly, they were searching for the maximum intellectual clarity humanly possible. I wanted to be part of that quest. When the critical spirit of justice was added to this mix, something began to burn in my guts. Taking the impassioned spirit of critical theory/critical pedagogy, adding it to the innovations of socio-cognition and this Dionysian celebration of affect and joy, I believed, could create a new way of thinking about thinking. A critical postformalism emerged in this bricolage, a way out of the hell of hyper-rationalism/formalism of

mainstream schooling, teacher education, and the repressive political climate that was materializing before my eyes. (2006a, p. 19).

Today, that “hell” he describes in the last sentence is upon us more powerfully than when he had written the book back in 2006. Just look around at the news, the media, the entertainment, and the growing mindless restrictions placed upon students working toward their “education.” Look around at how so many people blindly follow along without even questioning why they must follow a dictated procedure or rule, walking the path laid out for them without thinking about changing things, much less the *ways* they might change things. With bricolage we can blaze new paths; we walk the “higher” road.

In my forays of actively engaging in a sort of “cosmic-led” bricolage, I often have experienced the very sort of pleasure and joy expressed in Kincheloe’s metaphor about the Dionysian gods and goddesses. One day on a simple walk to enjoy the spring flowers in the neighborhood and to take pictures of them, these very same gods, goddesses, and cherubs appeared in the sky for me! A storm was coming in, so I rushed out before it began to rain. I randomly pointed the camera to the sky periodically during my walk (a total of seven times) and snapped photos without even seeing what they were. Thus, in addition to photographs of flowers, I also found to my amazement when I uploaded them to the computer, all seven sky photos represented the very “fecundity of the gods” Kincheloe mentions above, complete with the fertility rabbit. Can you see the white rabbit in the photo on the next page? Can you see the lovers? *This is a test of your “bricolage” perceptual abilities.*



Photographed by Vanessa Paradis, May 22, 2010 at 3:17 PM

To view all seven photos visit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanessajaeparadis/sets/72157624129404315/>

Treasure Hunting 101

As mentioned in the introduction, part of my guidance for learning bricolage came to me in the form of treasure hunts directed and presumably observed from the fourth dimension. Of course, I can't prove this is what happened, but I can assure you I was quite shocked by the whole bizarre experience when it was first "handed down" to me and that I had been requested to take these—what Kincheloe (2008) refers to in his work as "epistemological road trips" that had me end up exploring a desolate yet sacred valley and the Pacific Coast on multiple occasions, as well as other areas. Treasure hunts, I assume, can take many different forms, but even if you are not as fortunate as I was to have them magically provided, you can still engage in a form of treasure hunting during which you observe things around you in your daily life and make interpretations. Don't ignore anything: there is likely significance in everything that seems random on first appearance. And pay particular attention when you notice several similar signs or if something unexpected comes your way. I've discovered they often hold great significance. So how can we translate this into everyday experience?

Think about what your typical day is like: emails, reading the news, watching television, walking to class, phone conversations, work, text messages, music, meals . . . begin to pay attention to the "extraordinary" midst the ordinary; that is, pay attention to the "coincidences" and the "synchronicities." There are so many examples I could give you from my own personal experience; in fact I will need to write a special book about "intuition" that describes them all, including the amazing variety of ways they are provided. I used to, for example, dislike it when someone gave me advice I didn't ask for. But now I pay attention to it. Who is the real messenger (back behind the curtain)? Could it be that the message came from some higher, wiser source who felt it was important that I receive the advice (or information, gift, or whatever it might be)? Thus, I no longer toss advice to the wayside; I pay attention to it.

Also pay attention to the "objects" that appear during your day. What are they? What do they represent? Do some online research for interpretations and meanings of those objects. Often certain animals may cross your path; find out what these animal "totems" represent. Pretend your life is like a dream and these are all dream objects needing to be interpreted. What is their significance? Find general interpretations, but also make specific interpretations that pertain to you and your life.

Also, listen to those positive, creative, intuitive promptings that come to you when your mind is silent. These "prompts" may be very helpful. Don't listen, however, if some voice tells you something negative: delete any negative thoughts (If you do this for a period of time, any negative thoughts will begin to fade away). All you have to do is say "Delete that thought" or come up with your own phrase, catch yourself, and then neutralize the negative thought. You can also replace it with a more positive thought.

A mundane example of making use of prompts that seem to come from “nowhere” was one day when I was heading home after shopping. I was prompted to stop and pick up hamburgers. I was clearly prompted to buy two meals even though I was alone and I was the only one who was going to be home. I felt a bit weird doing this, but I complied. No sooner had I gotten in the door than my son who lived 10 miles away knocked on the door for a visit! It was the one and only time he stopped in unannounced! And of course, he was hungry. What a great Mom, right? It sounds wild but it’s a true story. I have learned to listen to those helpful prompts and delete the negative ones.

How does all of this help you with writing? You will not only become more focused, you’ll more easily notice amazing information during your research (which comes in multiple ways) that can enhance what you write. This also helps with your interpretive skills, a critically important facet of this form of research. Often when I’m writing, I’ll get a “prompt” to refer to some specific page number in a book and sure enough, it has the perfect information for what I’m writing at that moment and often expands meaning or increases insight. Or I’ll just randomly (so I think) pick up a book and open it right up to a page that has information needed for what I’m working on and that information just seems to pop off the page. Sometimes information comes to me in dreams. I can’t explain how all of this happens. Kincheloe has developed an empirical phenomenological process which he calls the [critical science of complexity](#) for studying these phenomena so that we might gain a greater understanding of them, and which I hope to apply soon. So far, no one is using the process, but I hope that changes soon and people do start exploring these types of phenomena. It would be great to have a more scientific explanation for what happens. For now, there are theories (e.g. quantum entanglement and various spiritual interpretations), but the systematic and serious study of these amazing human phenomenological experiences have been greatly ignored.

Another valuable activity in relation to these treasure hunts would be to write about them. I recommend keeping a daily journal and if you feel like being especially creative, write a blog on occasion. It’s amazing how synchronistic it can all become in relation to your research. You can write freely about whatever your mind is on, what’s in the news, your various experiences, the synchronicities, and of course, your dreams. For dreams, it’s best to write them immediately upon awakening as you will remember more. This is all valuable “source material” for your writing projects whether immediately or sometime in the future. This is one of the secrets that many authors don’t reveal. They use various forms of fourth dimension research and experiences, no matter how crazy they are, for material for their writing. How do you think Star Wars was dreamed up? It was probably *literally* dreamed up. The same is probably true for Harry Potter. In my own work, I’ve taken a turn, however. I prefer love stories, and besides, Kincheloe’s theory actually has us synthesizing “eros love” into our work and there are very good and very important reasons for doing this. So my stories (e.g. Eros and Psyche)

are “diametric opposite readings” to the more thanatos-based types of stories (and videos, tv programs, movies, etc.).

As another personal example, one day I had multiple interesting “objects” appear, and they came in pairs. It turned out the reason for this happening was that it was a very special day in my fourth dimension world. Thus, I used my creative license and wrote the blog that’s reprinted on the next page about my experiences that day and, interestingly, this particular blog also reviews and links back to many of my past treasure hunts in case you’re interested in learning more about some of my experiences with treasure hunts as led by a “Master Teacher.”

Note that in this blog, I have taken on my “imaginary” name for myself (Sōferia) and my “consort,” (Emanu’El) who is also my main “Master Teacher.” Those names were just “handed down” to me from what I consider to be the fourth dimension; I did not “think” them up, at least not consciously. In fact, the names seemed to have come from “memory” of a future life time. My name, Sōferia, was just “shouted out” at me one day and somehow I knew it was my name from another place and time. This is not as far-fetched as we have been taught in our education, but an explanation of “no-time” would take us into a deep philosophical and physical sciences discussion which is beyond the scope of this work. You’ve probably seen these concepts covered in the media in “imaginary” movies and television programs. Also, having Master Teachers in the fourth dimension is not at all unheard of, although not many people are blessed with this gift. Dr. Brian Weiss, a psychoanalyst who has regressed thousands of people in his practice to help them restore memories that may be affecting them in their lives today, has had a number of his clients speak of learning from Master Teachers who seem to have great knowledge. So, if you are—or if you do—connect with one or several teachers, it’s not at all “crazy.” Sometimes they can take on other appearances in your dreams, so that’s another reason to pay attention to what you can learn from your dreams.

Thus, the following is the blog I wrote on what had turned into a very “special day.” That day, my totem animal, which is the beaver, popped up again for me, which I always find humorous because there’s a big joke around how that came up for me for the first time during one of my earlier treasure hunts. Also note that I used a form of numerology to help me interpret the significance of the day. There are multiple interpretations that can be made using various forms of numerology. While a professor might question the validity, bricolage research and writing will accept such interpretations when they open up meanings or provide greater support and depth of understanding to phenomenological experiences. For a little background to the story, it’s about two people working together in different dimensions, Sōferia and Emanu’el from the Pleiades who also go by the names Eros and Psyche...this is an ongoing story, *The Code Blue Earth Mission*, that’s posted on www.paradisipublications.com and from which a series of books are planned. This particular day was an especially important milestone for Emanuel.

Friday, September 16, 2011

Emanu'el is an Ascended Master! And We Are Celebrating TWOs with the Eager Beaver! Plus Music to My Ears: For the Longest Time



Sōferia, the Pleiadian Queen, here. I am so excited! It has been a great day! I have learned from Guru Ra that Emanu'el is now an Ascended Master! Actually, I learned of this a few days ago, and I confirmed it with Emanu'el. He says it is true. (He is so humble that he couldn't tell me himself and I had to learn it through Guru Ra).

Becoming a Master of the Wisdom Knowledges is what he came to Earth to work toward and I'm overjoyed that he has made it! He had to go through a lot of trials and tribulations to get where he is today. In fact, I cry if I think too deeply about all that he has been through. I am so proud of him: He has hung in there and he has made it!

So, we decided we want to celebrate today. I am not sure why he picked today, 9-16-2011. If you add 9 and 16 and 2 that makes 18 and then 1+8 is 9, so that gives 9-11. Nine symbolizes completion and 11 is God's number. It is very significant since the number 9 symbolizes his completion of the work to become

Ascended Master -- and all of the work Emanu'el and I do is ultimately for God and through God's gracious love that flows through us.

I had to go grocery shopping today and Emanu'el nudged me to pick up a cake to celebrate. I guess he loves to celebrate with cake and ice cream, and so do I. I was looking in a refrigerated case at a very small carrot cake, thinking that it would be more nutritious than a regular cake, but, no. He asked me to go across the aisle and look at the other cakes. Well, the instant I saw it (the cake you see me holding in the picture), I knew that was it! That crazy Eager Beaver keeps coming up for us over and over. I blame Hermes since these are the types of fun jokes Hermes loves and he is Emanu'el's dad as well as his teacher (as you might recall, Emanu'el is Eros, the God of Love, himself and Hermes is his dad. Venus or Aphrodite who played around a lot is his mother).

I laughed when I saw the cake. YES!!!! The "Eager Beaver Critical Pedagogue" strikes again – and right after I included a description of the incident in the recent article I wrote that describes what this never ending joke is all about. You can read that here: [A Revered Master](#) (see page 15, first paragraph). The way I look at it is, what fun is life if we can't laugh at ourselves - and so, I will forever laugh everytime

Hermes or Emanu'el surprises me with yet another reminder of what an "Eager Beaver" I am. AND Emanu'el says the *Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt* is not over yet! As soon as I finish with my dissertation, that's the first treasure hunt I get to continue with! I can't wait. Here is a review; you'd better get ready for some real fun!

[Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt and Another MUSIC Easter Egg July 21, 2009](#)

[Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt Part 2: Deciphering the Clues July 22, 2009](#)

[Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt Part 3: Deciphering the Clues July 23, 2009](#)

[The Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt: Take Two, Part One and Birthday Wishes for Rainbow Princess July 25, 2009](#)

[Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt Take Two, Part Two July 27, 2009](#)

[The Money I Did Spend: Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt Take Two, Part Three July 29, 2009](#)

[Tricky Beavers: Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunt Take Two, Part Four July 30, 2007](#)

[Kings Valley and Pacific Coast Eager Beaver Treasure Hunts Continue PLUS The Dancing Queen Wednesday, October 14, 2009](#)

It was very interesting, and almost magical (if you do not understand the science behind it) to find the OSU Beaver cake in the town I live in. It is not even the home of the Oregon State University Beavers, where I received my bachelor's and master's degrees, but a small country town about 12 miles away. *Someone* had to have told "someone" to make the cake and then they had to tell people who came along and looked at it not to buy the cake so that I could buy it, since there was only one cake with "Go Beavers!" written on it. What a perfect celebratory exclamation! Now Emanu'el is an "eager beaver," too, lol. I guess he wants me to know we really are in this together! And it was pretty funny, too, when I went to put the cake in the back seat of my car, right where I was going to set the cake down were two "pennies from Heaven." They must have fallen out of my son's pocket more than a week ago when he had been riding back there, and the pennies were just waiting for this special day for me to find them! I just wrote this blog a few days ago about pennies from Heaven and how many I have received from my twin flame:

[A Penny from Heaven PLUS A Reminder from the UHC Tuesday, August 30, 2011](#)



This time it was TWO pennies. There is something about TWO. There were TWO plastic rings shaped like footballs decorating our cake and then I found TWO pennies. One of the pennies is the year I graduated from High School, 1971, and the other one is 2006. I am not sure of the significance of the second one. There may be more. In fact, it is like the wedding requirement: You need to have "something old and something new." One of the pennies is old and dark,

the other looks like a shiny new penny. . . I think Emanu'el is telling me our work is almost done and we will get to have our wedding celebration soon! He has been giving me hints about that lately. How sweet!



Next, I got home and along come TWO Eagles flying above my house. I had a hard time getting pictures of them (I need a new and better camera!), but I did the best I could. At least, I think they are eagles, it's hard to tell. I am not good at identifying birds, but I will call them Eagles; they were very large when they flew close to me. When I found that the pictures were not that good, I went back out to take more and TWO yellow butterflies flittered around me. They flew off so fast, I could not get a picture, though. And the eagles by this time, were too far away for getting more pictures. I wonder what yellow butterflies represent - and one of them flew right towards me just as I went out the door.

It has been an eventful day! Emanu'el never lets me forget he is always with me. He gives me so many special and surprising gifts. Oh, and then we HAD to stop at McDonald's on the way home and pick up hamburgers, fries, and a coke. And I never even used to like McDonald's, lol. And we had to buy TWO meals because Rainbow Princess was with me.

So there you have it: A day filled with TWOs. I think Emanu'el is telling me we are in this together, eternally. I like that. Also, there are some strong hints that we are getting closer and closer to our wedding celebration - and the crowning of the King. I am so proud of him. Now he really deserves to be King - and please, earthlings, this is not a hierarchical thing! The King on our planet SERVES THE PEOPLE even at his own sacrifice. Now that he has reached Ascended Master status, it shows our people that he has even more to offer them. It is an honor to serve our people and to do the work it takes to serve them well, justly, and provide for them the things they need, abundantly.

For my music today, instead of giving me a clue for a song to look up on YouTube, the moment I awakened this morning, Emanu'el started singing a heavenly song right in my ear. He used to always wake me up that way, but then he switched to giving me clues to look up on YouTube - now it looks like we are back to beautiful and loving wake-up songs. I love it!!!! This song is so meaningful. We really did regret our choice to work across dimensions for a time. It has been very difficult in many ways and I still cry because I did not want him to leave yet at the same time, I had told him that I trusted his judgment completely. In other words, I left it up to him and I do respect his choice and I do love him so much, whatever he chooses is fine with me. All in all, it is working and when we finish with this Code Blue Earth

Mission, I am sure it will have been worth it. We will be back together once again in ALL ways, and this time it will be for eternity. Billy Joel- For the Longest Time 9:09 pm | [link](#)

Thus, this is an example of a typical blog I might write; I've written many in a similar vein. They are always extremely synchronistic and everything just sort of fits in place. These informal writings can be great material for future writings. You can take pieces out and blend them in with your writing, or when they're relevant to your message, the entire blog can be used, as I've done here. They can also be further interpreted and analyzed. For example, in the original blog, I wasn't sure of the meaning of the 2006 penny. . . but subconsciously, I must have picked up on the interpretation that $2+6=8$ and 8 represents "eternity" . . . which was the very word that the blog had ended with. Have fun with blogs and use them as an opportunity to explore, trying out different forms of writing. I will clue you in that the above blog is actually a true story.

The Multidimensional Critical Complex Bricolage

A scan of the research being done today reveals that there are many researchers using a process they call “bricolage” to pull bits and pieces of knowledge and understanding together to then convey these different perspectives to readers. However, the bricolage I cover in this book, which is based on Joe Kincheloe’s rigorous form of research bricolage, the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage*, is much more expansive and powerful than the popular versions of bricolage being commonly used. That’s not to say there aren’t people who are not taking a more rigorous approach (there are) but Kincheloe’s process, in its full employment, adds even more layers of analysis than what anyone outside of himself has been using. My dissertation is the only other example that I’m aware of that fully employs his process. One benefit for doing the work it takes to engage deeply in this form of research is that it naturally greatly enhances seeing a bigger slice of reality. There are also other amazing “gifts” you can discover if you take this form of learning and research seriously and put forth a sincere effort. However, since this is a *D.I.Y. Quick Start Guide* for high school and college students, I’ll primarily be discussing the academic uses for bricolage. I do have plans to expand from there and demonstrate the process in many different contexts. I’m sure you recognize the advantage that the ability to see a greater reality gives us if we can come to use this powerful process in our daily lives.

There are many reasons we must learn to think more critically and intelligently than the common “critical” pedagogy and bricolage that’s being promoted in the classrooms of today. The difference between them and Kincheloe’s versions are often as different as night and day, evil and good, weak and powerful; it’s a matter of yin and yang and what is created when bringing all beneficent possibilities together.

I will point out that very watered down versions of critical thinking, critical bricolage, and critical pedagogy are being promoted (along with reams of rhetoric) to those who partake of public education—and looks can be deceiving. What “looks” like critical thinking can sometimes produce counter effects (e.g., those “interpretive” processes for which it’s claimed there is only one right answer, which often happens in classrooms).

As an example, the “run of the mill” meaning of critical thinking goes something like this:

A well cultivated critical thinker:

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

(Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*, Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2008) [<http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/defining-critical-thinking/766>]

This is all well and good, but first of all, schools are not successfully teaching these skills because they're focused on teaching students to pass standardized tests. Secondly, this formulation does not recognize that critical thinking requires a multidimensional, nonlinear process. Surface problems and issues are just that—*surface* problems and issues. They are often merely the symptoms of something bigger that does not get treated—and putting band aids on symptoms does not heal the disease. It's not until we take a multidimensional, multi-pronged approach that the problems and questions that would make a difference are raised (Kincheloe refers to these as “third-order” questions in his Social Sciences textbook, *Getting Beyond the Facts*). Third, these simplified formulations often seen in the literature do not nearly represent Kincheloe's take on critical thinking. In fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, Kincheloe had developed an entirely new form of thinking we should all strive for, *postformalism*, or as he later named it, critical complex cognition, and the new educational psychology, *critical psychology of complexity*.

In the book *Critical Thinking and Learning: An Encyclopedia for Parents and Teachers*, Kincheloe (& Weill, 2004) politely recognized what some researchers and teachers are attempting to accomplish, stating “We have no trouble with traditional critical thinking's attempt to avoid unexamined living. We profoundly respect the tradition's emphasis on logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemological insight, but we suspect that we can go farther. We believe that there are unexplored domains of human consciousness and cognition” (“Into the Great Wide Open, Introducing Critical Thinking,” p.xiii).

Kincheloe often emphasizes the importance of human consciousness, a project he held close to his heart, because of the amazing possibilities a better understanding of consciousness offers us for expanding our understanding and knowledge. Following his bricolage process is essentially a new way of empirically and rigorously investigating human phenomenological experience and consciousness. It allows us to “drill down” so to speak through all of the layers of our consciousness and develop a greater awareness as to how our beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, etc., have been constructed. Thus, when you practice his critical complex epistemology and multidimensional critical complex bricolage, which involves looking at consciousness construction, you will be developing higher order thinking skills beyond standardized ideas of “critical thinking” as well as developing some of the skills of Kincheloe’s *critical science of complexity*. This kind of thinking can put you in what’s called the HOT Zone (Higher Order Thinking Zone). In 2012 Texas lawmakers had actually tried to outlaw teaching HOT in schools. Why do you suppose that is? [Valerie Strauss, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/texas-gop-rejects-critical-thinking-skills-really/2012/07/08/gJQAHNpFXW_blog.html].



What traits does Kincheloe describe are necessary for this higher order form of critical thinking? He explains that it’s “a new terrain of cognition,” and that “when critical thinkers started using diverse ways of seeing and making meaning, they began to discern interconnections between texts, ideas, physical objects, social circumstances, and the educational process that had previously been ignored” (Kincheloe, 2004f, p. 3). This is exactly what we want to accomplish with this form of research; we want to see what hasn’t been noticed and develop powerful new understandings of those dimensions of the social world that are so often hidden from our view. Kincheloe often describes it in his work as learning to become a detective. What fun!

As I have also come to learn, bricolage must also be based on a foundation of purity, goodness, and, importantly, **love**, as Joe Kincheloe always emphasizes: our research and the actions we take must be based on **love and compassion**. That does not mean that it’s necessarily a “comfortable” process. Confronting the reality that we must make changes can be a difficult process. As he states, “Postformalism knows that no critical teaching, learning, and thinking can occur without a degree of distress to identity and what was once a comfortable form of consciousness. . . . Indeed, postformal thinking involves having the guts to walk through the stargate to a new terrain of consciousness” (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 119). We must also develop

a strong, impenetrable, yet evolving philosophy and [world view](#) based on the recognition that there are changes happening so rapidly that we can barely keep pace—and yet we must. These three additional factors—love, compassion, and an evolving world view—woven into the bricolage create a new and powerful force. I'll explain throughout this book what is meant by the various elements and how Kincheloe has provided the guiding light. Since I draw extensively—and adhere to—the late Joe Kincheloe's theoretical and philosophical work, I will bring in some of his ideas to clarify as I proceed lining out the D.I.Y. processes you will wish to develop in order to effectively engage in this type of research and knowledge production.

It's important to realize that while many people using bricolage are often using inferior, weak, ineffective forms of bricolage that do little for increasing greater understanding or for providing knowledge for actions we can take to remedy complex social problems, at the same time the corporate sector (and in particular, the discipline of marketing) is getting bricolage—in the form of knowing every little, minute detail about **us**—down to a science so that they can target their efforts with precision to maximize their power, control, and of course, sales. In fact, the corporate sector, unfortunately, expends great efforts in research in order to define our world for us: what we should want, what we need, how we should “misbehave,” and much more, thus creating and complicating social problems so that they can come along with the “perfect solution.” And as they do this for their own purposes, they carefully avoid teaching us these processes in our corporate-controlled education programs.

While the thought is that the scientific, quantitatively based form of bricolage the corporate and government sectors use is a surefire way of knowing customers, as you learn more about the multidimensional critical complex bricolage, you will come to realize that it's not as effective as they might believe, especially as more people engage in the more dynamic, natural process Kincheloe has developed. There are weaknesses in chasing rapidly moving targets during this era of change and a fickle populous. But the corporate sector has other tactics in place, of course to fill in the gaps in order to influence great masses of people who then often subconsciously (and consciously) flow along the divided paths that are set out for them. Thus, it becomes critical that we learn what they are doing intimately. Every bricolage project involves researching for the influences from all directions including history, science, economic, religious, social, educational, and more.

The process for studying and conducting research that provides greater insight to these complex dynamics is based on Joe Kincheloe's conceptualization of bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001, 2004a,b,c,d,e; 2005a), *critical complex epistemology* and the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage*, renamed for the reasons already expressed (Paradis, 2013). When writing the research, bricoleurs might begin with a point of entry text (POET). The multidimensional critical complex bricolage, combined with epistemology uncovers the complex links, or the matrix that

forms the connections holding any given process, structure, entity, etc., together as we weave through the text with different perspectives and use different interpretive processes. Bricoleurs thus use multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and analyses in various and unique combinations, which are typically as individual as each researcher and these choices are guided by the unfolding of the research as it progresses—in response to what emerges. Bricoleurs take action based in relation to what emerges in this dynamic process. Kincheloe has provided guidance for making choices from among interpretations and actions at these various junctures during the research. For example, he instructs us:

A particular interpretation is chosen because it: provides a richer insight into the text than did others; constructs an interconnected and cohesive portrait of the phenomenon; grants access to new possibilities of meaning; benefits marginalized groups in their struggle for empowerment; fits the phenomenon under study; accounts for many of the cultural and historical contexts in which the phenomenon is found; considers previous interpretations of the phenomenon in question; generates insight gained from the recognition of the dialectic of particularity and generalization, or wholes and parts; indicates an awareness of the forces that have constructed it; makes use of multiple perspectives of multiple individuals coming from diverse social locations; catalyzes just, intelligent, and worthwhile action. (Kincheloe, 2004e, pp. 101–102)

Thus, an improvisational approach is used and, as such, a blueprint cannot be laid out ahead of the research process, except in a general sense. As Kincheloe (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) conveys, “... the bricolage refuses to follow a set course and values improvisation...” (p. xi). The bricolage honors multiple forms of knowledge and takes the position that we must move away from the dominant Eurocentric worldview. This is accomplished by utilizing views of subjugated peoples, including indigenous knowledges. We must become familiar with alternative epistemologies (knowledges) and ways of describing phenomena. This way, researchers produce knowledge that constructs a deeper understanding of how people come to explain and understand the topic being researched, including ways they come to be exploited, how they suffer, how their misery continues, and how they are forced to maintain their current position within the status quo. By uncovering the effects of how the dominant power operates to oppress and divide people, multiple insights can be gained for possibilities that can change the equation and improve conditions for everyone. At the same time, those in power can’t track the next step and get there before we do (Kincheloe, 2001, 2004a,b,c, 2005b). We find connections and greater understanding that bring us together.

An Example of Improvisational Bricolage

All of my own writing is improvisational. I really don't plan it out ahead of time. I might be "handed down" a title for a book with a basic idea of what it's to cover, such as this book, but then I write it as it flows, weaving in text here and there as I expand on various concepts or weave in examples.

I will write a completely improvisational piece right now and give a simple example of how it works for me by color coding the text as I weave it into the initial text, and placing the process or method I used in brackets. This is a very simplified example, just to put across the idea and to demonstrate that this form of research and writing is not linear, but cycles and expands like the Hermeneutic circle of interpretation, re-interpretation, reorganizing, deleting, adding, threading, weaving, etc.

The two previous paragraphs have been written improvisationally and I have just now inserted this chapter into this book, also improvisationally. Because I feel that an example might be helpful to new bricoleurs, I will use the first paragraph, above, as my Point of Entry Text (POET) to demonstrate the process with color coding. As Berry (2004a) instructs us, the POET is just the starting point. "It acts as point of origin through which all the different areas of the bricolage are threaded. The original text changes in content as well as structure once the volume of bricolage threads increases with each feedback loop. For every bricoleur the starting point is different" (p. 111). This means every bricoleur will produce different knowledge or at the least, a unique presentation of the knowledge.

Thus, the following creation has evolved from this paragraph. The black text is the original first paragraph above which is shown in italics, and the different colors represent different "weavings" or "threads" that have been synthesized into the text.

An Example.

All of my own writing is improvisational. I really don't plan it out ahead of time. I never was able to write using a linear process. Writing an outline, as so many teachers require always stymied me because, as bricolage research recognizes and Kincheloe (and Einstein) have expressed, we don't know what we're going to find until we research it! [weaving in Kincheloe's theory]. So often, what I would do was turn the outline in late, writing it after I had written my paper or not turning it in at all. Still, I have always received A grades on my papers! [expanding my personal experience, my "generative theme."] Sometimes, I might be "handed down" a title for a book with a basic idea of what it's to cover, such as had happened with this book [general

example of fourth dimension research]. A few days ago, I was instructed in writing from the “higher realms” that I was to write three introductory books for bricolage: one for high school and college students, one for scholarly researchers, and one for teachers who want to add bricolage to their curriculum [specific example of fourth dimension research]. What do I mean by “higher realms”? For an adequate explanation, I would need to visit many different cultures’ views on how this might be described as well as look at it from various disciplines. For example, perhaps from an African spiritual perspective, I might be communing with and appeasing the gods who reside closest to the Great Spirit, the one omniscient God in order to work my way to higher consciousness. Osahon (2009) provides the following insight in relation to this phenomenon from his African heritage:

Our ancestors taught that spiritual development or progress is possible in degrees through disciplined intellect, adoption of ethical principles and balance in ones life. That one needs to allow disciplined subtle forces to dominate ones physical essence. The secret knowledge the adepts taught was about the mastery of these subtle forces progressively to achieve higher consciousness. (“How to engage the gods,” para. 9)[Weaving in African culture; note that no bricolage is complete without African, indigenous, and other forms of subjugated knowledges in order to expand the Western-dominated world view which has caused so much harm in the world].

An excerpt from my dissertation provides a science perspective to this connection I experience to what I refer to as the “higher realms”:

These connections might also be explained as a manifestation of “entanglement” described in quantum physics, which I will describe in more detail later, but however this phenomenon is explained, the connection and its accompanying “extrasensory experiences” are very real for those of us who experience them (Clegg, 2006; Radin, 2006; Lane Deer, 1992). It appears that as Kincheloe contends throughout his work, “bricolage” as he has conceptualized it can take us to higher levels of cognition, perhaps in incremental steps that build higher levels of conscious connection between people, or similar to African spirituality, a closer connection with the gods [weaving in African spiritual perspective]. While I was working with Kincheloe during the early phase of this research I was only semi-aware that we seemed to have a special bond or connection. There are many incidents of documented mind reading between us, as well as seemingly encoded dialogue that had deeper meanings, upon analysis [weaving in specific examples of intuition or fourth dimension research]. I did not find that unusual at the time because he had a powerful impact on many people. His death, however, devastated me to the core, which was difficult to explain. It was so extreme that my own mother had commented that I acted like I had lost my husband.

The data collected indicate that Kincheloe and I appeared to have had a telepathic as well as a hidden level (“implicate order”) of communication when we had worked together. This “higher order” connection (soul connection?) may have existed from

childhood and throughout our adult lives even though we did not know each other prior to spring, 2008 [consciousness theory]. Our connection continues following his death. Jung's "collective unconscious" theory in which all knowledge is accessible under certain conditions fails to fully explain my phenomenological experiences (Semetsky, 2011; Weiss, 1988)[psychoanalytic theory]. Gadamer (1975/2004) viewed holding to this view of collective consciousness as "dogmatic" (p. 276) [phenomenology]. Science, which has neglected empirical phenomenological study of these experiences might hold much promise in the future for gaining a better understanding of our greater reality [science perspective]. Thus, there are multiple interpretations for the interconnectedness that I have experienced, as will be shown. Each interpretation provides a facet of understanding and there are commonalities among them. Scientists are coming together, concurring that interdisciplinary research will be required in ways that have never happened previously if we are to bring together disparate ideas to gain greater understanding of the complexity of human experience (Mitchell, 2009). Kincheloe (2001a, 2005a, 2008c) thus instructs us to view knowledge as tentative and counsels us to become comfortable with uncertainty [bricolage theory]. Freeman (2007) sums this up in his discussion of bricolage for policymakers, contending, "Learning begins in uncertainty—but often ends there too; for sometimes different kinds of learning conflict." (p. 488) [organizational theory]. He concludes that this uncertainty can debilitate us, can be used destructively, or we can become more conscious for ways to use it creatively and constructively. This research, of course, takes the latter path and demonstrates how uncertainty can be used to help formulate creative solutions for life issues, education, and social injustices (Paradis, 2013, pp. 164-166). [quoting previous research that has synthesized a variety of views]

Thus, my dissertation went on to explore the science explanations more deeply and provide various interpretations for the core phenomenology I was experiencing. Each interpretation provided another facet of understanding, but in my final analysis, I interpreted love as being the major factor that would allow for such connections, although it is intertwined with many processes, such as the work it takes to reach higher levels of consciousness [weaving in eros love, as Kincheloe recommends]. This was exemplified through a variety of metaphors such as the golden chalice, walking the great path, Dharma, the Ojibwe *Seventh Fire Prophecy*, Divine Wisdom Knowledges, Ancient Wisdom, Taoism, religious views of twin souls and divine love, and even alien presence. Whatever the explanation adopted (and they each contribute), I have been working on this book every day and receiving guidance from people in unseen places each day for how I am to proceed [Fourth dimension research]. But when I write, I simply write it as it flows, weaving in text here and there as I expand on various concepts or weave in examples, or as information is handed down to me from "higher consciousness" [Intuitive processes, fourth dimension research] or as I am serendipitously led to information that can contribute to conveying understanding or even taking some relevant action [personal experience; fourth dimension research].

Thus, as I have shown, the original text, which is only the text in black italics, looks quite different now and has greatly expanded; if I were to continue forward, this could expand further turn into a paper, article or even a book about the improvisational nature of bricolage and it would develop its own self-organizing paragraphs, sections, and chapters.

End of example.

It's important to note that the above "bricolage" was not created linearly whatsoever. I, and others, have described the process of researching and writing as "zig-zagging" and that's literally what happens. Others, including Kincheloe, refer to it as "dancing" and I happen to love that metaphor, after spending so much time cyber-dancing with him on his website in the form of dialogues and discussions with the various participants. The multidimensional critical complex bricolage is often musical, rhythmic, and joyful, and often the final written piece is rhythmic. I believe this develops when we allow a sort of "cosmic flow" or continue to take a somewhat intuitive, improvisational approach. An examination of Kincheloe's work shows that he has taken the bricolage dance to a very high level—the magical level, and he as much as says this in his work, upon a careful reading. His writing is very rhythmic and with the music he's incorporated at both the conscious and subconscious levels, reading his work is much like dancing. I was pleased during my research when I came across a "bricolage dance" which expresses this so well. We dance around, even with various partners, but always end up back "home," and "love" is always the final answer (some of my blogs on the www.joekincheloe.us website more adequately cover this aspect of the bricolage as a dance: eg., [Joe Kincheloe's Nine-Step Dance: It's Complicated but a Lot of Fun!](#)).

Honestly, this complex form of bricolage or inquiry cannot be understood in a phenomenological sense until one experiences how, if you research a topic deep, wide, broad, and long enough, a sense of unity can be perceived and with that sense of unity a profound sense of love. Everything becomes everything else. Bricolage is everything and everything is bricolage. And yet at the same time, in the Jungian sense, everyone and everything becomes more individuated. Paradox becomes the way of the world, and we can come to understand the many mediating perspectives. What comes after that? I'm still exploring.

If you'd like to see the bricolage dance performance I'm referring to, it can be viewed here on [YouTube](#). I encourage these sorts of diversions to the research because they can add the necessary emotional dimension and I've been amazed, myself, how doing so enhances memory and learning. Here is an excerpt from my dissertation in which I described this dance:

During my research, I came across a beautiful rendition of a dance on YouTube, by choreographer, Anna Buonomo (2010), titled "Tied Up! Bricolage Dance Movement" which was presented at a performance called *Resolution*. The dance is a love dance, which again marries the definition of bricoleur to the idea of being a lover. As the dance

begins, a young couple is sitting together on a bench; he is engrossed, reading a book. They are connected by a cord that's wound all around her and tied to his foot. She becomes restless and when other couples dance into the picture, she dances around and around in circles until she is free from the cord. She dances all around her lover and then goes out to explore the world of dancing with other people. He gets up and walks away, out of the room behind the curtain, but the cord still stretches across the floor within easy reach and still tied to his foot. She has never lost the potential to reconnect with him. At one point, a sign is held up with the words "You Are," and in juxtaposition with the title of the dance, becomes "You Are Tied Up!" You have a Twin Flame, could be the interpretation. She dances for a time, and then the other people leave. She rediscovers the cord on the floor and dances in circles, winding it back around her ankles and legs, becoming completely entangled as her lover walks back into the room. The dance ends with them sitting on the bench, side-by-side reading the book together. They have reunited and now share the mission. The song, thus, associates the idea of Twin Flame love that keeps a couple connected, even if they venture out in the world separated. Conscious connection may be lost temporarily, but eventually consciousness of their divine connection returns and the couple becomes forever entangled in their eternal love, the book symbolizing their shared consciousness and dreams.

Kincheloe (2004d) relates dancing and bricolage in his book, *The Sign of the Burger* in which he has provided interpretations of McDonald's that push readers into thinking more deeply so that they question the story presented through McDonald's promotion and advertising efforts. He elaborates: "Throughout the book these diverse meanings of McDonald's engage in a dance. My hope as the author is that the dance, like a hula dance, tells a story. As a bricoleur I want it to enrich our understanding of McDonald's as a socio-political and pedagogical phenomenon in a way that leads to progressive social action" (p. 95). He explains, "Bricoleurs employ polysemy to keep discussion open around particular phenomena, knowing that authoritarian operates best when analysis is finalized." This technique of using multiple meanings and never declaring one final "right" meaning is one I use throughout this dissertation, including my interpretation of bricoleur. However, it was interesting during my research how often bricolage and bricoleur became paired with the idea of love, Twin Flames, and their eternal, sacred dance. It seems it was the "best" interpretation for this particular project given my subjectivity, and, perhaps, my Master Teacher watching in the wings. (Paradis, 2013, pp. 322-323)[YouTube video: <http://youtu.be/EKmiP7dNnKQ>]

Whether you use the metaphor of zig-zagging or dancing or Sacred Love—or all of those metaphors and more—it's important to allow this natural process to proceed without being hampered by worrying about the surface features of writing such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and the order you're presenting the text, etc. Kincheloe mentions often, and in many different contexts, the need to bring libido, eros love, life force energy—back to life in Western culture, and one way to do this is to allow our work to flow creatively and lovingly. We have been so ingrained with self-serving values and a colossal fear of love. Yet, the proliferation of

loveless sex, violent sex, and immoral sex is accepted as a “fact of life” and few people even blink over it anymore. People are so desensitized, they expose children to violence and sex without a thought (but believe me, the media thinks about it and has an agenda for it all). Even Jesus’ love as represented in a media depiction of an extremely violent, bloody, drawn-out death has been idolized and immortalized in a sickening and hypocritical way.

Of course, in school, all too often teachers and professors are dinosaurs when it comes to these issues, thus they insist on enforcing “proper” academic style, format, punctuation, grammar, deadlines, etc. when these issues are clearly raised at the expense of student creativity; it shuts down the flow of intuitive creation. They are not necessary since these details can be handled later. In my own work, once the bricolage is complete and I’m satisfied, only then will I take a linear approach, going through and addressing the finer details such as consistent formatting and meeting any specifications required by teachers or the publication in which the writing might appear. I have found that as I become more adept with using bricolage, I can address some of these issues as I go without it detracting from the intuitive, improvisational process. But in the beginning, I found that it was best to save these details for last, which I found also required quite a significant amount of time. Be sure you leave ample time for the final editing and formatting stage. You may want to get assistance at that point, if the finer details are not your “forte.” But be sure you keep the essence of your own writing; don’t let editors revise the creativity out of your work.

What Are the “Nuts & Bolts” of Bricolage?

In the last chapter, I provided an actual example of how I approach bricolage research and writing in an improvisational manner and how I weave in new ideas or information. There are many, many more dimensions of bricolage and processes I could apply. In fact, on the home page of the www.ioekincheloe.us website, I have summarized the dimensions of bricolage and how researchers might approach them and with various links on the site, I've expanded on the explanations and provided recommendations for which of his books will assist you with greater understanding; in my [dissertation](#) I have provided additional guidance as well as an example applying his theory. You may want to review all of these at a later time. However, for now, it is helpful to understand that:

Kincheloe's bricolage refers to the use of different processes as dimensions of research. The bricoleur uses them all as many times as practical to get a thick description of the phenomenon/a. As the research unfolds, “enactment” keeps the research jettisoning forward and the researcher must make decisions where to begin and stop various aspects of the research, including the final bricolage. Thus, the following dimensions are used, as provided by Kincheloe (2005a) and in no particular order using an iterative, improvisational process weaving through the discourse: (1) methodological bricolage; (2) theoretical bricolage; (3) interpretive bricolage; (4) political bricolage; (5) narrative bricolage; (6) philosophical research (constructivism, historicity, epistemological insight); (7) critical hermeneutics; (8) identification of what is absent; (9) fourth dimension of research in which the bricoleur is future oriented, discovering “a kinetic epistemology of the possible. In the process, the sophistication of knowledge work moves to a new cognitive level; the notion of rigor transmigrates to a new dimension. As in a 1950s sci-fi movie, bricoleurs enter the 4-D—the fourth dimension of research.” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 346). Thus, bricoleurs weave in and out, around and through, back and forth through the various dimensions with each pass through informing the next, often using multiple dimensions of analysis simultaneously.

A brief description of the nine dimensions:

(1) methodological bricolage is the process of using various methods while gathering the data and analyzing it. These methods might include traditional research methods encountered in qualitative research and may even use some quantitative approaches where it's deemed numbers contribute to the understanding we are seeking. Likewise, creative bricoleur-researchers adapt and even invent new methods when doing so gives more understanding to

the phenomenon or topic they're studying. I provided an example of that earlier in the blog that demonstrated a unique numerical analysis of the data to draw out significance. The move is away from linear, recipe-like approaches as these tend to hide understanding or reduce understanding and thus, fail to represent the complexity of the topic being researched. Kincheloe specifically mentions particular processes which is a great place to begin. His definition for the methodological bricolage suggests that the researcher "employs numerous data-gathering strategies from interviewing techniques of ethnography, historical research methods, discursive and rhetorical analysis of language, semiotic analysis of signs, phenomenological analysis of consciousness and intersubjectivity, psychoanalytical methods, Pinarian currere, to textual analysis of documents" (Kincheloe, 2005). These will be discussed in greater detail in the next book of this series or if you want to know more, refer to Kincheloe's works such as the book *Teachers as Researchers* and his articles about bricolage. For now, you can find a summary of these processes on our website:

[Interpretive and Methodological Processes for the Multidimensional Critical Complex Bricolage](#)

He does not recommend studying more traditional methods per se in great depth because they may take researchers on the wrong track (Kincheloe, 2001). Too often they are presented in ways that lead to over-simplifying or collapsing data instead of expanding it. While it doesn't hurt to get a background in methods, more attention should be paid to the suggestions just listed and to the other dimensions listed below than traditional qualitative methods as this will help you achieve greater understanding as well as aid you with finding your own unique approaches to this form of research quicker. And don't worry about a deep understanding of these at this time; I think you will find that you will gravitate toward doing these forms of bricolage quite naturally. Don't worry about educational jargon, either. We can move away from it.

(2) Kincheloe defines theoretical bricolage as using "a wide knowledge of social-theoretical positions . . . to situate and determine the purposes, meanings, and uses of the research act." While he mentions a number of different formal ideological positions, for this stage in bricolage, you might view this simply as being able to argue from different positions on the topic you've selected or view it from different perspectives. This keeps the process more open and will help you establish why you are researching what you're researching and determine the most viable positions.

(3) Interpretive bricolage, Kincheloe contends,

deploys a range of interpretive strategies that emerge from a detailed awareness of the field of hermeneutics [interpretation] and the ability to use the hermeneutic circle. In this context, bricoleurs work to discern their location in the web of reality in

relation to intersecting axes of personal history, autobiography, race, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, geographical place, and numerous other dynamics. This process is combined with different perspectives offered by people located in diverse locations in the web in order to widen the hermeneutical circle and to appreciate the diversity of perspectives on a particular topic. These perspectives or interpretations are viewed in relation to one another and in relation to larger social, cultural, political, economic, psychological, and educational structures as well as the social-theoretical positions previously referenced. In this way the complexity and multidimensionality of the interpretive process is comprehended by the bricoleur” (Kincheloe, 2005).

The hermeneutic circle involves interpreting and reinterpreting in various contexts. It’s probably best to use examples for this, which I’ll do in the next installment of this series. For now a great video for background information is a lecture I was guided to on YouTube and in the meantime you can practice various ways of interpretation using an intuitive process:

[Ways In and Out of the Hermeneutic Circle](#)

(4) Political bricolage involves the analysis of power behind the knowledge, again seeking the multiple dimensions of this power and the various interconnections. As we move forward with increasing technology, the connections become more pervasive and also more hidden. He states that “political bricolage understands that all research processes hold political implications, are manifestations of power. No science, no mode of knowledge production is free from the inscriptions of power. In this context bricoleurs study the information they collect and the knowledge they produce to discern the ways tacit forms of power have shaped them. In light of such awareness bricoleurs attempt to document the effects of ideological power, hegemonic power, discursive power, disciplinary power, regulatory power, and coercive power” (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 126).

(5) narrative bricolage; this involves “story telling” or the concept of “show” versus “tell” but it extends beyond standard ethnographic or self-ethnographic narratives. Kincheloe encourages bricoleurs to explore and experiment with a multitude of genres, including using humor, absurdism, whatever the imagination conjures up in order make an impact on the reader to view issues in a new light. The following quote from him summarizes his philosophy and how he emphasizes creativity over stuck-in-the-mud educational scholarly approaches (although, there are times when more formal approaches are also needed—just not to the extent or degree as is being required of students and researchers). Kincheloe (1997) recommends, in spite of objections, that bricoleurs explore using romance, tragedy, satire, comedy, and “absurdism” (pp. 65-66); I have used them all and more. As he states, “Narrative bricolage appreciates the notion that all research knowledge is shaped by the types of stories

inquirers tell about their topics. Such story types are not necessarily innocently constructed but reflect particular narratological traditions: comedy, tragedy, and irony. The bricoleur's knowledge of the frequently unconscious narrative formula at work in the representation of research allows a greater degree of insight into the forces that shape the nature of knowledge production. Thus, more complex and sophisticated research emerges from the bricolage" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 126).

(6) philosophical research (constructivism, historicity, epistemological insight); I've already touched on philosophical research and its importance. As far as constructivism, historicity and epistemology, Kincheloe has his unique take, as he does with all of his concepts. Typically, he always adds the terms "critical complex" to his redefining of complex concepts, and at this point, "multidimensionality" must also be assumed. Constructivism for Kincheloe extends beyond a pedagogical procedure to use as a tool to teach pre-determined knowledge, as emphasized, and is a new, evolving, unified world view. I recommend reading his book *Critical Constructivism* to get a better grasp of what this entails. In the book, he also covers the importance of historicity, his version of critical complex epistemology, critical hermeneutics, and how to seek "what's missing," items (7) and (8), below. Here are a few definitions to become familiar with (some of these will be review and they will all be reviewed in various contexts as they are demonstrated):

Constructivist. An epistemological position that maintains that the knower personally participates in all acts of knowing and understanding. Knowledge does not exist "out there" in isolation from the knower. (Kincheloe, 2008c, p. 171)

"Critical" and "Complex" as in Critical Complex Pedagogy/Epistemology/Bricolage. Note: When Kincheloe attaches the designator, "critical" in front of terms, this represents the incorporation of his own unique and more rigorous version of evolving critical theory, which he describes in his work. It is, of course, associated with the identification of dominant power and finding solutions to alleviate oppression and suffering. The word "complex" denotes the engagement with complexity theory. (Kincheloe, 2008c, p. 247).

Note, also, that the word "critical" can be interpreted as "divine love," in some contexts, for, indeed, Kincheloe's version of critical contains his "golden strand of love" or "eros love" as he has specified in his last book, (Kincheloe, 2008c).

Critical complex pedagogy. Attuned to the importance of complexity in constructing a rigorous and transformative education. Because of the importance of complexity, I often refer to my version of critical pedagogy as a critical complex pedagogy. (Kincheloe, 2008b, p. 8, 119)

Critical psychology of complexity/Critical complex cognition. Aware of many different perspectives, the vantage points of diverse disciplines of knowledge (e.g., history, philosophy, sociology) and transdisciplinary ways of seeing such as cultural studies (Kincheloe, 2008b, p. 173). Views learning as an untidy process of constructing new *relationships* in the interaction of cultural understandings, the influences of the information environment, familiar stories, idiosyncratic ways of making meaning, and schooling. (Kincheloe, 2008b, p. 161)[Author's italics]

Epistemology. Constitutes the branch of philosophy that analyzes the nature of knowledge and what we believe to be true. Epistemology asks how do we analyze knowledge? How do we know it's true? How do we produce knowledge and what is the status of that knowledge in the world? In other words, how do various individuals react to the knowledge we produce? An educational epistemological question that emerges in this context involves what do we consider valid and important knowledge and which parts of it should become part of the curriculum? How do we figure out what to teach [or learn] and is the knowledge we choose of any worth? (Kincheloe, 2008c, pp. 15–16)

(7) critical hermeneutics; [For Kincheloe] *Critical complex hermeneutics is a form of hermeneutics (interpretation) that has engaged with critical and complexity theories. It is interested in the ways power operates to shape consciousness, behavior and maintain control—or, in a more productive vein, end human suffering and upgrade human life. It moves beyond what's visible to expose hidden structures and intentions.* (Kincheloe, 2008c, p. 247)

(8) Identification of what is absent involves asking questions about what is missing in any given perspective or account of the topic at hand and researching to determine why it's missing. For example, perhaps the perspective is presented from a Christian perspective, thus, the idea of evolution may be omitted. It's important to consider the perspective of the author and to also make comparisons between different perspectives because what one author or interviewee leaves out may be included by another. Thus, we want to ask questions such as: Who wrote this? What is their positioning? Why are they presenting the perspective this way? Who benefits from this perspective? Who loses? Who funded the research? Why? What has been left out and why? With practice we can develop the skill of guessing the likely positioning of authors, based on their hidden assumptions, even if they have carefully omitted their positioning.

(9) Fourth dimension of research is when the bricoleur is future oriented, discovering “a kinetic epistemology of the possible,” as Kincheloe describes it in his 2005 bricolage article. This fourth dimension aspect to the research incorporates an intuitional, creative element that forces the researcher to confront implicate and explicate orders of reality. There are reasons for

this. Combining a sound philosophical, intellectual component of research that also incorporates intuitional and emotional, empathic aspects -- along with deep semiotic and hermeneutic analyses synergistically creates something new from the interactions. Enaction during the research process leads to the emergence of something new and often profound. This is where the power of the bricolage comes into play. It's the exposure to relationships, as Kincheloe explains in his conceptualization of symbiotic hermeneutics, that jettisons bricoleurs to seeing and understanding "anew" and to recreating themselves. Because knowledge is socially constructed new creations, ideas, concepts, as well as new relationships also perpetually emerge -- and are created -- from these interactions. This all takes place naturally when confronting complexity, difference, and chaos, as Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela posited with their Santiago Theory of Enactivism (see Kincheloe's (2008) *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, page 147). It is quite amazing.

This extent of this fourth dimension of research depends upon how intuitive and creative a person is to start. I am still exploring what fourth dimension research encompasses and can only say that it's expansive and expanding. For many people it may only begin with sudden epiphanies or "coincidences." The more you **interact** with these, the more they will occur and at a point they can become quite magical. There is not a viable science today that proves why this is; there are only theories waiting for more exploration. The synchronicities may begin to "jump off the charts" for you the more you notice them. For now, my recommendation is to pay close attention to these and act on them. I'll cover them in greater detail in the next book which is devised for higher level research. If you want a sneak preview, I cover them to some extent in my dissertation using the metaphor of playing with the gods: [The Implicate Order: Cosmic Play with the Gods](#). Interestingly, today's child prodigies seem to be familiar with "fourth dimension research" as a natural process, as indicated in [this video](#) and there's much we can learn from them. It truly appears, by that video and also as theorized in Kincheloe's work, we are all capable of reaching "genius" status in that which we most love to do, if we can discover or rediscover what that is. Too often we've been taken off our paths. The rewards for this rediscovery (or allowing children to follow their natural path as shown in the video) are monumental and given that all knowledge (like everything) is connected, simply following our passionate interests and abilities can lead us to a broad range of knowledge, in particular if we follow Kincheloe's advice and do the interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research and use the processes he recommends. It truly gets very interesting!

Bricolage, as inquiry, has no ending point; it has a fractal-like nature, and we have to decide where to pick up and continue in more depth as well as determine the best place to end for the specific purpose we're writing. Bricoleurs do not contend they've discovered the "one true answer" or single truth, yet at the same time, as Kincheloe contends, they are "less badly off the mark." They have better (more complete) and yet evolving explanations of phenomena.

They use metaphors to provide contextual examples that may apply in other situations, but they choose them carefully, otherwise the metaphors may not be as meaningful and the bricolage could grow out of control or become “unmanageable.”

As an example, for this book I only wanted to present a somewhat bare bones introduction (as much is as practical for a very complex process) because if I were to continue on, it would soon become too complex for someone to whom these ideas are new—bricolage in its full employment will create a synergistic whole, a unified perspective that might be hard to wrap one’s mind around. Sometimes we do need to take things in smaller pieces, keeping in mind that they are building up to the “synergistic whole.” And this is where the mundane bricolage differs from the multidimensional critical complex bricolage—the mundane bricolage creates disjointed, unconnected perspectives; whereas, at the very same time that the multidimensional critical complex bricolage increases in complexity it also increases the unified perspective of the various metaphors one might use, and along with that, understanding is enhanced and unity is better understood. This can be seen in my dissertation, where the bricolage, the topic of my research, finally merged into being love itself. As mystics or gurus, or anyone who has reached higher levels of consciousness will commonly tell us, any inquiry taken far enough will always yield the same answer: Love. But it’s beyond knowing that; it’s experiencing that and being that.

Another characteristic with this more rigorous form of bricolage, the more dimensions of analysis applied, the greater the understanding of the topic at hand and the more likely hidden problems and issues might be discovered, along with creative ideas for potential solutions or creations. Kathleen Berry (2004a) provides a great introduction to the wide range of perspectives, theories, and paradigmatic positioning that might be woven through the text, and really, an introduction at this point is more than enough. Bricoleurs will naturally discover their own processes and they can learn more as they practice. As Berry points out, every bricoleur’s “journey” will be different and unique. Kincheloe has also stressed the importance of not allowing standardized and reductionistic procedures to take precedent over a more fluid, natural approach.

Thus, Kincheloe has identified in his 2005 article, both the “nuts and bolts” of bricolage as well as the nine dimensions of bricolage. His seminal articles about bricolage, written in 2001 and 2005, go into greater detail and are [available free online](#). They are worth reading. Even if you don’t understand it all you will absorb much more than you realize.

Critical Complex Epistemology

Joe Kincheloe has done such a wonderful job of defining, explaining, and extending the concept of epistemology throughout all of his works. In his last book, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, written in 2008, he takes epistemology to the outer reaches of its applicability and demonstrates how it can empower us. If, as Foucault has observed, “Knowledge is power,” then, in my interpretation, “Epistemology is empowerment.” The more we learn about epistemology, the philosophy of knowledge, the more we can understand how to construct knowledge for ourselves rather than deferring to those who may not have our best interests at heart. And during this process we can become more human and more true to our own idiosyncratic nature – thus, human in the true and divine sense of the experience of BE-ing human, not being as others attempt to define us with various ideological, psychological, social, educational, etc. constraints. This allows us such great freedom to be creative. As “Indian in the Machine” has observed:

Often creative people have become the ‘misfits’ of society and the ‘black sheep’ of community and family. Look around... in extreme cases, creative people often have to prostitute themselves by selling their creations to a bored and jaded crowd who have denied their own creativity.... This crowd of uncreatives are often very unspiritual, hardened, heartless or closed-off in some way... and they often have jobs, where they have to follow orders, in order to get their rewards, in order to get ahead in a world that no longer values God, spirituality, sensitivity, or love. ~ [Indian in the machine](http://indianinthemachine.wordpress.com/2013/10/26/you-raise-your-frequency-or-are-highly-creative-and-others-attack-you-or-dont-support-you/)

[<http://indianinthemachine.wordpress.com/2013/10/26/you-raise-your-frequency-or-are-highly-creative-and-others-attack-you-or-dont-support-you/>]

I have transcended that type of scenario of working for someone else, and while I am in deep poverty at the moment, I am happy doing what I love...so do I trade my happiness and freedom for the form of mind-numbing slavery Indian in the Machine describes? It’s definitely not a choice I would willingly make, especially at this point in life. Thus, I have to stay confident that the cosmos will somehow provide for me and that eventually enough people will join me in seeing the value of freedom and doing what we love. As Kincheloe illuminates for us, “Critical complex teacher education encourages desocialization via ideological disembedding. Critical complex professional education coursework and practicum experiences focus on the ways in which the values of power-driven, information-saturated hyperreality of the twenty-first

century shape the consciousness of both students and teachers” (“The Knowledges of Teacher Education,” 2004, p. 60). As you will learn by the end of this book, if you are not already conscious of it, knowledge is in a massive state of disarray. How well has this been hidden from you? Have you been taught the “facts” and the “truth” throughout your education? Are the discontinuities, the half-truths, and the disinformation beginning to be revealed? The multidimensional critical complex bricolage, while as Kincheloe as pointed out is not a panacea, can at least assist us with sorting through the knowledge jungle.

Returning to epistemology, the philosophy of knowledge, Kincheloe defines it for us:

Epistemology constitutes the branch of philosophy that analyzes the nature of knowledge and what we believe to be true. Epistemology asks how do we analyze knowledge? How do we know it’s true? How do we produce knowledge and what is the status of that knowledge in the world? In other words, how do various individuals react to the knowledge we produce? An educational epistemological question that emerges in this context involves what do we consider valid and important knowledge and which parts of it should become part of the curriculum? How do we figure out what to teach [or learn] and is the knowledge we choose of any worth? (Kincheloe, 2008, pp. 15-16).

Kincheloe has delineated his own unique meaning of the term “critical” and his own unique form of critical pedagogy, aspects of his research bricolage. Termed, a “critical complex pedagogy,” and “evolving critical pedagogy,” or a **critical complex epistemology** (the term I’ve adopted), he has synthesized his own unique, more holistic definition of “critical” as well as having incorporated chaos and complexity theories, among innumerable other theories. Contending that we construct our consciousness in relationship to our environment (including social), his theory incorporates the Santiago theory of enactivism. This is all explored thoroughly in his work, and once you see the process “in action” for yourself, it will actually make sense from the applicative dimension.

What can often happen during this process is that you may find that the issue you thought was an issue is merely a **symptom** of some deeper issue(s) and this raises more questions that need to be answered. Thus, it’s important to stay flexible during the research phase because you may want to either change your topic slightly or cover it from a different angle than you had first assumed. Many other questions can appear during this improvisational form of research, so rather than “focus” as so many teachers instruct, you will want to follow up researching in divergent directions. You will often be amazed at what you discover during

this process of following the “deeper level” questions that emerge as you move forward with your research.

If you follow all of the recommendations I’m putting forth in this Quick-Start guide, you’ll also be reading Kincheloe’s explanations and definitions in specific works, and as you apply the research process, it will all come together. But this guide, for now, consists in very basic steps to get started developing some of the skills needed for the research process. In fact, some of these steps were what I went through before I had even come across Kincheloe’s work and which I feel serendipitously had prepared me for understanding and applying his bricolage. (But I often ask myself, was it serendipitous, or was it planned in the “higher realms”? There is evidence we had been working together in the fourth dimension all along).

As can be seen, this is a much more complex process than simply gathering up pieces and putting together a puzzle, which is how so many people mistakenly define bricolage, but at the same time, it is a **natural** “knowledge construction” process that our educational process has deprived us from engaging in. I found that, while the theory behind it seems to be complicated, it is also very sound as born out in my study of the process and final dissertation, and that engaging in the process becomes “second nature” if we just “go with the flow” along with using our critical thinking skills. I will bring in a discussion of aspects of the more complex theory and my personal interpretation of that theory in relation to my experiences where it will clarify the process.

If you have Kincheloe’s books, *Critical Constructivism* and/or *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* (or any of his other books), read the sections about epistemology. The understanding you achieve from them will be of great assistance in your research and writing. If you don’t have his books, I have posted some information on the web site I developed about his work which is available for free: [Critical Complex Epistemology](#). On that page is a link to a free article he’s written, “[The Knowledges of Teacher Education: Developing a Critical Complex Epistemology](#)”. In addition, there’s an article posted on the same page I’ve written that demonstrates using a critical complex epistemology and some of the methods and processes that you might apply to your own research: [Remembering Joe Lyons Kincheloe: A Revered Master \(Paradis, 2011\)](#). The study of this material will provide you with an introduction to critical complex epistemology, an important partner to the research bricolage.

D.I.Y. “Deprogramming”

This is the harsh but true reality. We have all been programmed and are even carrying scripts that have been carried for multiple generations. No one wants to talk about this and we certainly will not learn this in most of our educational PROGRAMS. Why is that? As you probably do know or have heard, education is often comprised of indoctrination. It is designed to make us obedient, unquestioning citizens who blindly follow the rules. Did you ever take a class that taught you how to change the law, for example? If you have, then maybe you’re lucky or privileged. How about how to fill out taxes, how to file court proceedings, or start your own business? They didn’t teach those in any of my courses. But what most of us learn is to follow orders and rules, along with the belief that we should work an eight hour day to make someone else rich. We are even taught what constitutes “political correctness.” THEY define it, but does that make it truth? Think about this: **Why** are we all taught that we must go to school all day in confined classrooms for 12 years or more and then that we must spend eight hours or more per day working for someone else while we barely earn enough to pay for housing, food, and a car and gas to get to work? Can you imagine other possibilities? Why do they teach us the “facts” they teach us? Why do they leave out things? What are the assumptions behind what they do teach? This process of the multidimensional critical complex bricolage helps us to begin to break down the barriers to our creative thought so that we can not only begin to imagine something better, but also so that we can begin to do the things we need to in order to create that something better. My perfect day is doing what I love, which is to read, research, learn, and then write about what I learn to share with other people. I have other activities I enjoy as well, so my perfect day allows me the freedom to choose from among all of the various activities I enjoy while at the same time, I feel I am contributing to the greater society. We all need this freedom and in my world we can all have this freedom and live with abundance all around us.

Most people don’t want to face the reality they’re being manipulated by a complex combination of forces, some that they are conscious of, but other forces they are scarcely aware of or may even be oblivious to. It’s not easy to admit, in looking back at our lives that we have been swayed by any number of influences even though, inside, perhaps, we were not convinced that the choices we were making were in our best interests. We did them anyway, like good little robotons. Or we were convinced we made our own choices, only to realize later we had been manipulated. I know for myself, that I have made honest, well-thought-out, and good choices that turned out to result in huge setbacks in my life in a variety of ways—all because I could not see what was happening in those hidden dimensions of reality and I did not

understand the processes for investigating them. I pretty much grew up believing that everyone, including our government and the justice system, had everyone's best interest in mind. I grew up believing the laws were justly instituted and administered. I could not have been more wrong. In other words, I grew up being extremely ignorant and my entire life has been spent uncovering layer after layer of my ignorance as I uncovered layer after layer of programmed consciousness. I wonder if the process ever ends and if we ever get to our "true self." When I began applying the multidimensional critical complex bricolage, I discovered many more layers for which I have no idea how they had become so embedded so deep in my consciousness. Some of these are discussed in my [dissertation](#) and I still question whether I have drilled down to "reality" or if the interpretations made are just more layers of very deeply programmed consciousness. The work is far from over because with the multidimensional critical complex bricolage based on a unifying world view, we realize we most often do not find definitive answers; we discover metaphors and explanations for evolving processes and keep our options open as more information is available and deciphered for value.

Why is it that we often learn too late that our choices have been made on deceptive information and even outright lies, for example? What has influenced us? Who tells us these lies and why? And, more importantly, how can we override these influences? How can we drill down to greater truth? That is the purpose of taking this first step toward critical complex epistemology and the multidimensional critical complex bricolage—we must come to understand how we have been programmed and begin a "do-it-yourself" DIY deprogramming process. This requires depth of thought in ways we've probably rarely engaged in, which is one of the actions that help us develop higher order thinking skills. In spite of the difficulty we might have in facing the reality of how we have been manipulated, the good news is that doing the work to understand it helps us develop greater thinking skills of the kind that will serve us well throughout our lifetimes.

Your assignment for this chapter about D.I.Y. Deprogramming is to read Joe Kincheloe's book, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*. This is by far the best book on the planet for learning about ourselves and the ways we have been molded. The book is a pleasure to read and a true treasure trove of brilliant ideas. Joe has so generously shared himself with us in that book, injected humor, and provided a multimedia, multidisciplinary, multiperspectival analysis of how knowledge is produced and dispensed. Reading it and reflecting on our own personal experiences opens up new doors to possibilities. Read it and think about how you have been "programmed" with various "ideologies" in social settings, your educational experiences, your home life, your religion, politically, etc. Write in a journal about some of your experiences.

While I could use so many different examples of how I've been programmed, I'll use the example of education. I bought into the lie that getting a good education is the magic key to a good job and a great life. I had a bachelor's degree and lots of additional education but it wasn't working for advancement. Every job I worked at, I had to start "at the bottom" at the lowest pay level, no matter what my previous work had been and no matter the level of skills I had acquired. Still being programmed by the belief that education is the answer, I made the decision to get the additional education required to be a teacher. I was influenced by a multitude of factors, some of which included: I had always thought I wanted to be a teacher, even as a very small child; the mass media was "crying wolf" (as I learned too late) claiming there would be a dire shortage of teachers due to the baby boomers retiring soon so I was sure there was a secure future in teaching for as long as I chose to teach; a temporary online Masters **Program** in education was made available at a traditional university, which was convenient for what I was doing at the time (running an online eBay business which was requiring more and more time to even turn a profit due to eBay's greed and wishes to take more money off the backs of those struggling to make ends meet); my need to stay home for the time-being because I was homeschooling my daughter; and the availability of the student loans that made it easy to take advantage of the opportunity.

As can be seen a multitude of complex factors influenced me. But there's more to it than that. It was as if I was nearly pushed, prodded, and herded in that direction—along with many, many others. And so now, after investing years of my life toward this "teaching" profession we have the following reality: the numbers of teachers have been cut—there is no teaching shortage, there's a surplus of teachers, again for multiple reasons; the online program I took, I hate to say this, but it was watered down and had I not done extensive additional research during the process, I wouldn't have learned much. This watering down of education takes the value of education downward in terms of what we can learn as well as in terms of opportunities; my eBay business had to fold because I began losing money on a business that previously had been keeping food on the table and a roof over my head but was now sinking me into deeper poverty. Most of this was due to eBay's actions by which they subjectively delete all of a person's auctions which at that time required hours and hours to post, along with the incessant raising of their fees. I was pushed out of the business. Today: I refuse to participate with eBay in any way, shape, or form and canceled my account with them. Like so many corporate moguls, they have become too greedy for their own good and to do business with them, in my view, is to be complicit in their unethical business practices. You are not a real person with them and if there are issues from buyers, it's totally ignored (in spite of their joke of an automated system which accomplished little). And to think they started out as a "mom and pop" store trading in Beanie Babies . . . I will note here that all of the corporate monopolies engage in what I consider to be unethical business practices and so as much as possible I avoid them—unfortunately, we are forced, if we want to live in this society at all, to support some of

them (e.g., I pay for Internet service, electrical service, occasionally drive a car, etc.). As far as my “career,” the online universities went corporate and cheap, forcing the wages and demand for experienced online teachers down. And then, finally, we have the student loan scam—it has become yet another way for the corporate sector, the banks and finance companies, to get rich off the backs of people who simply want a better life for themselves and their families and, thus, invest in that dream education. Here, we have another bubble—even bigger than the housing bubble—that is just about to explode and it’s likely to be messier than the housing bubble. Thus, that is MyStory; I bought into the idea that if I could just get a good education, then I would be guaranteed a good job. The government (our “representatives”) fully support this lie and steal our money for that purpose. As I learned, I could not have been more wrong. My time would have been better spent pursuing my dreams. Thus, I am calling loudly, as are many other people, for [New Alternatives to Education](#). We need them and we need them now. And this is exactly what the bricolage is all about, from my perspective. It helps us discover why we need new alternatives and it provides us the processes for developing them.

As a side note here, Norman Denzin (1997) has described “MyStory” as being about placing ourselves in the context of our topic. The example I just wrote, about my experience with education is one such story. These stories, in eduspeak are referred to as reflective auto-ethnographies and they make excellent point of entry texts (POETs) for beginning your bricolage study. And critical to the personal reflective ethnography are performance texts; as you write these, you might consider who your various audiences are—who you are performing for and what type of performance will make a great impact. It is predicted that this form of writing will continue to increase and, indeed, many people write these as blogs and even perform them as vlogs on the Internet (a process I have also engaged in as a part of my research). As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) articulate, “Finally, we anticipate a continued performance turn in qualitative inquiry, with writers performing their texts for others” (p. xiii). This is happening on an increasing basis.

When this trend takes greater hold, perhaps an aspect of Kincheloe’s “[perpetual revolution](#),” in concert with his multidimensional critical complex bricolage we will advance our understanding of what it means to be human. We will be able to relate to each other in genuine and loving ways, and some highly creative and entertaining ways as well. Performance text is a powerful method to combine with bricolage, so it’s something to keep in mind, even if it might not be appropriate for the specific research and paper you are writing for your current courses.

During my preliminary forays exploring bricolage I often wrote in the style that would be considered “performance text,” posting my writings on the Internet as blogs, exploring various types and styles of texts, perspectives, ontological positions, rhetoric, and philosophies, ranging from formal academic prose to imaginary and creative writing. Kincheloe (1997) recommends,

in spite of objections, that bricoleurs explore using romance, tragedy, satire, comedy, and “absurdism” (pp. 65-66); I used them all and more. Because by this time, I was free from formal academic constraints, I was able to examine a wide variety of topics deeply, becoming intimate with them from various perspectives during the early part of my research into this form of bricolage. It’s a great learning process, especially when guided from the fourth dimension, as I have been. My blogs are always written improvisationally (with no planning) and seem to almost be “channeled” in a sense from a different dimension. In my early blogs I had an uncanny knowledge, for example, of Kincheloe’s work before I had even read all that much of his work. Here’s just one example, from literally thousands of blogs I’ve written on almost every topic imaginable (this is one of my earliest blogs written a few months after he had passed over):

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Please Bear With Me

Joe was an exceptionally complex man. He was all pure goodness and love, and very, very complex, which was exemplified in his writing, notably in his last book, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*. I would wager there are many people who do not understand some of his writing, if not much of his writing. I am one of those people and I am seriously working on the understanding of his work. It does take an immense amount of effort and study and it appears to me that Joe was so advanced in his conceptualizations that it is now time for the world to catch up to him and his ideas. What was he really saying? How are we to hermeneutically interpret the multiple possible meanings of the complex messages from this man who everyone readily asserts was a genius? And how might we apply his ingenious ideas in education?



I strongly urge people to read what, perhaps is one of his most prescient works, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, along with the equally complex work he and Kathleen Berry wrote on the advance conceptualization of the bricolage and his work with Thomas, which is a powerful explanation and application of cognitive theory, *Postformalism* (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Thomas & Kincheloe, 2000). Also, note that he had written an additional article on the bricolage taking it even further in conceptualization (Kincheloe, 2005). These are just a few of his works, and I have provided links to some lists of more of his works, including some he coauthored with others on the *About Joe Kincheloe* page of this website.

In order to really know Joe and how much he has contributed to education and to fully grasp the potential - *the gifts* - he has left us for improving our world if we apply his work, we must take time to read, interpret, and understand it – from multiple perspectives. And then we need to read, interpret and understand his works again. And again. Only then can we truly know who Joe was. He was much, much more than a “critical theorist,” or any of the other “monological” labels that one might be able to attribute to him, which just exemplifies why we should never attach labels to anyone. All of us are so much more than what a few labels we might attach to ourselves or to others can possibly represent.

We do owe Joe the time and effort to develop a deeper understanding of the complexity he spent so many thousands of hours trying to put across to us. We need a deep understanding of that complexity if we are going to function rationally in the increasingly irrational world of this Twenty-First Century. It does take time and effort, but it is precipitously essential, and even this, Joe has made abundantly clear in his work. If we choose to remain simplistic in our thinking -- monological and positivistic -- we are doomed as a world society, a universal society, or as Joe has put it, a “pluriversal” one (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 209).

Joe’s work spells this out. He patiently spent his thousands of hours explaining and re-explaining this as it was one of his most critical messages to us....and yet we do not heed his advice. Why?

Joe was an activist, and again this can not be explained in a simplistic or easily definable way. However, if we do not take our understanding of Joe’s work to the level of actively making changes in the world around us – while acknowledging and proactively addressing the complexity of this world -- then we do

not understand the person Joe was, what he was working toward, or what we need to be doing. He clearly states this in his work, and he clearly stated this in personal conversations I have had with him, and he clearly demonstrated this in his own actions that appeared almost superhuman in terms of how much he was able to accomplish during his too short lifetime. He wrote, "Complex critical thinking is always concerned with what could be and what is immanent in various ways of thinking, It should move beyond the contemplative realm and lead to concrete social reform....Immanence in complex critical thinking involves the use of human wisdom to bring about a better and more just world, less suffering, and more individual fulfillment instead of helping students and teachers adapt to the world as it is" (Kincheloe, p. 31). And how should it move beyond this contemplative realm? How do humans achieve the wisdom necessary to accomplish these tasks? Again, Joe has some exceptionally brilliant answers in his work.

As I am attempting to convey, Joe knew complexity. His work is not meant to be interpreted only one idiosyncratic way. Nor is it meant not to be. We must start somewhere. We can each start in our own way. Joe would have loved that, but he knows that any demonstration of his work will take time and will be complex and this is why I ask my readers to *Please Bear With Me*. Any demonstration of Joe's work, ideas, concepts, philosophy, theory, creativity, will necessarily be extremely complex and multifaceted, even if, in my case, it is highly idiosyncratic and merely my own interpretation. We do have to begin somewhere and not allow his work to be stuffed in the "dustbins" of history (I think I read that word in Joe's work somewhere) or limited by simplistic descriptions of Joe's personality that obscure the great and complex man he was and how his work can serve to create some of the enormous changes in education – and ultimately in the world – that are so desperately needed today.

Anyway, this is what I am attempting to show here. That Joe's ideas were exceptionally complex but the contribution they have for improving the world by addressing and working with the increasing complexity and rapidly changing conditions are mind boggling. In that spirit, then, my work in these blogs will be multifaceted. Therefore I will write blogs that are serious, humorous, interpretative, instructive, creative, multidimensional, etc. They may be creative representations of ideas, they may be narratives, they may be fantasies, they may be instructional materials, or anything else that my creative imagination comes up with. It can be no other way. I concur wholeheartedly with Joe's contention that "We are lost if we are not imaginative, exploring entities" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 250). With time, you will see that I do pull in many other contributors and their creative and imaginative contributions because we are all a part of Joe and he is a part of us all. So I ask that you bear with me, be patient and watch the evolution of something new. It will emerge and I cannot predict exactly how or when it will emerge, but Joe's theory predicts this. I will discuss at another time how Joe's theory that synthesizes complexity, enactive, and chaos theories within the bricolage supports my strategy or methodology for presenting my interpretation of Joe's work. It is completely improvisational, but great and beautiful things can be created by using this methodology. I know that in my heart. I would not be – as Joe had done – spending thousands upon thousands of hours on this if I did not truly believe that something great and beautiful can evolve.

In conclusion, I just want to reiterate that educators and teachers who are serious about making a difference in education do need to put forth the time and effort to gain a deep understanding of Joe's work so that it can be applied appropriately and the great rewards from doing so can be reaped. It is not that I believe any one interpretation is going to be the right one. It is not that we leave out the great and brilliant ideas of other contributors to our understandings of education. Joe was far too ingenious to force those requirements upon us, and in fact would be repulsed if we did so. And so I ask that you please bear with me. Be patient. This is going to be a good thing. And I do know without a doubt that Joe would only wish for interpretations that lead to "good things" -- love, peace, goodness, social justice, "jouissance," sensuality, charity, compassion, freedom – including freedom of expression -- and total generosity that takes us out from under the grips of capitalism. Good Things! All of the most "delicious" things in life.

Have a wonderful weekend and be happy!

Vanessa

[Bobby McFerrin – Don't Worry Be Happy](#)

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Photo courtesy of Microsoft.

10:28 am | [link](#)

“MyStories”

Thus narration, and in particular, self-ethnographical or auto-ethnographical and auto-phenomenological self reflection in relation to one’s perceived social positioning disseminated as performance text are important partners to the multidimensional critical complex bricolage. While they do not constitute Kincheloe’s concept for rigorous research because they do not typically incorporate rigorous analyses, they do constitute background research and preparation work that contribute to the final bricolage, and they contribute to the gradual transformation that takes place which is inextricable from the bricolage.

In addition, as you also engage in philosophical inquiry, which is a required component of this form of bricolage, the excursions will become increasingly insightful. And the fun part is that there are no academic rules for these explorations; we can take formal and informal approaches or any of a number of approaches as Kincheloe has recommended. And we are all multidimensional beings—everyone has multiple voices, whether you speak as a student, a parent, a worker, or any other role you wish to take on as you engage in your MyStory (Denzin, 1997; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997; Ellis, 1997). I have even argued from positions I don’t agree with as it is a powerful technique for understanding different perspectives. However, many people do not seem to understand that they are merely perspectives, not a fixed reality. And some people have objected over my descriptions of my phenomenological experiences in “other worlds,” highlighting continued Western domination and the enforcing of a “one true reality.” Our other realities are to be hidden and swept under the rug or we risk being permanently, publicly labeled as “unbalanced.” We do have some work to do in [FIDUROD](#) Land, and this is the very work the multidimensional critical complex bricolage can help us achieve. Using multiple perspectives even at surface levels gives everyone something to relate to with the bricolage as well as it exposes them to difference, which is critical for developing new ways of thinking and higher levels of cognition.

Thus, performance texts begin with “mystories,” as Denzin (1997) explains, which involve the story-teller’s entire “being,” their timeless biography of the past, present, and future. And with my own work, I have extended the concept of “mystories” to encompass multidimensional experiences that the Western worldview denies exist. Transcending traditional texts and a one true FIDURODian reality to seek answers to epiphanies, existential experiences, and other phenomenological experiences, the performance text travels outside traditional boundaries to explore and perform multiple self-reflexive ways of “being” in the world. This leads quite naturally to the exploration of a variety of ontological perspectives, freeing writer-performers from social, political, and epistemological shackles.

Ontology, in simple terms, simply means “to be” in the world: how do we, other people, objects, etc. exist in the world and how do we explain their existence. Denzin illuminates: “The reflexive performance text must contest the pull of traditional ‘realist,’ theater, ‘method,’ acting (and ethnography)” (p. 181). This literally can involve breaking all of the rules and the effect can be beneficial in many ways. The freedom for “being” and letting go and allowing others to “be” would contribute to a more loving and creative world. While this work by Denzin was written in 1997, progress has been stalled by the recent Bush and Obama’s administrations’ backlash focus on educational standards and push for positivistic research that “measures” learning and teacher effectiveness. As a result, graduate level educational research being produced at some universities is often dry, third person, terse, out-of-context, and overly condensed. It does not produce much in the way of new knowledge but rather tends to result in redundancy and rehashing with little that can be applied to improve education. University research is also increasingly being funded for corporate, political, military, and technocratic purposes and, of course, that funding currently goes primarily to quantitative research. People do what’s funded. Thus, teachers will become obsolete, replaced by computers that can see, hear, and measure everything about its students. Is this really what we wish to create?

Performance text, the telling of our stories is a bit risky because we are telling a different truth from [FIDUROD](#)ian reality, and this is still relatively new territory today. For example, it’s perfectly fine to talk about the problems and how we suffer as long as we do not present real solutions. In fact, the media flaunt our dilemmas in front of our faces; we are told on a daily basis how our economic and social woes are constructed. But get too deep and start talking about the unrevealed dimensions of those problems, real actions for change, and start implementing them as the multidimensional critical complex bricolage has us doing, we are treading in the realm of “dangerous knowledge.” There can be a price to pay for that. There are too many people holding up the matrix who feel threatened when someone comes along and rattles their cage. Thus, not enough educational researchers are diving into the waters of performance text. Denzin (1997) provides guidance to help researchers move forward. He suggests developing a “performance aesthetic” and an “evocative epistemology” that move beyond “the already-seen and already heard” (p. 181). He explains, “This aesthetic will venture into those taboo spaces where the unrepresentable in the culture is felt and made visible, seeking a performance sublime” (p. 181). I do believe I hear celestial music.

Thus, as can be seen, I am advocating that more of us push for the “performance aesthetic” and “evocative epistemology.” We all need to be pushing against the constraints of the machine in order to begin the work toward reversing the current trend of digitizing and robotizing our education and our entire lives. Technology is a good and useful thing, but when it moves seriously toward constructing a human biological cyborg or a “transhuman” we have lost

humanity altogether. Perhaps it's too late. How can we know? Can you regain the freedom in order to use a DIY approach for constructing your own consciousness?

So let's see how MyStory "panned out." After I finished my Masters degree and was in the process of working on a PhD, I began searching for teaching positions. What did I land? I applied for a position working with special education students, but I was overridden by a male teacher who had less education than I did. Instead of a teaching position, I was handed a teacher's aide position. I didn't do sports. He did. Ah, yes, priorities. I was in poverty with two children, so I accepted a position that kept us entrenched in poverty, with a salary of only \$8.00 and some odd cents per hour. What I needed was more education. (NOT). But I forged forward, working on a doctorate. This allowed me to pick up some instructional design work (again, for little pay for the amount of work and time involved) and online teaching, which started out decent, but definitely not what I should have been earning at that point in my life and education. Soon the corporate sector took that over—literally buying out the college I was working for and completely restructuring. They hired less qualified teachers for less pay because the K12 teachers more readily would do what they're told (which was to NOT teach). As far as instructional design, the online colleges and high schools were turning more and more toward canned programs with online, watered down textbooks or, in the case of major universities, the professors were producing their own online versions of courses whether they knew how to design and teach online or not. That's another long story.

Online education today, overall, has become watered down, scripted teaching. The contracts often stipulate that "teachers" may not deviate from the script (literally). Thus, online teachers, in many cases, simply become graders of papers and moderators of the boring forums (in which true debate and dialogue are discouraged—"talking about the Iraq war is not appropriate" as I was told in an online ethics class). Tests, are generally already scored automatically, so online teachers' roles are, well what? They answer student questions; they make sure the numbers are right; they track attendance. There are many online courses in which there are no real teachers at all.

All of these actions greatly lowers the cost of running online **programs** (and decreases their quality) while they increase profits for the mega-corporations that are taking over the online sector of education. Here it is eight years after achieving a Masters degree and now I have even completed a doctoral degree (minus the deficient university's cheap piece of paper which I no longer even want) and I now have been unemployed for four years. Why? Someone at the top wants us all to be stupid and working as slaves while they devise ways to take all of our money and drive us into perpetual poverty for generations to come. It gets worse. I just heard today that in the United Kingdom it's illegal to be homeless so now they're taking people off the streets and putting them in prison—all so the "for-profit" prisons can turn some bucks—

and all at our expense, costs that extend far beyond monetary. Hopefully, my change in perspective by which I no longer even wish to be employed (but would rather be a sovereign business owner) will eventually turn successful. I'm writing a book about that, too!

During my extensive research into bricolage, I discovered that Kincheloe's bricolage process could take education, including online education, to a higher level than has ever been accomplished, but I also learned that the universities are NOT interested in this! There are many factors behind this, including the need to maintain on campus attendance, expensive sports programs, and many other things influencing their actions for keeping online education mediocre or as what's termed "blended learning." Blended learning uses classroom instruction, supported by online activities. Of course even though universities are not interested in high quality online education at this moment in time, we are here to change that. Someday there will be a sincere demand for it. In the meantime, it's important to fully realize that if you really want knowledge and if you want to change things, you're pretty much on your own until more people begin to pick up the ball. But you won't be sorry if you spend time developing these skills and gaining the wisdom they help you develop: I promise you, you are going to need them and you'll be many steps ahead of the crowd who will eventually learn how cool and necessary it is to be a "[geek](#)."

To continue "MyStory," back when I was working with Joe Kincheloe in 2008, he had asked me to write a book and I was going to apply his theory to online education. Of course the proposal I had written for the research to design an instructional design model using the multidimensional critical complex bricolage was promptly trashed by the online university I was attending (Paradis, 2008). From that point on, I swear I was put on their "blacklist," but they kept taking exorbitant tuition and stringing me along with their black magic and fake golden carrots (students beware!). There is much more to this debacle which I'll save for another time, but the university took nearly two-hundred-thousand dollars in tuition while I was focused on the carrot they obviously had never intended on giving me, for whatever dark reasons that were lurking in the background (a mystery I am still working on). I think it relates to "dangerous knowledge" that Kincheloe often mentioned but didn't specify.

The point of this discussion is not to present a "sob story" but rather to provide an example of how **little** control we may have over our own destiny, even though we think we're making intelligent decisions in the interest of our futures. Maybe you did better than I did; I certainly hope so! The point of presenting this true story (of which there are many, many more details that could be shared) is to help people understand that **our destiny is planned out far in advance**, not by God, but by those who have power, time, and the money to do so—those who seem to override God and who only have their own best interests at heart and yet are so skilled at making us believe otherwise. It truly has gotten to the point that if you want to have any

semblance of a “good life” you will need to learn the processes Kincheloe has developed for us. It helps us navigate the complex matrix, even if we cannot immediately solve the problems that keep it functioning in unjust ways. It also provides hope and reassurance during the darkest moments of our lives that something will change, eventually, and in the meantime we can enjoy the “blues aesthetics” he has often mentioned in his work and still enjoy our lives in spite of the shitty people and the shit in the world.

As a case in point; it matters not to me that I’m in poverty, I still enjoy a good life, a blissful life, even. I would rather be in poverty attempting to get the word out, doing what I love most than spend nine hours slaving for someone else, come home totally “spent” every day, go to bed and get up and do the same thing again the next day, day-after-day—and still be in poverty! Believe me, I have wasted too much of my life doing that already! That is MyStory, one that I’m in the process of changing.

And finally, let’s have one last look at what Kincheloe (2008c) says that relates to this concept of writing creative, powerful “MyStories.” This quotation from his last book, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*, always intrigued me. I truly hope that he enjoys the freedom to engage in the creation of these types of discourses, now that he has stepped outside the debilitating realm of higher education. In this section, he has discussed the importance of music for pushing us “on down the road” and how “for some reason” he “loved the title of the old soap, ‘Search for Tomorrow’” (p. 20). He continues:

That’s what *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* and its epistemological road trip are all about—acting on the belief that the future will be different, more just, less violent, more respectful of the panoply of inspired knowledges that people from diverse cultures have produced. But to get there we have to find a way to engage the attention of diverse individuals languishing in the trance of Western epistemology. How do we get the attention of teachers and students anesthetized by consumerism and hypereality’s saturation of information and marketing iconography? I want to write for this audience in the style of a detective writer (epistemology noir?), a boy’s adventure writer, and author of girls’ romance novels, a beat poet, *Lame Deer’s* memoirs, or Stephen King penning a horror story all rolled into one. Anything to get them to think about these issues of knowledge and the ways they shape our lives and the everyday existence of people around the world. (page 20).

Our mission is to change higher education so that we can all be as creative as described in this quotation; it’s really what higher education and lifelong learning should be about! I hope you join the effort and find it as much fun as I do. Together, we can change education in ways that will benefit everyone, changing the world and ourselves in the process.

Write YOUR MyStory

Just for practice, write your own story about where you've been, what you've done, what you want to do. Is there anything about your life that you would like to do differently in the future? What is it and how might you go about accomplishing that? Do you foresee that this form of research that allows us greater insight into the various complexities that feed into our decisions, opportunities, and/or lack of opportunities might be helpful toward opening up greater possibilities? What are societal changes that you would like to see?

I look at it this way: If those in power (sometimes referred to as the "imperialists," the "cabal," "the corporate sector," the "neocons," the "Republicans," the "Democrats," etc.) spend CENTURIES planning OUR lack of opportunities and implement programming that steers us toward dead end lives that end in death, then it is worthwhile that WE spend ample time learning how they are doing this, how we are complicit in this (considered "hegemony"), and how we can discover ways to weave through the matrix (much like the movie with the same title) and create better lives and a better world.

A good example of the protracted period of time those in power spend planning their complicated dark missions (you have to feel sorry for them because truly they are in misery if they believe they must expend their energy this way) is represented by the *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. Long claimed to be merely a hoax, the authorship of the protocols still is in question. Some people claim that authorship belongs to the Zionists, who are not considered to be true Jewish people and have set it up to look as if Jewish people are the authors; other people claim that the Jesuits wrote it. The Jesuits are defined as, "members of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic order of priests founded by St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, and others in 1534, to do missionary work. The order was zealous in opposing the Reformation. Despite periodic persecution it has retained an important influence in Catholic thought and education." Again, they would have had the motive to set it up to look as if the Jewish people had devised these protocols. However, there are some who claim that Jesus was an invention of the Jesuits. If that were true, think seriously about how that changes everything and points to the multidimensionality of the scam that's been taking place before our very eyes, including elevating certain peoples, setting races and various groups against each other, dividing even Christian groups, not to mention all of the various religions. . . and that's not even the tip of the iceberg. One of your assignments will be to explore some aspect of the Protocols that interests you and examine it from multiple points of views and interpretations. This activity will begin to reveal some of the complexities and the dimensions of power with which our world and our consciousnesses have been constructed.

For example, whether the Protocols were a PLAN or not, nearly everything that's been put forth within them has come to fruition, thus making the document fall outside the class of "conspiracy" and yet, it's still considered such. If a plan is put forth, is implemented, and the objectives come true, don't you want to know who made the plan and why it's come true? However, if we all believe what we're told, that it's "just a conspiracy" then we are not likely to look into these questions. Wikipedia presents this subjective picture:

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion is an [antisemitic hoax](#) purporting to describe a [Jewish](#) plan for global domination. It was first published in [Russia](#) in 1903, translated into multiple languages, and disseminated internationally in the early part of the 20th century. [Henry Ford](#) funded printing of 500,000 copies that were distributed throughout the US in the 1920s.

[Adolf Hitler](#) and the [Nazis](#) publicized the text as if it were a valid document, although it had already been exposed as fraudulent. After the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, it ordered the text to be studied in [German](#) classrooms. The historian [Norman Cohn](#) suggested that Hitler used the *Protocols* as his primary justification for initiating the [Holocaust](#)—his "warrant for genocide".^[1]

The *Protocols* purports to document the minutes of a late 19th-century meeting of Jewish leaders discussing their goal of global Jewish [hegemony](#) by subverting the morals of [Gentiles](#), and by controlling the press and the world's economies. It is still widely available today and even now sometimes presented as a genuine document, whether on the Internet or in print in numerous languages.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Protocols_of_the_Elders_of_Zion]

One must wonder why someone is going to an extravagant effort to paint a particular picture of how the *Protocols* are a hoax when, if one closely analyzes them, they are and have come to fruition in so many ways. While this would require extensive analysis, which I will not attempt here, I will draw on quotations related to education. Wikipedia points to the source of the *Protocols* as follows, and the thing to notice here is how long these protocols have been "in the works." The elite patiently work over centuries (with our help due to our "ignorance" and compliance) to plan and then to carry out those plans. If these plans were not coming to fruition, we could correctly call this all conspiracy as the Wikipedia has done; however, there are too many things that are true so the plan itself looks less like a conspiracy and more like someone's agenda. Here's what Wikipedia states, and I encourage readers to do additional research using Kincheloe's multidimensional critical complex bricolage in which you get many different views on the subject. This is a moving target:

Maurice Joly (1829—1878) was a [French satirist](#) and [lawyer](#) known for his work titled [The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu](#), later used as a basis for [The Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Joly]

My question is, did these *Protocols*, in fact, originate earlier—at least the PLAN they contain? It is informative to read the *Protocols* and become aware of just how much of the plan has been completed. While we may not be able to trace down the true authors (although, with work and the multidimensional critical complex bricolage that’s possible, too, or at least we may be able to narrow it down) we can clearly see that the plan itself is no longer a conspiracy. It is around us. It affects us in our daily lives. It has been almost fully implemented. Here is a link to one translation of the *Protocols*, which I’ll be citing:

<http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion1.htm>

What do the *Protocols* say about education? The following matches my experiences, which I’ve just described in the detailed MyStory, as well as the experiences of many:

8. In a word, knowing by the experience of many centuries that people live and are guided by ideas, that these ideas are imbibed by people only by the aid of education provided with equal success for all ages of growth, but of course by varying methods, we shall swallow up and confiscate to our own use the last scintilla of independence of thought, which we have for long past been directing towards subjects and ideas useful for us. The system of bridling thought is already at work in the so-called system of teaching by OBJECT LESSONS, the purpose of which is to turn the GOYIM into unthinking submissive brutes waiting for things to be presented before their eyes in order to form an idea of them In France, one of our best agents, Bourgeois, has already made public a new program of teaching by object lessons.

16] [“We Shall Change History” <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion5.htm#protocol> No.

What do we see in education today? It is strictly planned according to “objectives,” standards which are being decided by states, national governments, and now international governance with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO [<https://en.unesco.org/>]. The mission of UNESCO *sounds* great:

Education for the 21st Century

Putting quality education at the heart of development

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO’s mission has been to contribute to the building of peace, poverty eradication, lasting development and intercultural dialogue, with education as one of its principal activities to achieve this aim. The Organization is committed to a holistic and humanistic vision of quality education worldwide, the

realization of everyone's right to education, and the belief that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development.

UNESCO's educational objectives are to support the achievement of Education for All (EFA); to provide global and regional leadership in education; to strengthen education systems worldwide from early childhood to the adult years; to respond to contemporary global challenges through education.

As the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education, UNESCO's work encompasses educational development from pre-school through to higher education, including technical and vocational education and training, non-formal education and literacy.

The Organization focuses on increasing equity and access, improving quality, and ensuring that education develops knowledge and skills in areas such as sustainable development, HIV and AIDS, human rights and gender equality. UNESCO works with governments and a wide range of partners to make education systems more effective through policy change.

It coordinates the Education for All movement, tracks education trends and raises the profile of educational needs on global development agendas. [Source: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-21st-century>]

Yes, it sounds great unless you fully interpret it, using Kincheloe's "critical hermeneutics" but we'll save that for later, since this guide is presenting the basics. Do we really want UNESCO to take over ALL aspects of education, including nonformal education (as highlighted in the yellow)? What rights are we giving up? Is their agenda our agenda for ourselves? How long will they institute controls in the name of education? We can also dig deeper and ask such questions as why would Proctor and Gamble, a corporate mogul, recognize UNESCO and who cares besides them and UNESCO?:

UNESCO wins recognition Award from Procter & Gamble

In the margins of the Clinton Global Initiative in New York, the Director-General received a recognition award on 24 September honouring UNESCO's role in implementing a partnership with Procter & Gamble to improve girls' education and literacy in Africa.

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_wins_recognition_award_from_proctor_gamble/back/9597/#.UknHuxbn_IU]

Do you naively believe this is all charity and unconditional giving on the part of Proctor and Gamble? What's in it for them? And importantly, as well, just what kind of education or indoctrination are these girls getting? Is it a "coincidence" that Proctor and Gamble's main line of products include beauty products and household products? Are we pushing western culture onto the young female African students? This is referred to as "colonialization" (being subjugated) and the results of such actions have been disastrous. But then, it's all about money, right? Is that what matters most—businesses turning a profit? Perhaps in today's world this is the rule. [http://www.pg.com/en_US/brands/]

So, what a deal! There are massive whole new consumer markets in Africa and elsewhere around the globe to educate and derive profits from. Just call me skeptical. I guess Proctor and Gamble cares about this, after all. And what ties UNESCO and Proctor and Gamble, and dozens of other corporate moguls together? And what's Clinton got to do with it?

It's not that I'm against education; there need to be fair opportunities and I do think people are more capable of educating themselves than given credit for, in their own communities by their own community members. But this does not play a role in Proctor and Gamble funded educations. Let's see what kind of education these girls in Africa are getting:

Since the signing of a first agreement in April 2011, the partnership has enabled some 5,000 young girls and women in Senegal to follow literacy classes and vocational skills training in 7 regions of the country. The project also includes training of literacy educators and a **TV literacy program** that is expected to reach around 30,000 girls and young women. The project is now slated for expansion in Nigeria.

[http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_wins_recognition_award_from_proctor_gamble/back/9597/#.UknHuxbn_IU]

Thus, from this entry, we see that these girls are going to be given television programming. Television has been a powerful mind-molding technology, and the media moguls have greatly upped the ante (research that), and so now these girls can watch Proctor and Gamble television ads among the many other advertisements and programming that takes place through television. It's strange that, with the Internet, another tool for the mind controllers, that television has not become obsolete, when you think about it. Of course, their television programming is also on the Internet, but what is it about the media that it seems to want to make sure people plop themselves down every day in front of a "boob tube"? What is there about their new digital technology that compelled them to give every television in the nation a free "box" to convert signals from analog to digital? What's the technology behind this and what new capabilities does this provide the media moguls? Why is it when I drive through my neighborhood nearly all of my neighbors have huge, wide screen televisions and they appear to be literally glued in front of them? I don't have the answers, but the point is, when we engage in multidimensional critical complex bricolage, we will find that we end up with more questions than answers. It's these second, third, fourth, and so on—higher level

questions—that we need to spend time researching and this is what lends to the multidimensionality of the final bricolage we write as well as to a more in depth understanding of the complexity of the issues. Let’s just see what the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) says about this new technology, out of curiosity:

Digital Television (DTV) is an advanced broadcasting technology that has transformed the television viewing experience. DTV enables broadcasters to offer television with better picture and sound quality, and multiple channels of programming. Since June 13, 2009, full-power television stations nationwide have been required to broadcast exclusively in a digital format.

The switch from analog to digital broadcast television is known as the Digital Television Transition. In 1996, Congress authorized the distribution of an additional broadcast channel to every full-power TV station so that each station could launch a digital broadcast channel while simultaneously continuing analog broadcasting. Later, Congress set June 12, 2009 as the deadline for full power television stations to stop broadcasting analog signals.

An important benefit of the switch to all-digital broadcasting is that parts of the valuable broadcast spectrum have been freed up for public safety communications by groups such as police, fire departments and rescue squads. Also, some of the spectrum has been auctioned to companies that will be able to provide consumers with advanced wireless services, such as wireless broadband.
[<http://www.fcc.gov/digital-television>]

Why do they care about the quality of our television viewing experience? Well, according to them it seems that it’s important that there are additional spectrums of communication available for the police, fire departments, and rescue squads. And so then we must ask why this is needed. I couldn’t help but notice that right on the very same page of the FCC website, they give us a clue with the document they have posted. Will the government shut down? Is it a PLAN? Here’s the entire document; you tell me:

Plan for Orderly Shutdown Due to Lapse of Congressional Appropriations

September 27, 2013

Generally, during a shutdown all FCC activities other than those immediately necessary for the protection of life or property will cease. Suspended activities include, among many others: Consumer complaint and inquiry phone lines cannot be answered; consumer protection and local competition enforcement must cease; licensing services, including broadcast, wireless, and wireline, must cease; management of radio spectrum and the creation of new opportunities for competitive technologies and services for the American public must be suspended; and equipment authorizations, including those bringing new electronic devices to American consumers, cannot be provided.

When this shutdown plan is activated, all FCC employees will be instructed to report to work the first business day following a lapse in appropriations if necessary to conduct orderly shutdown of operations. FCC estimates that the time required for each employee to accomplish an orderly shutdown will be not more than four (4) hours with very rare exceptions detailed below. During this time, all but full-time furlough excepted FCC employees will receive a notice of decision to furlough in the form of a letter attached to an e-mail. The notice of decision will inform employees to cease regular work activities. Employees being furloughed also will be provided shutdown instructions advising them to engage only in shutdown activities, which include items such as:

- Securing the work area and locking up materials and files;
 - Cancelling travel plans and scheduled training;
 - Cancelling internal and external meetings and informing attendees;
 - Cancelling FCC sponsored events and notifying participants, and
 - Placing out-of-office messages on email and voicemail.
- With very rare exceptions detailed below, FCC estimates orderly shutdown will be completed in approximately four (4) hours – one half-day for planning purposes.
 - FCC expects that approximately 1754 employees will be on-board before the implementation of the plan.
 - Up to six (6) employees will be retained under the plan because their compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations. These are full-time employees. They include the FCC Chairwoman and two Commissioners, and approximately three Inspector General (IG) no-year/Universal Service Funds Staff – the three (3) IG staff; however, may need to be furloughed due to lack of excepted supervisors.
 - Up to 16 employees, not otherwise exempt, will be retained to protect life and property. These are full-time employees, working shifts to cover 24 hour and 18 hour operations. Up to two (2) employees working per shift at each location. Staff of the FCC Operations Center handle emergency contacts for agency. Staff of the High Frequency Direction Finding (HFDF) Center operate the high frequency antenna system used to protect life and property. One (1) management employee will oversee and coordinate regularly with both operations, and their respective shifts, to help identify and respond to imminent threats to life or property.
 - Up to eight (8) employees will be retained to conduct interference detection, mitigation, and disaster response operations wherever they may be needed. These are full-time employees strategically located across the country who will resolve imminent threats to the safety of life or property.
 - Two (2) employees will be retained for critical oversight issues.*
 - One (1) employee will be retained to conduct treaty negotiations – functions instrumental in the discharge of the President’s constitutional powers. This is a full-time employee.

- One (1) employee on detail to another agency will be retained to perform national security functions instrumental in the discharge of the President’s constitutional power. This is a full-time employee.
- Four (4) employees will be retained for critical Information Technology (IT) issues. One (1) part-time and three (3) full-time.

After the plan has been implemented, the 38 employees listed above, or 2% of those on-board before the plan was implemented, will have been retained. The remaining 1716 employees, or 98% of those on-board before the plan was implemented, will have been furloughed and sent home.

The FCC does not estimate that more than one-half day will be needed to complete a shutdown, however, up to 10 employees in the Wireline Competition Bureau and a few employees from other offices may be needed for up to a day to suspend recently filed tariffs so they do not automatically take effect during the shutdown.

The number of employees to be retained to protect life and property will not exceed 5% of the number of employees on-board at the beginning of a hiatus less those exempt. In addition to the employees listed above, the following contractors will be retained to protect life or property:

- 1) 24/7 IT support to monitor system – 15 full-time contractors, 12 per day working varied shifts
- 2) Headquarters (HQ) Security Guards, eight (8) contractors (8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Mon thru Fri) and five (5) at all other times
- 3) Field Security Guards, two (2) contractors (Gettysburg, PA and Columbia, MD)(5:30 am to 8:00 pm, Mon thru Fri)
- 4) Security Patrol Service for Honolulu (drive by twice daily)

The following employees, otherwise in furlough status, may be called upon to work on an as-needed basis during the furlough due to the nature of their responsibilities:

Protection of Life or Property – working as needed¹

¹ “As needed” means that staff may be called upon to answer questions or provide guidance on matters relating to the protection of life or property or the orderly shutdown of operations, or to perform these excepted activities as the case requires. They will not work a regular schedule. ⁴

- 5) Office of Managing Director (OMD) Senior Management Official* - staff of two (2)
- 6) Office of General Counsel (OGC) Senior Management Official* – staff of three (3)
- 7) Enforcement Bureau (EB) Senior Management Official* – staff of two (2)
- 8) Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) Senior Management Official* – staff of one (1)
- 9) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Senior Management Official* - staff of two (2)
- 10)OIG staff to respond to FBI and DOJ - up to five (5) staff may be called upon
- 11) Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) Senior Management Official* - staff of one (1)
- 12) International Bureau (IB) Senior Management Official* – staff of one (1)
- 13)Media Bureau (MB) Senior Management Official* - staff of one (1)

- 14) Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) Senior Management Official* - staff of one (1)
- 15) Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) Senior Management Official* - staff of one (1)
- 16) Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) Senior Management Official* - staff of one (1)
- 17) EB Field Supervisors* and EB Field Staff to respond to emergencies involving the protection of life or property (e.g., interference with aircraft frequencies)
- 18) COMSEC Personnel, staff of two (2)
- 19) Others employees or contractors as needed for immediate protection of life or property, such as to handle an unanticipated natural disaster, computer security issue, or other emergency

*Authorized to designate other staff to work on as needed basis

Orderly Shutdown Activity

OMD Payroll/Financial Operations, staff of five (5), to process payroll for work performed prior to shutdown - up to one day depending on when in the pay period a furlough occurs and whether payroll records have been transmitted to the National Finance Center.

[Source: <http://transition.fcc.gov/Plan-for-Orderly-Shutdown-September-2013.pdf>]



With the multidimensional critical complex bricolage, one thing leads to another. Today, as I write this, it is September 30, 2013 and a government shutdown is looming for tomorrow. The media is playing the fear card. I will not make a prediction and I wonder if a government shutdown would impact us at all. The government as it currently operates is a conglomerate of corporations and it's clear that the FCC operates to support these corporations. UPDATE: Yes, the government implemented what they "call" a shutdown. Remembering what we said about epistemology, however, and the power of

knowledge, we can see that the government has defined for themselves what "shut down" means, and it has not really shut down. Only certain elements of government have sent their

workers home, but relatively speaking, very few. And now they are talking about a “shut down” for mid-October. Power defines and redefines words as they wish to instill and drag out fear and to control the masses. The goal, it seems, is to keep us off-guard, off balance. However, in this book, we’ve been discussing the *Protocols*. Maybe we should see what they say about a U.S. government shut down. Is it in the plans? And if so, for what purpose would it serve? But first a diversion. . . let’s return to how we are educated. We are not educated to think deeply about these sorts of issues or to really get in there and dig for answers, and most assuredly, we are not advised to look at “bogus” writings of conspiracies, such as the *Protocols*. What are we taught, primarily?

Teachers are readers of scripts. I know this is true; I have worked in the education system and have seen it at both the high school and online college level, and I can assume it also happens at the elementary school level; according to teachers I know, it does—even in music classes now! Education becomes a controlled performance, not a natural experience through which humans can develop and grow. And the problem with the objectives they teach to, is that they are “dumbed down” and require the same education for everyone (albeit presented in different ways, perhaps). It has been so watered down at the college level, Einstein and the Theory of Relativity were not covered at all in the physics curriculum I was forced to abide by as an online “teacher.” I ignored the rules, and sent my students out on their own “web quests” to find more information. However, that was met with great disapproval and so I became unemployed and have been ever since, seemingly “blacklisted.” While people may be skeptical of this thought, understand that the government has the most powerful technology, including their own super Internet for which crunching massive amounts of data is easy and efficient. They have the capability of knowing everything anyone’s done on the Internet. Google, itself (a partner, no doubt) admits it has recorded and kept absolutely every google search that’s ever been done. I am sure I keep them a bit confused with the huge range of research topics I cover...a value of the multidimensional critical bricolage which I’ll be explaining in greater depth. How can they “know” your mind and your interests when you’re so “multidimensional” and chasing complexity? It’s something to think about.

Another unfortunate strategy is that those in power, those who make the decisions for everyone else in the world define important things such as “empowerment” FOR us. There are many, many ways we can define what being empowered means for us, personally, yet here is UNESCO, making it a global strategy to “empower” people through literacy whereby they choose the definition of empowerment (the epistemological framework), and, thus, the literature and the goals, the standards, and the assessments that measure this “empowerment.” Here’s what they state (and note their “cute” acronym—LIFE—you can almost always take a dialectical reading of these things; they are joking, of course):

Literacy Initiative (LIFE)

UNESCO's Literacy **Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)** is a global strategic framework for the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), in order to meet the Education for All (EFA) goals, with particular focus on adult literacy and out-of-school children.

It was created when it became apparent that existing literacy efforts would not be sufficient to achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.

LIFE targets the 35 countries that have a literacy rate of less than 50 percent or a population of more than 10 million people who cannot read nor write. Eighty-five percent of the world's non-literate population resides in these countries, and two-thirds are women and girls.

[<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/un-literacy-decade/literacy-initiative-life/>]

Thus, UNESCO defines empowerment as:

Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE)



© UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) is conceived as a ten-year (2006-2015) strategic framework through which national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies, and bilateral and multilateral agencies collectively accelerate literacy efforts in 35 countries where illiteracy poses a critical challenge. As a key operational mechanism for the implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012), which is led and coordinated by UNESCO, LIFE is an initiative to support countries in achieving a 50 per cent improvement in their adult literacy rates by 2015.

LIFE is:

- A framework of collaborative action for enhancing and improving national literacy efforts.
- A process in support of literacy which is country-led and country-specific.
- A support mechanism embedded in national policies and strategies.
- An initiative for technical support services and facilitation by UNESCO in the areas of policy, advocacy, partnership, capacity-building and innovation.

It's not clear here how they are going to do this; more research is needed, which I'm not going to do for this project. The goal is, however, as the protocols point out, "to turn the GOYIM into unthinking submissive brutes waiting for things to be presented before their eyes in order to form an idea of them." [Goyim is a derogatory term for people who are not Jewish, but can be interpreted as "the masses"]. Thus, we have the increasing practices of "teaching to the test" and students asking teachers to just tell them "what's on the test." In literacy programs, the students are told what to read. It's all measured and based on quantitative assessments, "one right answer," etc. Lost is critical thinking. Lost is imagination and creativity. Lost is the space to grow at a natural pace. And as Kincheloe (2008) and many others are pointing out, what is taught as "critical thinking" in the schools today is just another approach for teaching students what and how to think. Often there are hidden political motives—even Paulo Freire, the so-called leader of critical pedagogy had political reasons for teaching the "peasants" if you delve into the history (see Gibson, 1994). The goal, according to the *Protocols*, is to destroy creativity, individuality, and innovativeness. The goal has been realized in the public education system operating today where recess, art, and music are no longer mandatory in many schools. Students might become geniuses if they were to tap into their entire minds, not just their "left brains." These writers of the *Protocols* do not want geniuses, for here's what they have to say about geniuses:

5. Each state of life must be trained within strict limits corresponding to its destination and work in life. The OCCASIONAL GENIUS HAS ALWAYS MANAGED AND ALWAYS WILL MANAGE TO SLIP THROUGH INTO OTHER STATES OF LIFE, BUT IT IS THE MOST PERFECT FOLLY FOR THE SAKE OF THIS RARE OCCASIONAL GENIUS TO LET THROUGH INTO RANKS FOREIGN TO THEM THE UNTALENTED WHO THUS ROB OF THEIR PLACES THOSE WHO BELONG TO THOSE RANKS BY

BIRTH OR EMPLOYMENT. YOU KNOW YOURSELVES IN WHAT ALL THIS HAS ENDED FOR THE "GOYIM" WHO ALLOWED THIS CRYING ABSURDITY.

["We Shall Change History" <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion5.htm#protocol> No. 16]

The term "state of life" can be interpreted in different ways, but in relation to education, it could mean how each of us is "tracked" via our education in specific directions. Education, by design, keeps the poor impoverished and paves the path to success for the elite. It is not devised to facilitate the cultivation of genius. Acquiring knowledge, when one is of the lower class, is prohibited from the higher ranks and in the rare case that one gets through, then they will ultimately be put back in "their place." Those higher level positions "belong" to the elite due to "birth" or "employment." It's who you know, and most of us are not allowed to know the "right" people.

Here is another quote from the same section:

7. We shall abolish every kind of freedom of instruction. Learners of all ages have the right to assemble together with their parents in the educational establishments as it were in a club: during these assemblies, on holidays, teachers will read what will pass as free lectures on questions of human relations, of the laws of examples, of the philosophy of new theories not yet declared to the world. These theories will be raised by us to the stage of a dogma of faith as a traditional stage towards our faith. On the completion of this exposition of our program of action in the present and the future I will read you the principles of these theories.

What appears to be reality can be so deceptive. We think we have honest instruction, freedom to access knowledge, and yet that can be shown to be far from truth. Today, we have the Internet, but the flow of knowledge is controlled and manipulated. It is rigged so that we are exposed mostly to the very "dogma" mentioned in the quotation. We are exposed to knowledge that alters history to a sanctioned account, a history that does not present accurate or truthful accounts. To make matters worse, people parrot the same misinformation and disinformation over and over again. They take what comes to the top of the pile when using google. We do the work of mass programming the people, so "they" don't have to. The mass media expends fortunes promoting the very "dogma of faith as a traditional stage towards our faith." What are they referring to? This can be interpreted in many contexts that we're bombarded with daily from the media to our education. What are the "laws" and the "philosophy of new theories not yet declared to the world"? With this, I think of the recent

trend in education to promote “spirituality” and faux “critical thinking” in schools—of course, in the way that serves the interest of the corporate sector. But there is also an extremely diabolical twist to this menu of spiritual “traditions” served up to the public. While we are busy trying so hard to “manifest” all of our material needs and “attract” abundance, in the background there are more sinister messages being implanted in our minds. Ancient sciences understand these processes very well, and so do the mind manipulators. We are not getting the full story.

Thus, it might be fruitful to return to the topic of technology and the television—and consider reasons why it remains central to most folks’ lives. This also winds back to UNESCO and their use of television to educate African girls....(yes, bricolage does wind around and take the long road sometimes, but it ultimately gets back “on topic”). According to Rense:

One of the most common examples of mind control in our so-called free and civilized society is the advent and usage of the television set. This isn't to say that all things on TV are geared towards brainwashing you. They're not. But most of the programming on television today is run and programmed by the largest media corporations that have interests in defense contracts, such as Westinghouse (CBS), and General Electric (NBC). This makes perfect sense when you see how slanted and warped the news is today. Examining the conflicts of interest is merely glancing at the issue, although to understand the multiple ways that lies become truth, we need to examine the techniques of brain washing that the networks are employing.
[<http://rense.com/general69/mass.htm>]

That, however was written back in 2005. Have things gotten worse since then? Here are some interesting videos presented from different perspectives. What do you think? (Advice: Do some more research).

[Alpha Mind Control \(Television Programming\)](#)

[Television Mind Control, Black Magic, Sigil Magik - THEY ARE ALTERING YOUR MIND!](#)

In another excerpt in the *Protocols*, the authors admit to the extensiveness of their lies. As in the example I provided earlier, in which there was proclaimed to be a future teacher shortage in order to herd people into that career. They could then be knocked out of employment by a constructed job shortage, a common strategy used to manipulate the job market and the type of low-quality education people pursue, while at the same time capitalizing on these situations as “cash cows.” In the meantime, they retain knowledge and

good-paying positions behind the scenes for themselves. The writers of the *Protocols* explain this:

4. Moreover, the art of directing masses and individuals by means of cleverly manipulated theory and verbiage, by regulations of life in common and all sorts of other quirks, in all which the GOYIM understand nothing, belongs likewise to the specialists of our administrative brain. Reared on analysis, observation, on delicacies of fine calculation, in this species of skill we have no rivals, any more than we have either in the drawing up of plans of political actions and solidarity. In this respect the Jesuits alone might have compared with us, but we have contrived to discredit them in the eyes of the unthinking mob as an overt organization, while we ourselves all the while have kept our secret organization in the shade. However, it is probably all the same to the world who is its sovereign lord, whether the head of Catholicism or our despot of the blood of Zion! But to us, the Chosen People, it is very far from being a matter of indifference.

[“Masses Led by Lies” <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion3.htm#PROTOCOL> No. 9]

The above statement demonstrates the elitism and arrogance of the people in the higher ranks, something I’ve witnessed many times. What’s interesting here is that the claim is that they have “contrived to discredit” the Jesuits. By some interpretation, it is the Jesuits who are responsible for not only writing the original ideas in the protocols, but for carrying out its plan, setting it up to appear that it was written by the Jewish people or the Zionists. Thus, we now have three possibilities: the Jesuits, the Zionists, the Jewish people. But reality is always stranger than it appears. The arrogance of the writers of this document leads them to believing they are the “Chosen People.” Who are these people?

We shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies, reservoirs of colossal riches, upon which even large fortunes of the GOYIM will depend to such an extent that they will go to the bottom together with the credit of the States on the day after the political smash ... (Compulsory superannuation, Social Security).

[Protocol No. 6 <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion3.htm#PROTOCOL> No. 9]

This is exactly what the mega-corporations have accomplished, and during the last 12 years they have done so in mind-boggling ways—wars for profit, and bank, auto, and oil company bailouts, and too many ways to list here. Billions of dollars just disappeared during the Iraq War, alone, not to mention the trillions spent. The corporate sector has no rules. Occasionally a company may be sued, but it's all for show. They get a little slap on the hand and it makes the public think they've been penalized. In reality, it's all illusion and the fines imposed are minuscule compared to what these companies take in profits. It's clear they are out to tank the global economy for totalitarian control of everything and everyone ("the political smash").



Shut-Down Service Station. This actually happened in my own "back yard" so to speak, in my hometown, Corvallis, Oregon. Photographed by Vanessa Paradis on a "Treasure Hunt," August 21, 2010.

Let's look at another excerpt from the Protocols:

WE SHALL DESTROY GOD

3. But even freedom might be harmless and have its place in the State economy without injury to the well-being of the peoples if it rested upon the foundation of faith in God, upon the brotherhood of humanity, unconnected with the conception of equality, which is negated by the very laws of creation, for they have established subordination. With such a faith as this a people might be governed by a wardship of parishes, and would walk contentedly and humbly under the guiding hand of its spiritual pastor submitting

to the dispositions of God upon earth. This is the reason why IT IS INDISPENSABLE FOR US TO UNDERMINE ALL FAITH, TO TEAR OUT OF THE MIND OF THE "GOYIM" THE VERY PRINCIPLE OF GOD-HEAD AND THE SPIRIT, AND TO PUT IN ITS PLACE ARITHMETICAL CALCULATIONS AND MATERIAL NEEDS.

4. In order to give the GOYIM no time to think and take note, their minds must be diverted towards industry and trade. Thus, all the nations will be swallowed up in the pursuit of gain and in the race for it will not take note of their common foe. But again, in order that freedom may once for all disintegrate and ruin the communities of the GOYIM, we must put industry on a speculative basis: the result of this will be that what is withdrawn from the land by industry will slip through the hands and pass into speculation, that is, to our classes.

5. The intensified struggle for superiority and shocks delivered to economic life will create, nay, have already created, disenchanted, cold and heartless communities. Such communities will foster a strong aversion towards the higher political and towards religion. Their only guide is gain that is Gold, which they will erect into a veritable cult, for the sake of those material delights which it can give. Then will the hour strike when, not for the sake of attaining the good, not even to win wealth, but solely out of hatred towards the privileged, the lower classes of the GOYIM will follow our lead against our rivals for power, the intellectuals of the GOYIM.

[<http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion3.htm#PROTOCOL> No. 9]

Here, the implementers of the Protocols, the "Chosen Ones" have turned the masses against those very people in their midst who do have knowledge, those intellectuals who are deemed to be the enemies of the "Learned Elders" whomever those Learned Elders might be—and I will add that there are plenty of "intellectuals" who work for the "machine"—can you tell the difference? Today, being smart is just not "cool." Being smart is risking being labeled a "geek" and shunned by those around us, even attacked. Smart children in school, soon learn to first hide their true intelligence, and then go through school without applying their true potential. Schools are not designed for being smart. Don't fall for their program! Think what would happen if we all rebelled against this!

Returning to the question, do the protocols predict a government shutdown? For all practical purposes, there is no government. It is well-known that the corporations own and operate what they call a "government" and they keep the façade going. A shutdown from the perspective that the corporations already run the country implies that the shutdown is merely a stage act. It changes nothing, but it will provide deceptive reasons for the "solutions" they bring to the table. Are we ready for the police state? It's in place; they've been working on it for decades: recruiting and training security personnel at almost every for-profit online university.

They've also been massively training health personnel such as nurses and nursing aides and medical coders. What is this stage they're setting here? The infrastructure is literally falling apart all across the U.S. with no plans to adequately repair it (look what happened to the levees during hurricane Katrina—there was money to fix them prior to the hurricane, but the money was spent for the Iraq War, according to some reports). There are not enough jobs to meet the basic needs of the people and yet there are many security personnel and nurses. Can you predict the future? It might be a very good thing to learn to do.



It's time for the [Perpetual Revolution](#)! Shut-down service station photographed by Vanessa Paradis on a "Treasure Hunt," August 21, 2010.



Frustration Expressed on Boarded-Up Service Station. Photographed by Vanessa Paradis on August 21, 2010.

We also have in the previous excerpt from the *Protocols* their expressed desire to destroy God. Why would they want to destroy God? What is the effect if the entire global population no longer believes there's an omniscient power? There are many ways this destruction of the belief in God is being accomplished. One that stands out is New Age popular culture ranging from the promotion of Satanic and the dark occult to the violent television programs (often referred to as "predictive programming"), music, and moving to the idea that we are all gods.

Much of what's being promulgated as New Age Spirituality has just enough truth to it so that it appeals to the lower desires of the people and is readily believed by those who have come through the deficient education system. For example, the so-called "Law of Attraction" is being pushed heavily onto people, which is no law at all and does not work the way the proponents claim, even though there are "truths" within what they propose. Yet, countless individuals fall prey to its simplicity through their ignorance of the complex dynamics operating behind the scenes. And therein lays the objective: Keep people focused on shallow, surface interests and basic needs such as survival and material wishes or, alternatively, on "spiritual values" that shun material goals. While, as presented in the previous quotation, in the meantime, these "Chosen Ones" have already established huge monopolies and continue to shut down private businesses and small farms, and strip the peoples of their last pennies.

The desire is to totally undermine our faith and then they offer up the solution: We are all gods, would be just one tactic among many, thus we have no need for an omniscient God; we can do anything God can do. This is also their standard protocol, by the way: problem, reaction, solution. They create a massive problem, the public reacts and ask for protection or aid, and then THEY, the imperial “Chosen Ones” create a solution that serves to take away our power and to basically make life less comfortable for the masses by creating more suffering. Religious organizations have fallen into many of these snares, such as placing a great focus on “fun” and “good times” and various material interests and spectacle events in an effort to draw people into the churches. There are now spectacle mega-churches, Christian rock concerts and the like to draw more people into the church. This is having a backlash effect because people see the manipulation and it’s taking the focus off of God (just as the “Chosen Ones” have planned). Even popular Christian bands (as supported by these “Chosen Ones”?) have become unchristian with many of the songs simply sounding like love songs rather than songs of praise for God.

I have come to the conclusion that these people, members of hidden elite groups, actually believe they are “Chosen Ones.” I have seen some of them become extremely violent if I should present that I am a “chosen one” in various contexts (e.g., as a joke) or should I unknowingly rock their unsacred boats. Lord, they do hate that and if you want to see who some of these people are then present yourself as special. They will raise their heads in scorn and even attack. It’s why my presentation of the Eros and Psyche mythology of the twenty-first century, and the truth about my own personal experiences have been so vehemently opposed: THEY are the “Chosen Ones” or so they want people to believe. Anything or anyone that threatens their position is quashed. But, at the same time, via their propaganda, we are all gods. That’s ok because no one really believes it and it serves a greater purpose: it undermines our connection to an Almighty power. It also keeps us distracted from the reality around us so that we are not aware of the mind insertions (brainwashing, subliminal programming, indoctrination that enters our subconscious minds). There is method to the madness.

This has all been “interpretation,” however. This particular interpretation cannot be proven at the moment. Keep your eyes and ears open, question everything, and do your research—which is what this book has been devised for. Power, as Kincheloe has stressed, is elusive: it’s here today, gone tomorrow. It’s in “that” person; suddenly it’s gone. It’s in “these two groups” and suddenly the two groups are enemies with each other. Power often cannot be seen, tasted, touched, felt, or heard. And as the Bible has put it, we are often dealing with “unseen principalities.”

How can we ever pull together the bits and pieces of complex information when it’s been devised, and continues to be devised to throw us off course and keep us ignorant? How

do we sort the wheat from the chaff? How can we make interpretations that bring us closer to the truth of what is operating in the hidden dimensions of our world? What are we to make of the chaotic, complex, conflicting, and profuse flood of information—which is so often *not* even true knowledge whatsoever?

It leaves us with the need to understand and apply *critical complex epistemology* and the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage* which handle the multidimensionality, the critical nature, the ambiguity, and the complexity of this task in order to reconstruct a conceptualization of reality that is closer to truth. Of course as Kincheloe has conveyed, we can never reach some final “truth” but we can get closer by using this process. This will ultimately help us in multiple domains and contexts. It is a powerful means of gaining greater understanding of truth, reality, and the forces that would attempt to control our lives. We need this information if we are to be masters of our own “MyStories.” We need this understanding if we are to rise up and live as free human beings “with liberty and justice for all.”



Statue of Liberty Painted on an Abandoned Building in Kings Valley, Oregon. Photographed by Vanessa Paradis on the Kings Valley Treasure Hunt on May 1, 2009

Practice Makes Perfect

I have purposely deviated from formal educational processes to a large degree, the “F” and “I” in Kincheloe’s “FIDROD” in this discussion (F stands for formal and I stands for intractable—the idea that there’s only one way to present knowledge and it needs to be formal, presented from the third person, and it needs to follow precise specifications. For more information see [FIDUROD](#)). Everything I have stated can be backed up with citations from various forms or literature or is general knowledge or is my interpretation. Rather than get bogged down with the political act of choosing authors whose views represent what I have expressed in these interpretations (other than Kincheloe’s work which has undeniably influenced me to a major extent), I prefer in these more general expositions of bricolage to simply present it all using common knowledge, as much as possible. I recommend that you initially write this way, not worrying about the formal aspects, but rather allow the writing and research to flow and evolve as it will. Do keep notes, of course, of the references you’ve used. Then when you’ve gotten your text written, you can go back and meet the formal requirements for the course or discipline you will be presenting it to, properly citing references. This isn’t a hard-and-fast suggestion, however. Work in a way that works best for you. I prefer not to have my train of thought interrupted by too many formalities. With practice, however, the formalities are less intrusive. So it’s always “what works.” If I were to make the previous discourse in this book more formal (such as for academia), I would now go back through the text, search up references that support what I’ve stated and find counter arguments that present different perspectives.

For those who are sincerely interested in moving forward with bricolage research, I strongly recommend engaging in research on topics that are of special interest to you because with the state of knowledge at the present, it requires a lot of motivation to sort and sift through it. You may even want to research a particular aspect of the *Protocols* that relates to your interests or your work. Research your topics from all angles and perspectives; from absolutely every angle you can find. Go outside the domain that claims it and see what people in other disciplines and outside scholarly research have to say about the issue. That is step one for beginning to acquire multidimensional critical complex bricolage research skills. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, you will want to read *Kincheloe’s book Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*. It will serve to begin the process of helping you situate yourself in the research and develop a philosophical perspective. There are rationales behind this recommendation. First, bricolage requires looking at topics, issues, controversies, problems, and the like from multiple perspectives. Try shifting perspectives as you read various accounts.

Try to figure out why they're writing as they are. Research the authors. Who are they and what do they represent? What organizations are they connected to? Try to get inside their minds.

And at the same time, reading Kincheloe's book will give you many ideas for questions to ask, as well as reveal to you how various axes of power formulate their consciousness-constructing tactics. Reading Kincheloe's book will also move you toward "thinking like a philosopher," another important step/continuing aspect of this process. His work is written in such a way that it provides practice for making perceptual shifts, a necessary skill for the multidimensional critical complex bricolage.

So in a nutshell, if you want a place to start: Read Joe Kincheloe's book, *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* and practice researching to find many, many different perspectives on a topic you're interested in. When you research, be sure to use different search engines, libraries, discussion forums, interviews, universities and other agency websites, etc. Also helpful is music, song lyrics, artwork, sculpture, personal narratives, etc., that are related to your topic and which may give a unique perspective upon analysis. Get creative with your research in your quest for multiple perspectives and also allow your research to flow—go where it seems to guide you, even if it doesn't traditionally seem to relate.

For example, music is effective for many reasons—it is a way of raising consciousness, a way of injecting emotion into your writing, thus uniting logic and affect (which I have found is also powerful for helping me remember what I have learned), a way of giving the text multiple layers of meaning by engaging the reader in the hermeneutic circle, a way to help transmute emotions, and a way to communicate special messages. This technique of using music often works at the subconscious level and then when it's brought to conscious awareness it can provide great learning opportunities and emotional connections, and contribute to expanding awareness. For more examples of how music can be used, refer to [Joe Kincheloe's works](#) and the [examples](#) I have posted on his website. Check back, as I continue to update the site as I encounter new examples and I'll be expanding on this idea of using music.

Philosophically Speaking

Kincheloe recommends that we all become philosophically literate. Westerners, as a group—and many people who have been overly influenced by Western culture, are most deficient in being able to back up their beliefs with a cogent, solid, non-contradictory philosophy. In fact, many consider that Western philosophy itself has reached a “cul-de-sac” or dead end. There are gaping holes in ethics theories, for example, and they can’t be patched up to handle the complexity in today’s world (Paradis, 2008/2013). There is even disagreement as to what constitutes philosophy or theory (e.g., critical pedagogy, constructivism). It’s the lack of the understanding of philosophy that entraps people into incoherent, self-contradictory “laws” and illogical belief systems. We need to apply Kincheloe’s criticality to our philosophical positioning, like everything else, and develop a world view that encompasses that. Kincheloe’s “critical constructivism” which is far beyond a theory of the use of constructivism for educational purposes, provides a guide for doing developing a philosophy. It is not a formulaic philosophy per se but rather a world view that can help us develop an evolving philosophy, a new way of viewing life, our purpose, and embracing the evolving nature of existence. It, of course, has egalitarianism, equality, and love all built into the conceptualization. Thus, reading his primer, *Critical Constructivism* can help the process of developing a philosophy that can stand up in these changing and chaotic times.

I have provided a brief introduction of Kincheloe’s world view in my dissertation in the “Theoretical and Philosophical Grounding for the Study” in the [Literature Review](#), and I have posted a very [brief summary](#) online. However, I encourage you to read his entire book, *Critical Constructivism* for the in depth discussion that can help with the understanding of the importance of philosophy and a unifying world view to ground our research and writing. Of course, this process is intertwined with and encapsulated in all of the critical complex epistemology and bricolage processes. This book has already discussed and demonstrated philosophy and how it is incorporated into the discourse, but there is much more to learn; learning about philosophy is a lifetime endeavor and philosophy ensures that research studies are rigorous and empirical. As Kincheloe explains, “There is no dividing line between the empirical and the philosophical” (2004a, p. 10).

Putting It All Together (Now)

We are only taking “baby steps” here. Some of you may be capable of more, but for others this may be new material, and based on my own experience, even knowing what I do about the process, I still need much practice even at this level. I am still learning, but on the other hand, I’ve learned enough that I feel comfortable sharing it to help other people get started with this process. And I believe it’s important that more people do get started.

The article that follows is a recent piece I wrote for the *Journal of Epistemology* ([JOE Journal](#)). I investigated the Sandy Hook school shooting from a multitude of angles and even at that, I have no theory for what really happened during that event. It would require more extensive research. This article highlights a few important things: 1) The state of information is totally chaotic and we must find a way to sort through it; 2) there is much more than meets the eyes; we need processes for researching deeper layers of reality; 3) we need more people working together to pull all the fragmented pieces together; 4) it provides evidence of the need for Kincheloe’s multidimensional critical complex bricolage—a rigorous form of investigative research that looks at all angles and synthesizes a multitude of perspectives together to paint a more accurate picture of reality. The alternatives to this look bleak. I hope people see the need and begin to do the work that’s required.

In this meantime, the article provides a look at various perspectives, a strategy of bricolage research, of the Sandy Hook school shooting. But since the multidimensional bricolage has not been carried forward as far or as rigorously as needed, there is less understanding of this situation than is possible unless additional research is undertaken.

An Analysis of the Newtown Tragedy: Was the Public Taken for a Ride?

by Vanessa Paradis



It’s interesting when one delves deeply into research on any given topic of interest and discovers an amazing array of perspectives. There is so much to learn by researching many different perspectives and viewpoints. However, too often when it comes to highly controversial topics or complex political and social events, the views are dichotomized and perhaps the more important question

than **what** happened then becomes, **why is truth so hard to get to?** Why are views so dichotomized and polarized? What exactly is happening in the media that makes it seemingly

extremely difficult, if not impossible, to drill down to truth? What causes, for example, the truth of what happened in a highly publicized event such as the Newtown school shooting incident to be so conflicted and polarized—and why? It truly seems that people either gravitate toward one extreme perspective or the opposite extreme perspective. Is this by design? Investigating these views can literally be reality-shaking. There are many incidents and topics I might cite as examples, but the Newtown shooting tragedy provides an example of this dualism that emerges, and it's still being profiled in the news today. I don't have final answers, but I do believe that it is critical that we begin to explore possible answers—and solutions—if we are to maintain some semblance of sanity in the media and our world.

There are no doubt multiple factors that cause people to speculate and fill in the blanks to events such as this tragic alleged school shooting, including due to the way it was reported in the press, the conflicting accounts provided, the need to wait until the investigation has been completed, the trauma people have suffered, etc. A recent article by ctpost.com attempts, without great success to address the concerns for the delay in releasing details (October, 19, 2013), stating, "State's Attorney for [Danbury Stephen Sedensky III](#), who is in charge of the investigation, has said he expects to release a full report sometime in the fall." In the meantime, we are approaching the one year anniversary of the shooting and the school building itself is being demolished. It seems the delay and the secrecy behind the incident is acting as more fuel for people to fill in the blanks however they can and in the meantime, other people are capitalizing on the incident for various purposes.

For example, recently, a book by Joshua DuBois was published and promoted in Huffingtonpost.com in which the incident is cited; the title of the article highlights and perpetuates the secrecy surrounding the details we, as the public, have of the event:

[What Obama 'Did In Secret' In Newtown \(EXCERPT\)](#) (October 26, 2013).

Another article provides that

"The President's Devotional," released Tuesday (Oct. 22) by Pentecostal minister turned political aide Joshua DuBois, is a compilation of 365 of the more than 1,500 meditations DuBois has sent the president since he started working for him in the U.S. Senate. . . . In one of the dozen essays that introduce a month's devotional readings, DuBois recalls how Obama took on a pastoral role as he talked with surviving family members of the 20 elementary schoolchildren killed in Newtown, Conn. - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1IscF0l4.dpuf>

The above article goes on to state:

DuBois, who now runs the [Values Partnerships](#) consulting firm, also revealed that he disagreed with Obama and others in the administration on the controversial contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act. He wrote that he argued “the government just can’t force religious organizations to pay for things they don’t believe in.” When the White House carved out an exemption for some religious groups, DuBois said it showed the administration heard and understood the criticism. - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1IscF0l4.dpuf>

In an odd twist, the article seems much like an advertisement for a new organization that may be attempting to mix politics with religion in ways that may not be appropriate or agreeable in a country that’s founded on religious freedom and separation of state. It has included a direct link to a newly forming organization, <http://www.valuespartnerships.com/>. With a mission that states, “Based in our unique experience at the intersection of religion, culture and social change, we help private, public and not-for-profit institutions partner with the faith community and other grassroots organizations to tackle big challenges. And we help leaders and organizations in the church more effectively navigate and serve the world around them” and given the author’s positioning in relation to President Obama, one has to be curious as to how much and in what form religion will intrude into politics and vice versa.

The book, and possibly the organization itself, seems to be capitalizing on the controversy and mystery surrounding Sandy Hook shooting to get in the public eye; it makes one wonder if there is a complex matrix beneath the surface propping various players up. Determining that would take deeper research to find out who those players are and how they interconnect. The issues being highlighted surround very controversial ones such as women’s reproductive rights and the lobbying taking place for more stringent gun laws, as well as the trend toward a global movement to cram “spirituality,” ideologically defined, on people (some people claim it’s the New World Order’s move toward a One World Religion). These are the very issues that continue to be used to polarize people and keep them divided. And if there are no answers or missing puzzle pieces to polarizing events such as this shooting, one thing is certain: people are good at creating polarized possibilities. What’s disconcerting is that this then serves the same outcome: dividing the people. Division of the people is a Machiavellian approach to law and order.

The statement about spirituality and forcing it on people may seem surprising coming from me given a lot of my own work has incorporated seemingly spiritual perspectives (if you are familiar with my work). However, I will clarify here that I merely present perspectives. Some people misinterpret my perspectives for my reality. I do look at topics through the lens of many different filters, thus, spirituality and religion are perspectives that can sometimes shed some light on a different understandings. And sometimes I do come to believe what I learn, but I am always re-evaluating, holding ideas tentatively, and seeking many ways to look at the same

phenomena. There is little understanding how our consciousnesses have been constructed or molded, thus, it's difficult to determine whether what we believe is based on actual experiences or whether ideas have somehow been emblazoned into our subconscious minds and then we live these experiences. Much more study is needed in the area of consciousness and higher states of experience.

Much of what people define as “spiritual” clouds the fact that “spiritual” explanations may simply represent a lack of knowledge or perhaps simply provide various metaphors for describing phenomena we may not otherwise be able to describe. Scientists are beginning to offer explanations for some of these phenomena from a science perspective, which also provide important information for seeking understanding and new ways to describe complex experiences. Thus, I am ever-seeking of new knowledges and perspectives and trying on different “hats” so to speak. I am not for or against spirituality or religion. The problem comes in when a few people make interpretations and then force their ideologies onto others or use their power to limit and control the rights of people who have different beliefs, which is why I find the promotion of this particular book and the way it's being promoted troubling—it is ideologically linked to politics, the media, and religion, three powerful dominating forces. These are complex issues I creatively explore in my writing in various, innovative ways, taking on different perspectives—an act that some people find difficult to understand. And since my research and writing evolve in a rather improvisational manner, the reasoning behind it all may not be revealed until later. Sometimes I don't even know for certain why I am exploring from particular perspectives until I've gotten into the research. Most of my writing is improvisational and I go where I feel I'm being guided.

I point these issues out because I want to emphasize the fact that I take **tentative views** toward complex situations and controversial topics, including in this article about this tragic shooting. There is most often missing knowledge and too many missing details in these situations. To make things more complicated, the issues, themselves, are evolving and revealing new dynamics, interrelationships, connections, and motivations as time moves forward, as is demonstrated by the case with the Newtown shooting. Taking a tentative view is a strategy that's incorporated in Kincheloe's complex form of [bricolage](#) research. The idea is to obtain as many perspectives as possible to aid in understanding what we are studying but to realize at the same time, it's not possible to examine them all. As he explains, there are just too many, in addition to the fact that new information continuously reveals itself, especially if, as researchers, we begin to actively interact with it. We change the research and the research changes us. (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

Continuing with the topic at hand, there are multiple articles in the mass media that have recently been published about this new book by DuBois, emphasizing how religious

President Obama is. We might be asking why it's so important that we understand this, especially given all of the conspiracy theories surrounding the idea of a One World Religion. It also does not escape me that scholarly researchers are also attempting to push spirituality into the classrooms in a variety of ways, including mandating that students engage in meditation. While I have no objection to meditation, I do object forcing all students to engage in it, not considering whether they may want to or not. For one thing, meditation is not effective for everyone and there are many other relaxation techniques. Scientists have only recently begun studying whether there may be harmful effects of meditation. There are dangers to meditation (e.g., [17 Ways Mindfulness Meditation Can Cause You Emotional Harm](#)). And some people associate meditation and yoga with religion (whether that is correct or not is debatable and depends on context), again indicating that in their minds requiring meditation or yoga in school represents a conflict of the separation of church and state, and so then they may object since *their* religion is not allowed in school.

In relation to religion and the potential hazards of not keeping it separate from state, the former President George Bush had indicated that he thought he was on a mission from God:

“George Bush has claimed he was on a mission from God when he launched the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, according to a senior Palestinian politician in an interview to be broadcast by the BBC later this month”
(<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/07/iraq.usa>).

We know how disastrous his reign turned out for the world. It seems hard to deny that not only the United States, but a great portion of the world suffered during those years of his presidency, and continue to suffer to this day. And yet, promoted in the article under discussion is a rather frightening proposition to consider:

We can do anything today — and we'd probably be right. Our statements are likely backed by unassailable facts and solid figures. Our postures toward those who have wronged us are probably justified. The judgment we cast on others is likely warranted, given their misdeeds. But is being right . . . worth it? Once we've summited the mountain of our own correctness, what great prize will we receive? - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1lscF0l4.dpuf>

This trend toward an “anything goes” attitude has been pushed on the public for quite some time now in multiple arenas and perhaps this is something that contributes to the difficulty of drilling down for the facts. Maybe truth is not even supposed to matter anymore. For example, various education domains and religious studies promote using what is often referred to as a “ludic postmodern” or nebulous approach to research that contributes nothing to the knowledge base. Of course, this is readily observable in the entertainment media where anything does go, with no thoughts about how society is affected. Lachman, who has presented

a more rational approach to knowledge-seeking describes what he has termed a “Hermesian state of mind” in which information is brought together in a more logical and useful way, albeit intuition and creativity are also involved. Thus, the Hermesian state of mind relates to “bringing together,” synthesizing and alchemizing—and empowering. When we engage in research or any kind of learning in which we seek the differences inherent in multiple perspectives (the more perspectives, the more effective this is), we synthesize information to create new knowledge. And at the same time, we are reconstructing or transforming our own consciousness; as stated previously, we alter the research as the research alters us. Lachman elaborates:

Whether it is Hermes and Thoth themselves, or heaven and earth—above and below—the Hermetic act seems to be one of connecting otherwise apparently disparate ideas, beliefs, and visions, and producing some new vital current out of the encounter. This is not the same as the postmodern ethos of “anything goes”, which is motivated more by a jaded, often cynical “post-belief” than by any effort to transcend the cul-de-sac at which western philosophy has arrived. Quite the contrary. If, Favre tells us, the Hermeticists “see the body as a magical object, mystically linked to the planets and to the elements of nature, it is because they find sense everywhere in things and transcend the illusion of banality.” And this, Favre remarks, is a “supremely poetic task.” Postmodernism thinking, to me at least, seems to operate with exactly the opposite mindset: “deconstructing” the great systems of thought, it arrives at a vision (or lack of it) that finds no sense—no meaning—anywhere. When nihilism first raised its disturbing head in the second half of the nineteenth century, it caused a kind of panic in the collective consciousness. Now it is taught at universities and hardly causes a stir. (Lachman, 2011, pp. 211–212)

Thus, there are clear parallels between the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage*, Kincheloe’s form of research that has us seeking multiple perspectives, and the “Hermesian Spirit,” and, once again, a clear differentiation is made here between the postmodern “anything goes” approaches that quilt-making bricolage metaphors may slip into, and the more creative, analytic, “bringing together” approach that produces something new. We do not throw out traditions nor reject the modern world, according to Lachman (2011), but instead, the drive behind intense curiosity and focused eclecticism of the Hermetic mind is to “synthesize its insights with those of the past in order to produce some new possibility, not immediately given by either” (p. 212). This further explains my approach to research, why I consider looking from spiritual and religious—as well as science—viewpoints. When we achieve many views on a topic, it is a sort of magic that happens in a sense, once our mind has taken in all of the ideas and we have time to process them. Often sudden insights or “epiphanies” will come to us and

move our understanding forward and with this, we can see or create new approaches to complicated problems.

But there are some issues, such as the case with the Newtown, in which the mass media seems to purposely present dialectically opposing takes, with no middle ground, an existential state of hyperrealism created from a constant sense of cognitive dissonance. How do they do this? And why? I think the why is easiest to understand. It's no longer a secret that the media and government is controlled by the top 300 multinational corporations and serves their needs. (It may be fewer now, because they've gone through internal shifts in their fight over dominance and money). It has long been the goal to keep the public divided across many axes. The creation of the illusion of polar opposites between "Republicans" and "Democrats" has long been a strategy to keep people divided. At this point there truly seems to be little if any difference since the two groups of politicians, aside from their petty fights over pork barrel interests, clearly work hand-in-hand and their separation is more of a created false reality than reality itself. It's one that's wearing thin as more people can see behind the façade.

The media seem to have taken this strategy of divide and conquer to an exceptionally diabolical, complex, and very high level at times. It's as if their wish to divide people is a more powerful motive than providing a more complete picture of truth. Combine that with the different motives behind interpretations of what they present and the result is that multiple, conflicting realities can be shown. All one needs to do is look for patterns that match their particular "take" and ignore the patterns that don't support their view. While I can cite many examples based on the extensive research I've done, I will stay with the Newtown case to provide a concrete, focused example and because it relates to our theme in a metaphorical sense—it may very well be a "school bus ride"—according to the conspiracy theorists.

After listening to the numerous views about Newtown and researching for an extended time, literally two different realities have been constructed. One is the sanctioned view that the event happened as described by the press and is the view that most of the public hold because they depend on the mass media for their information. The other view is presented by the conspiracy theorists, or those who have taken time for analysis and investigative reporting. It's actually pretty much common knowledge among the theorists that the mass media (or "cabal" or whatever label one wishes to use) has its tentacles in both views and may be presenting both sides of the picture as well (this maximizes confusion, division, and discord). As the theorists reveal insight that counters the sanctioned view, or in other words, "blow their cover," the mass media will return to promote (and at the very least, allow) these countering views because it serves their wishes to keep the public divided. Sometimes the media will release new "facts" which the theorists refer to as "controlled release" of information because they are already known or have become widely believed bits of information. Thus we have conspiracy

theorists claiming that the incident was a staged event. Some contend that it was actually a drill, that no one at all was killed and that it was filmed and presented as real to keep the public off balance, create discord, and/or to take the next step toward martial law by providing support for tightening up gun laws (and, indeed, of course the people involved did promote this). Are the conspiracy theorists off their rockers to claim that no one was killed—have we all been taken for a metaphorical “school bus ride”? Other conspiracy theorists may present that the shooting did occur, but that it’s being hyped up for political reasons. Some of them try to present a more balanced view, but none of the views hold up—each perspective is simply missing too much information and provokes too many questions.

I honestly don’t have the answer to truth in this case because strangely, I see truth—and inconsistencies—in both versions and I don’t have the resources to do a deep investigative analysis, complete with interviews it would take to get more information about this case. Without meaning disrespect or a lack of compassion to those who have lost children and family members, I thought it might be worthwhile to explore these two immensely different views as an example of how the media and those who hold power over us seem to capitalize on the fear, division, and discord such disasters exert on people and how secrecy fuels conspiracy theories. Some of the theorists work hard to get to truth and should more rightly be referred to as investigative reporters. Sadly, there are people who think it’s funny to create, for example, YouTube videos of nonsense, basically mocking those who are trying to analyze for truth. While absurdity as a form of expression has a role, it’s destructive when used to impede getting to truth about situations such as this one. Exploring these various approaches should shed light on why it becomes so important that we learn, first of all, to not allow this division between us, and perhaps begin the work of finding “common ground”—and secondly, how it becomes important to learn to do the research required to get at least a little closer to the truth.

Thus, as conveyed, first there is the official story, of course, which few people question. A lone shooter, a 20-year-old man allegedly shot his own mother, a teacher, at their home and then went into Sandy Hooks Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012 and shot six adults and 20 students. There is confusion in the media over whether his mother actually taught at the school (one interviewee says no; another says yes, that it was why the boy was recognized and allowed into the school; and then the question has been raised: where is the video of him at the door since the media had indicated the school had just been equipped with a special security camera). The media went into a wild frenzy over this tragedy, and at the same time, the incompetency of the reporting may have been what fueled the conspiracy theorists—or the media was consciously supporting the conspiracy in this dichotomous presentation. There are many unanswered questions.

The following two videos are initial reports of the situation. The date was December 14, 2012

[Connecticut Shooting in Newtown at Sandy Hook Elementary: 1 Gunman Confirmed Dead](#)

In this report the school had been “cleared,” the gunman was found dead, and only one child had been transported to the hospital with injuries. Other injuries were reported, the extent of which were not clarified, and there was confusion over whether there was a second and maybe even a third shooter (which as it turned out, in the official report there was not).

The following is a screenshot from the video that shows the emergency vehicles in front of the school.



[Tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School: What Happened During Newtown, Connecticut Shooting?](#)



The shooting happened at 9:41 AM, according to the above report, which was filmed the same day of the shooting. The police were called and the school was put in lockdown. The report says it takes an “agonizing hour” to determine what went on in the school. It says the children and teachers were escorted out of the school by 10:30 AM. Surely the police

knew by that time that children had been injured or potentially injured and would have called ambulances before this. Wouldn't they be trying to rescue the injured? And in this report, there's no mention—as was made in the other report—that one student had been taken to the hospital with injuries. It specifies that it took the police until approximately 11:00 AM to realize that multiple injuries and fatalities had occurred and called for ambulances—this does not add up. They did not announce fatalities until 11:50 AM. Did it really take them from 10:30 AM (when they evacuated the school) to 11:50 AM to determine there had been fatalities? And why would they not have called the ambulances immediately upon learning that there had been gun shots fired? It seems the most logical action to take. According to the report, the shooter, Adam Lanza, was wearing a bullet-proof vest (worried about his own life?) yet, had taken his own life in a classroom at the school. Yet, according to other reports, Adam Lanza has a death date of December 13, the day before the incident. Police reportedly also had initially confused him with his older brother Ryan because he was carrying his brother's I.D. Has this Ryan ever been interviewed by the media? The image of Adam is criticized for being a poorly rendered Photoshop creation.

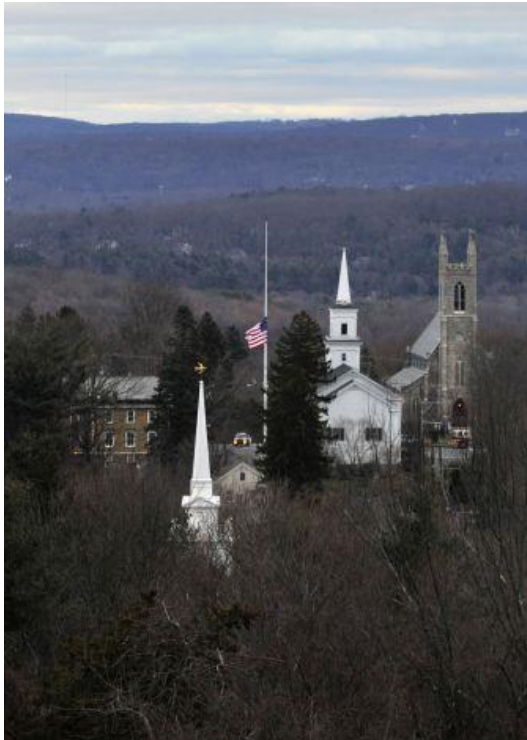
One thing noteworthy in the above video (and something the conspiracy theorists picked up on) is that there is no genuine emotion from those interviewed and there were no tears (most people would have cried, although perhaps not if they were in shock, which makes assessment difficult). But it did seem strange that so many of them make gestures to wipe tears from their eyes in this video as well as other videos, when there were no tears. Were they in shock? It didn't really look like they were in shock but that's a very subjective interpretation. However, there are other things that the conspiracy theorists contend about the people who have been interviewed, such as showing that some of them are actors and actresses and have even been in a previous shooting incident. But this all involves subjective interpretation, resulting in many inconsistencies that are not easily resolved. Here are a couple of other more analytical perspectives.

[Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting: Why Did Adam Lanza Snap? - ABC News](#)

[Sandy Hook Massacre A CLOSER LOOK](#)

I encourage readers to randomly watch additional YouTube videos, sampling different views of this event. Some of the perspectives are not credible (some are made with very poor taste and mocking either the conspiracy theorists or the media take); whereas, others are highly credible. I have watched dozens of videos and normally the truth would be popping out at me; but this is not the case here. Because I'm a researcher, I find this very strange. It seems it would take enormous conscious effort, even scientific, psychological approaches to dupe the public so badly that there is no way to perceive what actually happened in this case even after doing extensive research.

The Church, the “State,” education, and the corporate sectors are nearly inseparable, working together to present an illusion that is literally constructing daily and permanent cognitive dissonance among the masses—and the media—television, news, the movies, the Internet, social media, corporate advertisements, signs, signals, symbols, and significations play a huge role in creating this dichotomous illusion that’s making so many people stressed out, in fear, and dysfunctional. The solution, temporary at best, until we find real solutions is to accept that there will be many such situations in which we have no definitive answers. Alternative media needs to outshine the mass media, but unfortunately, mass media—the power wielders



have their greedy hands in alternative media. This makes it nearly impossible to determine who’s really behind the reporting and what their motives might be. Often these are well-hidden purposely. Until we find solutions, and as we are seeking answers to these various events, we must simply learn to transcend the need for an immediate answer. We can’t allow the fact that we are not able to find immediate truth cause us to live in fear and under stress. We must be wary that we also don’t lose additional rights and freedoms over these types of events and our disagreements over solutions. We have much work to do in order to restore what we’ve lost already through legislation such as the Patriot Act.

The flag pole on Main Street in Newtown flies at half-mast on Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, one week after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. Photo: Jason Rearick.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line, from my perspective, is that the news media did an atrocious job of covering this event. In their rush to report, they provided conflicting, chaotic, and inadequate information (some “conspiracy theorists” question the timing of some of the interviews, claiming they were staged prior to “the event” to explain the conflicting information). In some cases, the reporters’ own hyped-up emotions which did not appear to be all that genuine (reporters tend to be “desensitized” due to their exposure to tragic events) only highlighted the fact that those interviewed expressed numbed-out emotions or no emotions at all. If the event really happened, they gave the so-called “conspiracy theorists” a lot of fuel to go on. I really don’t like to use the term conspiracy theorists due to the negative connotation associated with

it, because many of them are genuine researchers, doing something we all should be doing—investigating and fact-checking. I prefer the term investigative reporters.

As much research as I have done, I would need to do much more if I were to answer the question as to whether the public has been taken on a metaphorical bus ride . . . although with passing time, the event has continued to be “played” by those who have various religious and political agendas and power motives. It has served as another incident to further divide the public. The important take-home point, in my view, is that we must rise above the tendency toward polarization and work toward staying united. Because information proliferation of the “facts” we are to know, obfuscation of the facts we are not to know, along with the compartmentalization of knowledge is a growing trend in many institutions with which we must interact, we need to take research and knowledge work very seriously in our everyday lives. I am thankful for all of the hard-working “YouTubers” who take this seriously and provide free services to inform the public. They should be supported in their endeavors.

As a final note, a tribute and clarification of the Newtown tragedy was recently presented by the town to explain the slow trickle of information, along with a series of photographs which can viewed [here](#). The photographs are interesting when viewed from conflicting perspectives. I also found it interesting that the caption of the photograph shown on the next page numbered the victims as 26, stating there were 26 angels, one for each victim. If you count the angels there are actually 27, thus, it appears that the 20-year-old shooter was also acknowledged as a victim by somebody responsible for creating the angels. If he, in fact existed (again, there is conflicting information about his very existence as well as the day he supposedly died), but if he truly existed and whether or not he was the shooter, he was, indeed, a victim as well. And until we can have total transparency and truth we are all victims of these increasing numbers of extremely tragic and traumatic events.



A crowd gathers in front of a memorial with 26 cardboard angels to the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre on Church Hill Road, Newtown, Conn., Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012. Photo: Bob Luckey

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Summary, and What's Next?

In conclusion, the following presents a summary of how you might approach research and writing for your general high school and college courses using some of the aspects of the multidimensional critical complex bricolage, the “nuts and bolts” so to speak (understand that there is more to learn, but applying what’s in this text can help you get A papers). We must all begin where we are and I hope this manual provides you guidance for doing that while also providing links for additional information and recommendations for reading specific books by Kincheloe so that you might soar as high as you wish. These will greatly increase your understanding. Also, I continue to expand on what’s available on the web site, and it’s all free, so be sure to check in every so often.

#1 Passion

Choose a topic you’re absolutely passionate about learning more about, a topic that you relate to on a very personal level. This, alone, will keep you motivated toward pursuing the research to the depth and breadth the multidimensional critical complex bricolage aims for. Remember that all knowledge is connected, as well. You can tie your passion into literally any subject or discipline. For example, in high school, I took an oceanography course, which I was interested in, but I was **passionate** about learning more about the Lost Continent of Atlantis.

My teacher was open-minded and allowed me to research the topic for my assigned paper, which took me on an interesting trek, exploring Plato’s works. **Passion** was the advice that Joe Kincheloe recommended when he asked me to write a book for one of his series for education (which didn’t get accomplished yet because he passed away and we went in other directions; but ultimately I will write the specific book). When I ran several ideas for the book by him, he had instructed me: “I want you to do the version you’re most **passionate** about” (pers. conv. September 19, 2008: http://www.joekincheloe.us/emails_from_joe_kincheloe.html).

If you have difficulty discovering your passion, reading Kincheloe’s book *Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* can help. I recommend this book for everyone and even re-reading it several times so that you become very intimate with how your consciousness has been influenced by outside forces. Reading the book may take you back to your early childhood and chances are you can reconnect with your innate interests and talents which may have been smothered during the process of schooling. There is a form of education called UNschooling for

a reason. Kincheloe's book examines the effects of the knowledge we've been taught from the various social, political, historical, and educational environments we've been immersed in at different points in our lives.

#2 Generative Themes

Kincheloe also recommends, as discussed previously, that we use "generative themes" as a source of inspiration, and these can easily be related to our passionate interests. As he has illuminated, John Dewey made this same recommendation although he had framed this as education that centers on our life experiences. What, exactly, are generative themes? Humorously, (but perhaps illuminating as well) just a few days ago I was reading a website post about the symbols and codes used by the Freemasons in which the author had expressed that "generative" is a code word for sex. Well, maybe there is something to that; I can see how that would work, but that's an expansion on the concept of bricolage for another time.

At any rate, the following blog which I had actually posted on Joe Kincheloe's website when I was working with him back in 2008, expresses another perspective for generative themes, and cites Joe's definition for edification. One of my passions is technology, which apparently does not fit social expectations.

Critical Pedagogy, Technology & Online Education: Women and technology: Where are we?



Submitted by [Vanessa Paradis](#) on Tue, 07/08/2008 - 15:05

Women and technology: Where are we?

I think I finally understand generative themes. I have seen the term a few times, and this morning I came across it again in an article I read. Kincheloe (2005) defines generative theme as a "topic taken from students' lived experience that is compelling and controversial enough to elicit their excitement and commitment" (Creating counter-hegemonic

classrooms: Fight the Power, para. 2). It finally clicked, and then I realized something.

I had an interesting generative theme experience just the other day.

I had gone into Radio Shack to upgrade my cell phones (yes *phones*, we have three). I decided, since the new phones had all of these cool features, I would add Internet Service.

"You want *Internet* service added?" the young, clean-cut, male sales-associate queried

"Well, yeah! I do."

It was taking forever because whatever business management system they use to create a contract and such appeared to be DOS Ancient or older. It moved like a dinosaur and repeatedly asked for the same input. And then, it just sat there, while we waited for it to process.

Because it was taking so long, the young associate who was just standing by began to make small talk. He asked me what I "did."

Assuming he meant, what was my occupation, I replied, "I design, develop, and teach online courses," I told him. "And I'm working on my doctorate in Instructional Design for Online Learning - *Online*, of course."

He tipped his head and looked at me quizzically, "You're kidding."

"Well, no... I'm...."

"You don't look like...."

"What? A computer geek?"

"Well, yeah..." he was slightly embarrassed.

I laughed and he laughed as we both probably contemplated what an older female computer geek might look like....and then he changed the subject to other things.

So that was my generative theme moment, which leads me to the question: Where are all the women in technology and what are we supposed to look like? Do I need to change my look? ***I think we really need a critical pedagogy helping hand with this!***

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Thus, generative themes can often provide us clues for topics and social issues we are naturally interested in learning more about. We can write about them in ways that are interesting, creative, humorous, and we can make people look at the issues in a new light.

#3 Passion Plus Generative Themes = MyStories

Write what you already know about your topic and what you wish to learn, injecting your passions, interests, experiences, etc. It can be a single experience such as I wrote in the previous blog about buying new cell phones, or it can be multiple experiences, or you might want to approach it from a more general perspective. There are no rules for MyStories. Review the previous chapter about MyStories to get a feel for how you might wish to approach your own based on the topic you've selected.

This is actually [Philosophy 101](#), but sadly, including ourselves in our writing is heavily discouraged in so much of academic work that still runs on tradition and [FIDUROD](#). We are supposed to use "third person" point-of-view . . . don't get me started on that one. Do the best you can. Include yourself in the writing even if the professor is a dinosaur and asks you to

remove yourself (you can do that, maybe, after you've finished the piece, depending upon what the topic is, of course).

Here's a link to an article that may help defend your positioning, and you can do additional research for more information:

[PDF] [Starting with ourselves in deepening our understanding of generativity in participatory educational research](#)

L van Laren, R Mudaly, K Pithouse-Morgan, S Singh - *South African Journal of ...*, 2013

This all reminds me of a funny email conversation I had with Joe Kincheloe about the dreaded "I-word." Honestly, in education the "I-word" is more taboo than the "F-word." Joe had expressed his empathy over my frustration at having to write without using the word "I" and he reminded me that the FIDURODians are still trying to maintain control over knowledge.

Hopefully, things will change soon for you, or you'll have an open-minded professor. If not, do it anyway and justify (in the early part of your paper) the use of first-person; that would be good practice. Be a change agent (or if you're into alien stories, be an Emissary from Planet _____ (fill in the blank with the planet of your choice—there are [8.8 billion planets](#) to choose from now). And another piece of advice: DO keep your sense of humor!

#4 Study Philosophy

Kincheloe recommends that for this form of research doing a lot of reading and writing about philosophy is needed in order to synthesize our philosophical thoughts into our work. This is important for so many reasons, one being that it really helps ground our writing, justifies our positions, and makes the knowledge produced more widely applicable. For example, by providing details as to the specific context we're speaking of, it becomes easier to see how and why it might apply in other similar situations, perhaps with modifications; whereas, over-generalized information becomes difficult to apply (think of how generalized the instruction of mathematics is and how we forget how to work problems because we haven't learned real-life ways to apply them).

Knowledge and Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction will help with this process and I also recommend reading Kincheloe's book *Critical Constructivism* for increasing your knowledge of philosophy, in which he's put forth an evolving unifying philosophical world view. Because he has synthesized so many perspectives, it forms a very strong philosophical base for the research. And please, extend your research as he recommends in that book and in all of his

work. There are many great contributors to philosophy and there are great benefits from reading their works.

Another blog I had written for Kincheloe's website back in 2008, again, explains the reasons reading philosophical works and writing about them are so important to the research and knowledge production process. What we read, whether it's extremely simplistic and has little substance, or it's extremely complex and philosophical literally changes how we think! We can either read "dumbed down" discourses or philosophically rich ones (and anything in between). But if your goal is higher order thinking, which would be the best choice? I just saw, today, as I write this a new app for the Android which allows blogging and blog discussions from the cell phone. But think! How deep can these conversations get? How open are these conversations for interpretation—and MISinterpretation. Thus, the following blog also provides a cautionary note about dumbing down, over-simplification, and how we engage in research and learning:

Critical Pedagogy, Technology & Online Education: e-learning for dummies? Reaction to "Is Google Making Our E-Learning Stupid?"



Submitted by [Vanessa Paradis](#) on Thu, 08/21/2008 - 00:27



e-learning for dummies?

The article, *Is Google Making Our E-Learning Stupid?*, presented by Tom Kuhlmann (2008) on his Rapid E-Learning Blog came to my attention, and it instantly reminded me of all of the "Books for Dummies" we have...*Internet for Dummies*, *Computers for Dummies*, etc., not that I

have a serious problem with them; *some* of them are quite well-written, or at least useful. Anyway, he discusses an article from Atlantic Monthly in which Nicholas Carr (2008) suggests the Internet is changing the way we read and think and explains that this is an extension of Taylorism. Carr (2008) goes on to explain, "Taylor's system is still very much with us; it remains the ethic of industrial manufacturing. And now, thanks to the growing power that computer engineers and software coders wield over our intellectual lives, Taylor's ethic is beginning to govern the realm of the mind as well." Kuhlmann (2008) then extrapolates, mistakenly, in my view, as to how this should influence the design of e-learning courses.

According to Carr (2008):

I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I'm reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore.

Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, [and] begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.

Kuhlmann (2008) recommends that instructional designers incorporate this professed change in the way people read and think into how they design e-learning, thus they should design courses for learners who "power-browse" because, as he states, they "are being conditioned to process online content a certain way. It impacts how they see, retrieve, and process information. If...we're developing a new way of reading (or retrieving information), then this needs to be a consideration as we design our e-learning courses" (para. 6,7). He instructs, "Design courses to accommodate these power browsing habits. If you don't, chances are you'll lose a connection with the learner which will make the course ineffectual" (para. 9).

Aside from the fact that Kuhlmann has just lost a connection with me, this amounts to a vastly over-simplified generalization. It appears to be a weak justification for a greater push toward watered down e-learning curricula that only serve to further condition people *not* to read, the last thing that is needed considering the multiple issues e-Learning already faces. E-learning, online education, or distance learning, as it is variously referred to, suffers from many examples of poorly designed courses due to the lack of a solid theoretical foundation. This recommended move by Kuhlmann is a most blatant example of what Freire (1970) refers to as *banking education*, "in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (p. 72), and it is a most diluted form of it. Promoting this watering down further, as Kuhlmann suggests, is a push in the wrong direction and will only give learners superficial information, not the knowledge they need to navigate our increasingly complex and distressing imperialist-controlled world, nor is it likely to result in empowering people to envision better options. Thus, it serves well to maintain the status quo.

It is true that many of us often scan and skim Internet text (perhaps because so much of it is not worth reading?), but that should not translate into making educational content overly concise just because it is being presented online. There is a point at which conciseness is detrimental to the educational and learning process. And in spite of Kuhlmann's protestation otherwise – yes, it does amount to dumbing down the content. He justifies his recommendation: "It's just that we have to build e-learning courses that connect with the way our learners receive and process information." My question is, what if we do not receive and process information the way that is being claimed? It may very well be the type of books and text and lack of practice that is the real problem....if content does not have much substance, then, yes, it is skimmed for the highlights. Many people happen to enjoy reading heavy theoretical dissertations and taking time to absorb every little detail. In fact, The Brazilian Paulo Freire Institute recommends "a public policy of teaching that includes more complex reading and writing," including complex Internet literacy skills and "reading within a multi-diversification of digitally generated texts" (Gomez, 2006). What Rapid E-Learning author Kuhlmann (2008) is suggesting takes instructional design for online learning in the totally wrong direction. What we need instead is to provide deeper learning opportunities for people so that they stay engaged – not the watered down, concise basics with highlighted bullets so that they focus on the "main points." (And who decides those main points, anyway?) Carr (2008) provides a good description of the benefits of deep reading – a skill, as educators, we should be reinforcing, not trying to eliminate:

The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge we acquire from the author's words but for the intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading of a book, or by any other act of contemplation, for that matter, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas. Deep reading, as Maryanne Wolf argues, is indistinguishable from deep thinking. (Carr, 2008).

Combine deep reading with deep dialogue, and a superior form of learning can occur that cannot possibly be accomplished by watering down the curriculum and making it overly concise. If online education researchers take time to base recommendations for instructional systems design for the online environment on a foundation of critical theory, Kuhlmann's article recommending that designers reinforce learners' skimming and scanning would never have been written.

This reminds me of an important point Shirley Steinberg (2007) made in the book, *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?* While she was referring to dialogue relating to critical pedagogy, it would be beneficial to all educators – and e-learning designers - to apply her advice: "Often critiqued as a deficit of critical theory and pedagogy, theoretical discourse is essential in order to both legitimize and make sense of the praxis we espouse. Refusing to dumb down to the essentialist comments of scholars past, critical pedagogy demands scholarly rigor which draws heavily upon social theories, literary criticism, philosophy, and pedagogy in order to clarify itself" (p. x).

Instead of making reading and learning so easy and avoiding the exploration of the deep *why* questions, learners need the opportunities to exert greater effort reading and learning online. If the content is challenging and includes the analysis of the *why* behind the *what* (in depth, not

based on superficialities), learners will be encouraged and motivated to make that effort. They also have the option to do what many learners already do: print out the text and read it offline until such time they have developed better skills to do more of their reading online.

To give Kuhlmann (2008) credit, he did suggest some worthy strategies that are considered best practice for e-learning, including taking more time to build learning communities or “what Moacir Gadottti recognized as a ‘learning society’ (Gomez, 2006), as well as exploring “real world activities,” which provides the opportunity to read the world (Freire, 1970). However, reliance on just these two factors as the primary way to engage learners when content – reading the word - is scarce is not the complete answer either, and it does not meet the Brazilian Paulo Freire Institute’s goals of offering learners the opportunity to acquire the “complex manners of reading and writing in a digital universe” (Gomez, 2006). We do not need to strive for absolute clarity and conciseness that require little thought, analysis, synthesis, or knowledge construction. As Macedo (2000) points out, and this applies here, in my view, “the mundane call for a language of ‘simplicity and clarity’ represents yet another mechanism to dismiss the complexity of theoretical issues, particularly if these theoretical constructs interrogate the prevailing dominant ideology” (p. 23).

A grounding in critical theory and critical pedagogy would aid the effort greatly to pull e-learning here in the U.S. out of its vulnerable and nearly non-existent theoretical status. Then we would see more than just a few isolated cases of exemplary e-learning taking place in the U.S. and far fewer examples of *shovelware* (simply uploaded course content). And if this is *really successful*, there might eventually be an added benefit: fewer worries about corporate and militaristic forces. As Giroux (2007) points out, universities mold their online programs to attract the military market, which “furthers and deepens the ongoing privatization of education and the fragmentation of knowledge itself” (p. 10). “Pedagogy must be understood as central to any discourse about academic freedom, but, more importantly, it must be understood as the most crucial referent we have for understanding politics and defending the university as one of very few remaining democratic public spheres in the United States today” (Giroux, 2008, para. 10). In the final analysis, we need to drop the notion that we should adapt e-learning to what really amounts to poor reading and learning habits, and instead, the push should be for more substance.

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#5 Research, Research, Research!

Well, if you have read that prior blog about e-learning, then you are aware of some of the issues with the flood of mindless, watered down information on the Internet. You have probably experienced the miscommunication of over-simplified cell phone text messages, not to mention the extremely superficial nature of them. Superficial has its place, no doubt, but with the multidimensional critical complex bricolage we are going places no human has ever gone before. Given that the requirement of the multidimensional critical complex bricolage is to research deeply and for many perspectives, what are some ways we can get around this hurdle of watered down, even parroted information (that is often incorrect and politically motivated) that rises to the top of Google searches?

The goal is to get as many perspectives as possible beyond those that rise to the top. Thus, as researchers we need to learn to be creative. Often just getting started with even one good article on our chosen topic will lead to other good articles, even opposing viewpoints. Even though teachers and professors rail against it, I often use Wikipedia for basic information and as a place to begin. Wikipedia articles represent the evolving nature of knowledge, albeit one must look carefully and discern who is adding and taking away from the information and consider motivation. You need to learn to look behind the curtain. Still, Wikipedia often highlights controversial aspects of topics, provides multiple views on topics, and provides reference lists for more information. All of this can be useful in our quest, despite teachers who preach the hazards of Wikipedia and even outright ban it. You can still use it as a "lead" to more information; just don't cite it in your references if your teacher has banned its use as a citation. This is changing now, as more and more scholarly researchers do cite Wikipedia.

Another good source for different perspectives is Amazon.com where you can look up authors, their works, and read the various reviews. You can also search inside many of the books for specific information, similar to Googlebooks, another free source for some information.

During your research, play around with key words and see what they bring up. There is no “hard-and-fast” way to utilize key words. It’s just “what works.” Use an intuitive approach, even search on phrases and questions—because chances are someone has posted an article that answers the same questions you have. Another tactic, in attempting to determine relationships between seemingly unrelated topics or people, is to search them both at the same time. Some interesting things rise to the top that can often uncover relationships between people, movements, organizations, etc. This is valuable for assessing the knowledge they produce and their perspectives and helpful for linking seemingly disparate ideas.

Often, when I’ve narrowed down on a topic and have found a series of articles that are written from different perspectives, I copy and paste them into a Word doc, with the hyperlinks to their locations. This makes it very easy to then skim the articles and highlight the main points. You can also take notes, if that’s your preference. Everyone has their own “best” process or can develop a process. Some people like bibliographic data software and keeping it all in a database. Or you can build specific topic-based bibliographies and write summaries of key articles.

Discussion forums can also be interesting places to visit to read different perspectives. There are discussion forums on almost everything you can think of. Search using your topic along with “forum” or “discussion” or “discussion forum” or “discussion group” and see what comes up. Online newspaper articles are also useful. There is a caveat to getting information from these sources: 1) They are often heavily censored and it’s not clear what they censor. 2) Political agendas are manipulated through these discussions with paid shills. Thus, this makes it hard to determine what the overriding consensus is, and worse, it serves to keep people divided. It seems there’s a purposeful division of people taking place. This can be observed simply by the slanted way an article is written, for example, to automatically divide people along some controversial axis.

University websites and other specialty databases, virtual libraries, and subject-specific databases are also places to find “hidden” information (information that Google doesn’t necessarily find; also known as “[the Deep Web](#)”). Use their search feature to research your topic. If you know a university that specializes in the subject under which your topic falls, you might start there. For example, I know that Princeton University has primary research documents written by Albert Einstein, so it’s a good starting point if I want to conduct research into his work.

See what different search engines bring up for your topic. You might start by doing a search for search engines for a list to work from. As an example, scirus.net is a search engine that specializes in science topics (unfortunately, I have just learned they are folding). Another strategy is to search on some of these search engines for “deep web” to find sites that list deep web sources. Here’s one such database, which lists deep web sources by category:

<http://aip.completeplanet.com/>. Be sure to search your topic in multiple categories and disciplines as a method for getting multiple perspectives and interdisciplinary knowledge.

Also, try researching in other countries. Here’s a website that lists international search engines: <http://www.searchenginecolossus.com/>

And last, but not least, there is the library—whether it’s your school library, the local library, or the university library. Be sure to take advantage of the research assistance the librarians provide. They are an invaluable resource and can help you in some amazing ways. The libraries contain vast amounts of knowledge that have not been digitized.

#6 Interpret, Interpret, Interpret!

This brings us back to the “**nuts and bolts of bricolage**,” the purpose of this “D.I.Y. Quick-Start” manual. Interpretation is critical if you really wish to turn out A+ papers consistently. Look at interpretation as a Golden Key to Great Knowledge. It reveals hidden dimensions of knowledge and interconnections between various knowledges, metaphors, and the producers of knowledge that you probably would not have otherwise made, if you take it deep enough. Kincheloe’s critical hermeneutics and his critical complex epistemology are key processes for this step. While I present this as a step, we are actually interpreting throughout the process of our research, so most likely you have already done some preliminary interpretation. You will want to write out some of your interpretations and the insight you’ve gained of various pieces of the bricolage (the various perspectives, objects of research, etc.) as they are brought to your attention.

We are informally using the hermeneutic circle since during research we uncover additional perspectives that shed new understanding and we are continuously reinterpreting our previous interpretations in light of the new information. A lot of this is actually “mind work.” We do it automatically as we research, keeping in mind the most important interpretations with an eye open for patterns and processes, as well as links between the various perspectives. We do this unconsciously in our sleep and often awaken with new insights. Or if we are conscious of fourth dimension research, we may even synthesize and learn consciously during our sleep. Then, when we formally write out some of these interpretations

something very powerful happens. The more you write, the more NEW insights will pop out at you—things you would not have noticed otherwise, and this process contributes to new knowledge. Also, you may notice that you're synchronistically led to information that is exactly what you need—and you never know where that might come from. It may come in the form of a totally unrelated conversation with a friend; you just never know. Or you may have one of those Ah Ha! moments, a sudden epiphany. It pays to stay observant.

Part of this process of interpretation involves critical complex epistemology and researching even what may seem like mundane words for their historical and social contexts, synonyms, and antonyms. Every perspective, when it comes to word meaning, adds to understanding. It is surprising how much English has changed over the years and how some words have taken on opposite meanings from their original meaning and in some cases are used in obscure derogatory ways to divide people. Thus, epistemology has us questioning knowledge. As Kincheloe has explained:

Epistemology. Constitutes the branch of philosophy that analyzes the nature of knowledge and what we believe to be true. Epistemology asks how do we analyze knowledge? How do we know it's true? How do we produce knowledge and what is the status of that knowledge in the world? In other words, how do various individuals react to the knowledge we produce? An educational epistemological question that emerges in this context involves what do we consider valid and important knowledge and which parts of it should become part of the curriculum? How do we figure out what to teach [or learn] and is the knowledge we choose of any worth? (Kincheloe, 2008c, pp. 15–16)

I personally find interpretation a lot of fun! If I happen to find a piece of music that expands my understanding on a topic, I often visit www.songmeanings.com and research what the song lyrics mean to other people. Unfortunately, most people are very weak in their interpretation abilities so usually the insight is fairly shallow, although occasionally someone will have specific knowledge that opens up the meaning of songs. It's great practice to interpret even what you see and experience in your daily life.



The study of semiotic (signs, signals, signifiers, etc.) is very fascinating and there's so much we can learn about ourselves and the construction of our social world by studying them. The image on this page is a fun symbol to practice interpreting. It's a symbol of the Free Masons, and one reason I selected it is because I know that it has a surface-level, common interpretation that's easy to find, but that it also has multiple layers of knowledge. There are secrets hidden in the deepest levels of interpretation that only people at the

very highest levels of freemasonry are privy to know. However, these hidden meanings can be discovered with deep enough interpretation and using Kincheloe's recommendations. So investigate this: find the "surface level" meaning of this freemason symbol and then take the research deeper and see if you can find or create four different interpretations for this symbol. Don't worry if you are "right" or "wrong." You may find "dark" esoteric meanings. If so, also flip them, as Kincheloe recommends in his work—take an "eros" love reading as a counterpoise to the dark interpretation. Get friends involved and make it a group project to find as many interpretations as you can. It can get very interesting when you bring in more perspectives.

#7 Write! Begin with a POET

For myself, and I don't know if this would be true for everyone, the more time I spend upfront with researching and interpreting, even writing various journal entries, blogs, "MyStories." article notes and summaries, as well as philosophical forms of treatises, the easier the final paper, document, article, or book is for me to write. By the time I reach the final writing stage, I have studied the topic inside-out, although never completely—there's way too much to learn everything there is to know about anything. There comes a point at which, as a learner, researcher, and writer that I've reached "saturation point" *for the moment*—until I decide to go to another level with the topic. It's the point at which I've selected what I feel is important to highlight and focus on for the time-being. It somehow addresses my "generative theme" that formed the point of entry text (POET) that started the quest in a way that is innovative, interesting, sheds light on the problem, offers up possible solutions, provides hope, develops new knowledge, alleviates suffering, etc. Then I can reread the POET, weaving in various interpretations, new perspectives, and other details, supporting it with additional research. Or I may start all over with a new POET that represents better what I know after having completed the research.

In making choices as to what to include in the final synthesis, it might be helpful to refer again to the selection criteria Kincheloe has recommended that I presented previously:

A particular interpretation is chosen because it: provides a richer insight into the text than did others; constructs an interconnected and cohesive portrait of the phenomenon; grants access to new possibilities of meaning; benefits marginalized groups in their struggle for empowerment; fits the phenomenon under study; accounts for many of the cultural and historical contexts in which the phenomenon is found; considers previous interpretations of the phenomenon in question; generates insight gained from the recognition of the dialectic of particularity and generalization, or wholes and parts; indicates an awareness of the forces that have constructed it; makes use of multiple perspectives of multiple individuals coming from

diverse social locations; catalyzes just, intelligent, and worthwhile action. (Kincheloe, 2004e, pp. 101–102)

These will help you focus your research for your final research. You can either thread all of your new knowledge through your original POET (which should be a “generative theme,” as discussed previously) or you can start by writing a new POET, as just described, from the position of your new understandings and then continue forward by weaving in supporting research and citations. Or, if you prefer a linear process for your writing or if it works better for your topic at hand, you can develop an outline. Another process is creating a mind map. But structure should not dictate creation, thus, maintaining flexibility will allow your work to flow naturally, intuitively, and at least somewhat improvisationally.

#8 Epistemological Evaluation

Have you woven through the POET with the nine dimensions of bricolage? You might want to review the nine dimensions presented earlier. Remember, this is not a call to weave through in a linear manner. An intuitive, flexible approach is the call and all of the dimensions will braid together. Upon analysis, it may be difficult or impossible to determine where one dimension ends and another begins. Questions you might consider include: have you incorporated many different perspectives, including subjugated and indigenous knowledge? Have you used Kincheloe’s recommended criteria? Does the paper flow logically? Are your positions well supported? You may want to do some additional research and/or interpretation and weave these into the discourse to strengthen certain areas of the paper. Have you constructed new knowledge or a unique understanding of your chosen topic? If so, be sure to acknowledge that in the paper, perhaps in the conclusion.

#9 Final Edits and Proofreading

When you’re satisfied you have covered the most relevant perspectives for the focus you’ve selected and developed the important themes or metaphors for your topic, work through the final editing and proofreading. Stay open to additions and changes during the process; you may find that you have epiphanies or you synchronistically come across something important that adds insight to what you’ve presented. You may want to develop subthemes or subtitles and rearrange the order slightly during this stage. When you’re satisfied with the results, do a final proofreading.

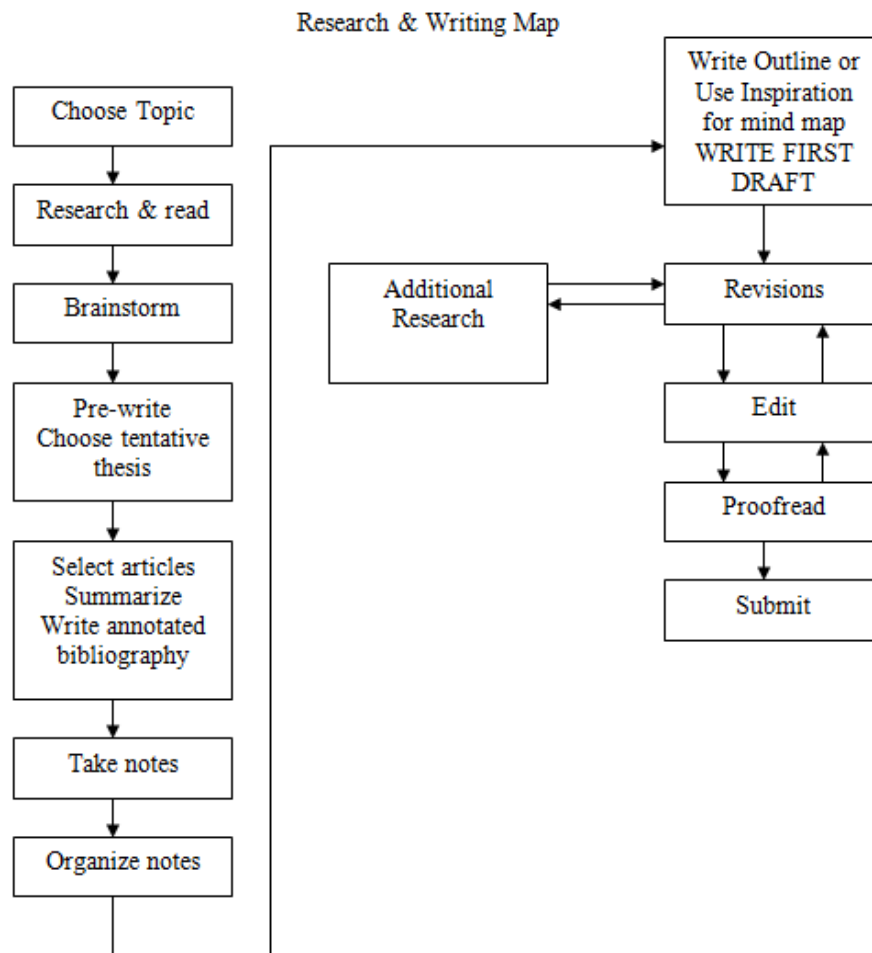
In the Appendix I've included three A papers I actually wrote for college courses in order to provide examples of how different perspectives can be used for high school and college papers. These papers are not representative of having gone through the bricolage process, but rather demonstrate very early skills of using multiple perspectives and synthesizing them into a coherent position paper or exploratory research paper. They provide examples of what to aim for, minimally, and are adequate for high school and early college students. The full bricolage process as presented in this book will provide a more in depth paper and produce new knowledge, so the more you can practice these skills, the better prepared you will be for more advanced applications of bricolage. For examples of the expert use of the multidimensional critical complex bricolage, Kincheloe's books are exemplary since he had developed the process and used it in his own research upon which his books are based.

Also, I've included a thorough Reference and Recommended Readings list for further information.

I hope this introduces you sufficiently to what will ultimately develop into a more complex and fun process the more you use it. If you are ready to advance to higher levels, there is ample free information, including [Kincheloe's articles about bricolage](#) as well as [my dissertation](#) which demonstrates the process--and I will be adding curricular materials for students and teachers on the www.joekincheloe.us website. And be sure to check back at www.paradispublications.com for our next book in the series—*Taking It to the Next Level: The Multidimensional Critical Complex Bricolage* in which I will cover more about fourth dimension research, a topic I'm fascinated in but still learning more about.

Research & Writing Map

Below is a standard research and writing map as typically recommended in traditional writing courses. How might you revise this map to fit the bricolage research process as described in this book, tailored for your own individualized use? What specific data gathering methods, interpretive processes, “fourth dimension” research, etc. would you incorporate, and where? Review this book for possibilities, and as you practice, develop a new, tentative map. The map can grow and evolve as you learn more about the multidimensional critical complex bricolage and develop additional skills.



Happy Writing!

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Appendix

Sample Paper #1

The Little Ice Age

Temperature fluctuations and climate changes on earth have always occurred. While the threat of global warming looms in the future, the study of past changes draws increasing interest. Some of the research suggests that we may have less impact on global temperatures than is commonly assumed. Geological evidence has been and continues to be collected and analyzed in order to understand the past changes in climate and to better predict future climate changes. The Little Ice Age that impacted life between the 1600's and 1700's provides a well-documented example of a recent major climate change. It is significant both for the information and knowledge it provides, and for providing the opportunity to view the issue of global climate change from a new perspective.

Climate change is a fact of earth. Some climate changes have been slow and progressive changes. Others such as those precipitated by volcanic eruptions have occurred more rapidly. Most major climate changes have occurred so long ago that there is no written documentation surrounding the occurrences by which we can correlate them with geological evidence. This geological evidence, in the form of ocean floor sediment samples, ice core samples, and dendrochronology (the study of annual growth rings of trees), has provided information about the numerous fluctuations of global climate change throughout the ages. There have been multiple periods throughout the earth's history of repeating ice ages, followed by warming periods.¹

The Little Ice Age is particularly informative because along with geological information, there is also written documentation that can be correlated with it and provide additional data. The Little Ice Age is believed to have begun about 1550, when global temperatures began to drop. The cooling trend continued for nearly 300 years, dropping the global mean temperature by 0.5 degree Celsius. Glaciers increased in size and advanced down river canyons. Severe winters were experienced in the Northern hemisphere, along with cooler summers, changes in rainfall, and wind shifts. The year 1618 is noted as an especially severe year with essentially no summer in the Northeastern United States. Every time crops were planted, they were destroyed by the cold weather. The growing season was shortened by 10% during the coldest portion of the Little Ice Age. In Europe there were famines, and millions of people are thought

¹ Ahrens, 2001

to have perished due to malnutrition and weakened immune systems that prevented them from fighting off diseases. Beginning in 1900 and until 1940, following the cold spell, temperatures rose by 0.5 degree Celsius. Then the temperature gradually cooled slightly over the next 25 years. The global warming today that is causing concern began about 30 years ago, and is commonly attributed to the release of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels. A better understanding of past global temperature changes could provide better evidence today as to whether we are, in fact, causing this warming trend.

Since the Little Ice Age occurred long before the Industrial Revolution and its introduction of the burning of fossil fuels, scientists can be fairly certain that it was a completely natural occurrence. It can be regarded as a typical and normal fluctuation in global climate, and therefore by learning more about it, we can gain a better understanding of climate change. Some scientists today believe that the slight global warming we are experiencing today is simply a naturally occurring “recovery period from the Little Ice Age.”²

Written documentation during the Little Ice Age includes the first readings from rain gauges and thermometers. Since monthly temperature records began in 1659, we also have actual temperature data. Other documentation studied includes old journals, shipping logs, taxation schedules, settlement and community records, crop production records, literature, and art. It is believed that tracking wheat and grain prices during the period of time of the Little Ice Age will give an indication of weather severity. The information gained from these documents in combination with geological evidence indicates that the temperatures were about 1-2 degrees Celsius cooler than they are today.

Several theories have been postulated concerning what precipitated the Little Ice Age. Among the most accepted are volcanic activity, sunspots, and shifts in ocean currents. All three theories have supporting evidence. The negative feedback loop, in all cases, probably made the cooling trend become somewhat self-perpetuating. Increased snowfall and the albedo effect, whereby the sun's radiation is reflected away from the earth probably led to even further reductions in temperature.

The historical records indicate that there were several major volcanic eruptions throughout the world during the time of the Little Ice Age. Volcanoes eject large amounts of gases and dusts into the atmosphere that act as condensation nuclei. These sulfur compounds remain in the atmosphere for years, clouding the lower atmosphere and reducing the amount of sunlight that can reach the earth, thus causing a reduction in temperatures. If this lasts for an extended period of time, the occurrence could potentially invoke an ice age. This is another theory that also has supporting evidence relative to the cause of the Little Ice Age.

² Cutler, Alan; 1997

The sunspot theory suggests that magnetic storms on the sun occur approximately every 11 years and increase sun energy by 0.1 percent or more during this activity. It has been documented that there was a near absence of sunspot activity during the Little Ice Age, which lends credence to this theory.³ Again, an extended period of time of no sunspot activity is thought to be capable of reducing temperatures to the point of causing an ice age.

Another theory attributes the cooling trend of the Little Ice Age to the shutting down of the “Great Ocean Conveyor” – that is, circulating ocean currents. One of the most important of these currents is the Gulf Stream in the North Atlantic. The Gulf Stream brings warm water up from the tropics north and then eastward, keeping temperatures warmer than they would be otherwise. It is believed that this circulation system shuts down on a regular basis, thus causing a cooling in temperatures. Some scientists believe that ocean circulation system shut down during the Little Ice Age. There are concerns today that this could happen again in the near future, and potentially last for hundreds of years.⁴ It has been found that the salinity level of the Atlantic Ocean is decreasing significantly, possibly due to the melting of polar ice during the process of global warming over the past few years. The decrease in salinity prevents the cold ocean water from sinking as it would normally, and thus circulating to keep the warm water moving up to North America from the equator. If the circulation of the Atlantic Ocean were to stop, this could result in extremely cold weather along the Atlantic, and into Europe, just as appears to have happened during the Little Ice Age.

While some theories propose that the Industrial Revolution led to the temperatures becoming warmer, recent research indicates that the Little Ice Age ended suddenly rather than gradually as would be predicted with gradual increases in greenhouse gases. Ice core data obtained in Wyoming indicate that the Little Ice Age ended within the span of 10 years.⁵ If that were the case, it would be difficult to continue to attribute the warming to manmade causes, which have been gradual.

More research is being done in an attempt to answer the many questions surrounding the occurrence of the Little Ice Age and the warming period that has followed. Whatever was the cause of the Little Ice Age – and it may very well have been the combination of factors rather than one specific cause – climate change is a natural occurrence that will continue to occur. While it is important to try to understand and attribute causes, it is also important to keep an open mind and to not oversimplify or overreact. Studying the Little Ice Age in more depth will continue to provide clearer answers and understanding relative to the global

³ Ahrens, 2001

⁴ Gagosian, 2002

⁵ Schuster, 2001

warming phenomenon that we seem to be experiencing today - as well as a better understanding of the Ice Ages of the past.

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Sample Paper # 2

History of Science: Final Essay Question

From the material presented in this course, the history of science can readily be viewed as forward moving in a straight line of progression. This necessarily involves the separation of culture from science, even though culture created science. Society's progression is circular and it is society's *utilization* (or lack of utilization) of science that creates an illusion of science developing in a circular fashion, and thus appearing to regress before making more progress. It's also a result of leaving out big chunks of the history of science, or of only considering Western science as if Western culture was the only one that had a part in scientific progress.

It is justified to view science as a separate entity from culture for the purpose of analyzing how science itself has progressed. The science, once developed is available for human use and further development because it has been documented. In fact, as the class notes indicate, "Many historians argue that the advent of writing was integral to the development of science." (Module 2). While Lindberg gives more credit for scientific progress during the Middle Ages than may be warranted, it is not necessary to do so in order to show that science has proceeded along a straight line of progression. As the class notes present, "...misplaced emphasis [on Roman and Medieval Science] leads the reader to believe that more intellectual vigor existed [within] Roman academia and early Christianity than actually existed." And the notes continue, "It is more accurate to note the decline of ancient science and the spread of a general ignorance in such matters." (Class Notes, Module 8).

While this may appear to be in opposition to the premise that science continues its "forward movement in a straight line of progression," if one considers that science has a utilitarian function for societies, then this still fits the metaphor. That society constrains science for its particular social purpose of the times is not to say that science itself has digressed. Lindberg wanted to show the linear development of science for Western science. This led him to attempt to prove that even during the Middle Ages, science did not regress, but made worthy progress. Had he not limited his dissertation to proving this for Western science, or had he separated the science from the culture, he could have more freely discussed how *little* science was actually utilized during that particular period. Society did not need it, at least not at the level at which it had developed by that time. It wasn't that science regressed, although it also did not advance significantly for Western culture.

Lindberg at times stretched his discussions to make a statements such as, "...the church was one of the major patrons – perhaps *the* major patron – of scientific learning." And then have to qualify the statement: "Its patronage may have been limited and selective, but limited

and selective patronage is better than no patronage at all.” (Lindberg, p. 151). It is more often argued that the church and culture of the Middle Ages had a very negative impact on scientific development. Civilizations have risen and fallen throughout history, thus the circular utilization of science makes sense. However, science and its technological developments were picked up by a new culture where the old culture had left off, and the new culture continued its progression. Science did progress during the Middle Ages within the Islamic civilization.

When mankind needs science, he is very adept at utilizing it and taking it to further levels. The Egyptians needed geometry and mathematics for the creation of their massive pyramids and for the purposes of tax collections. This was possible for them due to the writing system they developed, and yet, at the same time it was constrained by their writing system. The Mesopotamians developed mathematics and astronomy further as a response to their need for creating more order in their lives. Frankfort expresses this as an attempt to counteract the unpredictability they were subjected to continuously: “If we were to try to single out a typically Mesopotamian feature, we would perhaps point to the degree to which this people found and emphasized organized relationships of the powers they recognized.” (Frankfort, p. 133). Thus, the societal need to gain more predictability was a highly motivating factor for utilizing and further developing the science of astronomy and mathematics. While Egyptian and Mesopotamian medicine was mythopoeic in nature, they nevertheless made significant contributions. As Lindberg states, “...we have concrete evidence of the influence of Egyptian medical belief and practice.” (Lindberg, p. 111).

The Greeks took the Mesopotamian and Egyptian scientific knowledge to the next level. They had ample leisure time, developed a phonetic alphabet that was easy for anyone to use, and removed the gods from the science. “...the philosophically minded Greeks viewed nature as separate from the gods. . . . nature existed before the gods, and as such, it necessarily ran according to its own laws.” (Class Notes, Module 4). This opened up scientific discourse to ask new kinds of questions. “They sought to understand the process of change.” (Lindberg, p. 26). “They created a conception of nature that has served as the foundation of scientific belief and investigation in the intervening centuries.” (Lindberg, p. 44).

The Greeks documented their scientific advancements and it was available to future cultures. “Aristotle’s biology is so good that modern biologists familiar with the animals he describes can recognize these animals almost instantly just from the descriptions.” (Class Notes, Module 6). Theophrastus applied Aristotle’s teachings to botany and “...described the appearance of plants as well as describing their various parts....[and]....growing conditions under which they thrived.” (Class Notes, Module 6).

Greek medicine was still quite mythopoeic, due to cultural constraints. “While the philosophical elite discussed natural processes without recourse to supernatural powers, the

more numerous farmer, craftsmen, and traders still turned to the gods for help in times of crisis.” (Class Notes, Module 6). Therefore medical practices were diverse “. . . ranging from basic surgery and the use of internal medicines to religious incantations and dream healing.” (Lindberg, p. 111). Hippocratic medicine thus developed “alongside traditional healing practices.” (Lindberg, p.113). The desire was to elevate the practice of medicine to make it “self-regulating” and appear more professional. (Lindberg, p. 115). “The tools for the development of rational medicine had been acquired years before through the work of the Pre-Socratics.” (Class Notes, module 6).

Other Greek contributions to science include Dioscorides and his catalog of diseases and medicinal treatments, Euclid and his systemization of geometry, and Ptolemy for his more accurate system of cosmology. Each of these scientific advances would later influence further developments. “*The Elements of Euclid* ...is of such great pedagogical value that it was used in thousands of school well into the twentieth century.” (Class Notes, Module 6).

After the Romans captured Greece, the scientific advances were inherited, but the priorities changed. “...science or natural philosophy beyond the basics, was rarely valued except as an amusement,” (Lindberg, p. 137). Scientific and natural philosophical works became translated – and watered down – later into Latin, and took the form of condensed encyclopedias. The Roman contribution to science was in the form of engineering, road construction, and architecture – “Anything that could help keep the Empire together was considered good.” (Class Notes, Module 7). When political instability set in, communication between the West and the Greek East diminished. An economic downturn resulted in less leisure time for academic pursuits. By the year 524, “Rome had managed to preserve and transmit the Greek intellectual tradition only in a thin and limited version.” (Lindberg, p.149).

The church constrained the use of science even further. While scholarly pursuits were encouraged to some degree, it was “...only insofar as it contributed to religious ends. Science and natural philosophy were extremely marginal to this enterprise – although not entirely absent.” (Lindberg, p. 156). Lindberg thus goes as far as to credit the religious culture for “preservation and transmission” of science during the Middle Ages. According to Lindberg, without the monasteries for this purpose, “Western science would not have had more science, but less.” (Lindberg, p.157). While I am not totally convinced by Lindberg’s argument, it is irrelevant to the issue of science proceeding in a linear forward movement. Science was not needed during the Middle Ages, society had backslid and religious priorities constrained science. This does not imply that science itself had backslid. The story was quite the opposite for the East.

Constantinople, later known as the Byzantine Empire, was not experiencing the social and political unrest to the same degree as the Romans. This allowed for “the preservation and

eastward diffusion of the Greek heritage into Asia, where it would subsequently be absorbed into Islamic culture.” (Lindberg, p. 165). The excellent translations of Greek works into Arabic would prove to be a huge plus for future scientific development both in the Islamic world, and then later for the Western world. According to Lindberg, for the Islamic society “Science was justified by virtue of its utility.” (Lindberg, p. 177).

It’s difficult to ascertain exactly what Lindberg was intending with the emphasis of the utilitarian aspect of science by the Islamic culture. Studying the development of science could lead one to conclude that the primary reason science develops further is due to utilitarian aspects, and that most cultures justify it for this reason. Perhaps he is pointing out the contrast between science as technology and science in the form of an intellectual pursuit as happened in Greek culture. However, one could argue that even in Greek culture, science advancements were made out of a utilitarian motivation. Many of them had so much leisure time that they were bored and therefore had to find something to do – so they spent much of that time thinking and writing down their thoughts.

Lynn White, quoted in the article, *Introduction to Muslim Science*, states, “The very creative new Islamic civilization incorporated and perpetuated technical achievements of Greece and Rome...[in the form of] scientific discoveries in their thousands, artistic creativity, great architecture, huge libraries, hospitals, universities, mapping of the world, discovery of the sky, and much more....the idea of so called Dark Ages was only applicable to the western portion of the Roman Empire....” The class notes discuss the Islamic contribution to medicine as “the most notable contributions to the history of medicine.” (Class Notes, Module 9). Al-Razi, as discussed in the notes, a physician, documented case studies and descriptions that greatly increased knowledge of diseases. He wrote what was basically a medical textbook that was used “well into modern age.” The *Canon*, a medical text written by Avicenna provided Europe a source for much of their lost knowledge. (Class Notes, module 9).

Western science owes much to the contribution, preservation, and transmission of Islamic scientific progress, as well as the preservation of Greek knowledge. As Lindberg states, “Fortunately, before the products of Islamic science could be lost, contact was made with Christendom, and the process of cultural transmission began anew. Western society was now ready - for utilitarian reasons more than for any other reason. The economy was good, life was good, nature was good, and new technology was needed for the growing civilization’s needs. When the Europeans began the effort to reclaim the Iberian Peninsula and cities such as Toledo were taken over, it was discovered that the libraries contained a wealth of knowledge. With the new philosophy of education from the schoolmasters of Chartre and the importance of Greek science and philosophy, the culture that constrained science had been removed. (Class Notes, Module 10). It was time for a “rebirth.”

In conclusion, when analyzing science from the “big picture” point of view, it is fairly easy to comprehend its progression as linear. It is, however, necessary to filter out the many nuances of scientific thought and developments, which may be shown to be circular. While it may be possible to show circular development, it would require becoming somewhat lost within the nuances. I have to agree with Plato: “The soul, peering out from its prison, is able to perceive only these flickering shadows, and the ignorant claim that this is all there is to reality.” (Lindberg, p. 37).

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Sample Paper #3

Consciousness Construction:

Escaping the Circular Arguments of Instructivism vs. Constructivism

Submitted in partial fulfillment of

ED 7700 Learning Theory and Educational Process

Submitted by

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Consciousness Construction:

Escaping the Circular Arguments of Instructivism vs. Constructivism

Cognitive Load as an Argument for Instructivism

Cognitive load is an important consideration in today's Information Age in which students are bombarded with excessive amounts of unfiltered and unanalyzed knowledge from many different directions. Combine that with the expectation that they are required to know ever more bits of knowledge, or "factoids" so that they are able to pass the increasing numbers of standardized tests required for moving from grade level to grade level or to earn a high school diploma, and one can readily see that there is too much expected of students, too much in terms of cognitive load. In fact, it is a recipe for disaster when one considers the impact of this struggle on their emotional well being and sense of success and it is no surprise that increasing numbers of students are giving up and dropping out of high school. Thus, the need to memorize random bits of data combined with the use of constructivist approaches that have them constructing the somewhat elusive knowledge the teacher is expecting of them and sorting through all of the information they are exposed to in the process, places huge demands on learners that likely exceed cognitive load capacity. Thus, the argument here is for a greater focus on instructivist teaching to help learners understand what they need to focus on, sort through the vast amounts of information, and create learning projects that are well defined, all with the goal of helping reduce cognitive load so that more students might be successful. The fact is with most constructivist teaching there is a preconceived and expected product, so in

that sense, the cognitive load capacity often becomes exceeded from trying to figure out what it is that the teacher wants, before even confronting the vast information one encounters during the construction of that product. Trying to figure out what the teacher is after is not only demanding on cognitive load, but is also very stressful for the student, even frustrating, especially when teachers are elusive, evasive, or simply not clear in their expectations, which further exacerbates the problem.

Driscoll (2005) cites constructivist teaching as a method that places high cognitive demands on learners. Constructivist methodologies as they are typically practiced should be minimized due to the immense strain they place on cognitive load. Constructivist teaching places a burden on the students in that they need to figure out what it is that the teacher wants them to construct. It is deceptive in the sense that it feigns a new creation, but in reality, a specific creation emanates from the assignment by the pieces the instructor has asked the students to construct along the way. Invariably, the construction of new knowledge is not encountered during the typical “constructivist” assignment. If it were to allow construction of new knowledge, the pieces of information may not loom as such an overwhelming proposition for students since they would be directing their own show, so to speak. But this does not happen in most classrooms. Students are handed instructivist directions for the pieces they are to use in the construction of the final creation.

There is stress involved in being forced to develop these new pieces and not knowing where or how they are going to fit in the final product. More than once, I, as a student, have literally worked backwards on my assignment because I needed to see where I am heading with

this “constructivist” approach so that the pieces will indeed get me there. I have now engaged in so many of these constructivist projects that I no longer do that. I just try to trust the process, but the problem with this approach is that it still causes stress due to not really knowing where the project is heading, which for me impacts my cognitive load capacity and it also causes me frustration because I am not being allowed to truly create my own knowledge as I would wish. I have worked on projects that took me in one direction because that was where I needed to go for a grade in the course, while my heart went in another direction, thus causing me stress and frustration because I did not have time to do the research and creation that direction would have taken me.

What I am contending here is that the constructivist approaches are not truly constructivist, but often only a contrived method to getting students to learn predetermined knowledge. This is often born out by the fact that so many students in the courses that use this practice, end up with nearly identical products. It makes sense that they would be very similar since students use the same instructional materials, reading assignments, and directions. Unfortunately, as I have been contending, this only adds to the stress and cognitive load because it becomes more a matter of trying to figure out what the teacher wants and, in addition, it does not at all acknowledge that “different individuals coming from diverse backgrounds will see the world in different ways” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 9). Forcing perceptions on individuals that they perhaps have difficulty with is bound to have an impact on cognitive load, if not on levels of stress that can negatively impact learning. Thus, constructivism as it is often implemented ignores social context of learning, a very critical factor involved with cognition (Kincheloe, 2005). In addition, there is no evidence supporting teaching with minimal

guidance, but on the contrary, direct instruction has been shown to be more effective for teaching novice learners (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006).

Shown to be a superior method is a more guided form of learning, such as occurs with instructivism or direct instruction (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). “Direct instructional guidance is defined as providing information that fully explains the concepts and procedures that students are required to learn as well as learning strategy support that is compatible with human cognitive architecture” (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006, p.75). Immediately, the working memory is freed up, therefore learning is more likely to occur; whereas, in the constructivist scenario, the working memory’s effort dedicated to figuring out what is supposed to be done, or how to solve a problem hampers learning – or what is defined as “a change in long-term memory” (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). Once the burden of trying to decipher what it is exactly we need to be doing or learning, cognitive resources can be dedicated toward more appropriate and effective activities, given today’s educational expectations, such as memorizing important vocabulary and concepts needed for communicating as experts in a particular discipline or to pass the standardized tests.

Another issue with constructivist teaching is the fact that in order for it to be most effective, it must not only be contextual, but it must be authentic. Rarely are learning activities created that present truly authentic situations. On the job learning is more likely to create this type of scenario, and then the motivation for learning can compensate for the extra demand on cognitive load, at least rendering the constructivist approach more effective than in a typical classroom setting. If instructors were to take time to truly create authentic learning situations

that match the working world or otherwise real world for the learner, the amount of time and resources, considering the actual benefit, would not be justified. For example, if one were to follow Gagne's instructional design principles, all desired course outcomes need to be considered. We often have no idea how a learner will be using the information in some future environment, so it is somewhat futile to spend a lot of time attempting to speculate a multitude of possible outcomes and designing a course with "authentic" activities that may or may not transfer to future settings.

Escaping Circular Arguments

The arguments presented thus far are missing the boat as far as what is crucial in understanding the relationships between consciousness, cognition, learning, and the complexity of today's world. The factors highlighted have remained fixated on the scientific objectivist views that limit variables for an extremely complex process, when a more suitable learning approach would be to help learners operate within "ambiguity and complexity" with a skill which Varela defines as "intelligent awareness" and which Vajrayana Buddhism refers to as "crazy wisdom" (Kincheloe, 2005). This form of awareness allows one to jump in and out of various perspectives or perceptions in order to sift out essential, important, and relevant knowledge. This exposes the *real* craziness behind promoted socially-constructed perspectives that limit conceptual understandings and blind views to only those that are presumably "objective" (but deceptive) knowledges that filter out complex and critical variables from consideration. Thus, perspectives are narrowly defined or even restricted to one "right" way of being in the world. Educational psychology, and in this example with the argument between

instructivism and constructivism, as in any number of other issues one might cite within this same paradigm, attempts to explain a complex notion with a paradigm that is not structured to handle the complexity in our world. Nor does it free up cognitive ability of the learners in order to freely deal with this complexity. In a sense, we enter a “crazy-making” scenario that is essentially contending that our world is much less complex than we know to be true. This applies with constructivism because, as has been pointed out, rarely if ever do educational uses of constructivism acknowledge the true complexity from which knowledge should be constructed nor the political and social aspects that create the limitations typically placed on learners. As Kincheloe (2005) explains,

Educational psychology becomes not a liberating force but a producer of social risks that threaten the well-being of particular individuals. This moves the discipline long away from the goals of its humanistic origins. The hyperrationality of the positivistic articulation of the discipline with its standardized methods, narrow linear thinking, distance from a naturalistic context and universal application of techniques and assumptions sets up psychology and the schools it has helped construct for failure. Because such hyperrationality refuses to consider the sociopolitical roles of psychological activities, it produces a bureaucracy of rule-following technocrats” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 62).

In other words, we must move away from taking positions that would have teachers following this or that method, whether an instructivist or a constructivist approach, in this or that particular set of circumstances. Circumstances are always more complex than they would first appear, and inherent in these approaches is the lack of acknowledgment of the political and social forces behind the decisions for which approach to use and when it should be used. As Kincheloe attests, “a critical constructivist educational purpose becomes an act of resistance,

a counter-hegemonic struggle” (2005, p, 62). This challenge does not seek to uncover “conspiracies,” but rather to reveal what typically operates in our educational environments as “common sense” – the “unconscious inscription of dominant cultural norms and values onto the nature of psychological knowledge production” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 61).

This, of course, brings up a consideration of consciousness construction, which educational psychology deemphasizes because of the inability of science to adequately define consciousness. As Varela has posed, (as cited in Kincheloe, 2005), does ignoring this hole in our understanding make it go away? From the critical constructivist position, it becomes clear that we can construct our own intelligence by taking a more active role in our own consciousness construction. A survey of how human consciousness is constructed by the various outside social and political forces reveals that “the self is more malleable, more open to change than we had previously imagined. Given one’s motivation, of course, this dimension of selfhood can be mobilized for great benefit or manipulated for great harm” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 57). Thus, we can allow others the power to tell us how to think, or we can become empowered to learn to think for ourselves and use that power to the benefit of humankind and making the world a better place for everyone.

Kincheloe synthesizes Varela’s enactivism theory and acknowledges a form of knowledge production deriving from a type of wisdom that operates within these more complex situations – an intelligent awareness that “gains numerous levels of understanding on the origins of his or her perspective.” This leads to a form of “meta-awareness” in which we are able to make connections to “diverse dimensions of the socio-physical world around us”

(Kincheloe, 2005, p. 57). Thus, this points to a form of improvisational learning as a more appropriate mode of knowledge production for our current highly complex world. The beauty of this approach is that it recognizes and addresses diversity automatically with its focus on the attainment of multiple perspectives, an endeavor that is so perfectly suitable given the vast amounts of information we are confronted with. Until we acknowledge the complexity of the world around us, the nature by which human consciousness can be formed, the political and social forces that shape our consciousness, the ability for learners to take active control of the formation of their own consciousness, and the realization that none of this is possible within the tightly bounded arguments such as one which merely poses when to use instructivism and when to use constructivism, education is confined to being one that limits consciousness construction, knowledge production, and human potential.

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