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2018

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

(Re) Constructing Youth Offender Identities
through Digital Storytelling in a
Restorative Conferencing Program

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Social Welfare

by

Jordan Morris

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

(Re) Constructing Youth Offender Identities through Digital Storytelling in a
Restorative Conferencing Program

by

Jordan Morris

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Todd M Franke, Chair

This dissertation study contributes to the research on restorative conferencing with youth offenders by exploring the ways digital storytelling provided unique opportunities for participants in the Young New Yorkers program to engage in restorative justice values and critically reflect on their crime. Using narrative identity theory as a theoretical lens, and multimodality as an analytic framework, findings suggest that the YNY program's curriculum scaffolds restorative justice values through a narrative identity work to assist participants in the deconstruction of their crimes. Analysis of participant digital stories demonstrated participants took personal responsibility for their crimes and were able to identify the individual and environmental factors which promoted their criminal behavior. Further, participants were able to critically reflect on their offense and enhance their capacity to contribute to and work in collaboration with others in their community. Findings from this study highlight the affordances

of digital storytelling as a practice for engaging youth in re-storying their offender identities promoting the development of a prosocial identity.

This dissertation of Jordan Morris is approved.

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2018

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Until September of 2019, New York will be the only state in the country that defines 16- and 17-year-old defendants as criminally responsible adults. Nearly 50,000 16- and 17-year-olds are prosecuted annually in New York's adult criminal justice system (Rempel, Lambson, Cadoret, & Franklin, 2013). 16- and 17-year-olds are processed in the same courtroom and jails as their adult counterparts. They are rarely offered diversion options and can potentially face adult jail and prison sentences. Further, recent investigations by the United States Attorney General and the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York provide evidence of the negative treatment of minors in the adult jails (Weiser & Schwritz, 2014).

In August 2014, a report from a multi-year civil investigation was released on the conditions of confinement of adolescent male inmates on Rikers Island focused on the use of force by New York City Department of Correction (DOC) staff, inmate-on-inmate violence, and use of punitive segregation during the period 2011-2013. The investigation concluded that adolescent inmates are subjected to the rampant use of unnecessary and excessive force by staff and by other prisoners (Weiser & Schwritz, 2014). The report additionally showed DOC relies heavily on punitive segregation as a disciplinary measure, often placing adolescent inmates in solitary confinement for excessive periods. This report coincides with academic research about physical abuse and excessive forces by staff, sexual abuse, overdependence on isolation and restraint, and unchecked violence in correctional institutions housing minors (Abrams, 2013; Ferone, Salsich, & Fratello, 2014; Mendel, 2011). Research has further shown that youth transferred to the criminal system are more likely to commit new offenses, more quickly and more often (Fagan & Zimring, 2000). In contrast to 16 and 17 year olds, offenders 15 and

younger are processed in New York State's juvenile justice system and are treated in a strikingly distinct manner in that they receive more rehabilitative services.

Youth processed through the juvenile justice system participate in a probation intake process, which often results in diversion from formal prosecution. When prosecuted, the cases are referred to family court. Additionally, within the juvenile justice system youth have greater access to age-appropriate services, throughout the criminal proceedings, whether as part of the initial probation diversion, while their court case is underway, or as a court-ordered requirement of the final case disposition (Lee, Cheesman, Rottman, Swaner, Lambson, Rempel & Curtis, 2013). The outcomes of juvenile cases furthermore do not result in a criminal finding, while 16- and 17-year olds in the adult system can receive a permanent criminal record, which could adversely affect future employment and other opportunities. In an effort to improve the judicial response to 16- and 17-year old offenders, the Center for Court Innovation (CCI) assisted the New York State Court System pilot the Adolescent Diversion Program in the fall of 2011.

Adolescent Diversion Programs. Chief Judge of the State of New York and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals Jonathan Lippman initiated legislation for some 16- and 17-year-olds to have their cases prosecuted in a Youth Division within adult criminal courts (Rempel, et al., 2013). Further, Judge Lippman implemented a pilot Adolescent Diversion Program (ADP) on January 17, 2012, in nine of the state's counties, including the five boroughs of New York City, Erie, Nassau, Westchester, and Onondaga. The ADP initiative established specialized processes for handling 16- and 17-year-old defendants within the adult criminal justice system (Rempel, et al., 2013). In all, the ADP initiative is intended to provide a response to adolescent criminal behavior; reduce the use of conventional criminal penalties, and to achieve these benefits without jeopardizing public safety (Rempel, et al., 2013).

To accomplish these goals, the ADP initiative created programming focusing on restorative justice philosophies and practices, which advocates responding to crime by establishing programs to preclude youth from committing criminal acts as well as working with those who have committed criminal acts (Knoll & Sickmund, 2012). Restorative justice represents an alternative to the current adversarial justice process in New York that often concludes with a punitive outcome. Restorative justice practices rely on “building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision making” (Wachtel & McCold, 2004, p. 3). These initiatives can be implemented as alternatives to incarceration, suspension, and expulsion for offenses comparable to misconduct, such as bullying, assaults, drugs, and property damage (Umbreit & Armour, 2010).

Problem Statement

Given this context, it is evident that we need a greater comprehension of the value, and effectiveness of, alternative programs aimed at youthful offenders 16 to 17 years of age, in contrast to traditional criminal justice approaches. Latimer, Dowden and Muise (2005) suggests that restorative initiatives hold promise for achieving increased community and victim involvement in the judicial process, greater victim and community satisfaction with the case outcomes, improved offender compliance with restitution, increased perceptions of procedural fairness, and a reduction in recidivism rates (McCold & Wachtel, 1998). As a result, restorative justice practices have the potential to complement punitive retributive discipline and, potentially, decrease the number of children who are adjudicated and incarcerated for minor infractions within the criminal court systems (Latimer et al., 2005). Thus, while there are a number of models that incorporate the principles and theories of restorative justice, to date our understanding is limited to quantitative studies.

Restorative conferencing is a restorative justice model that engages a broader group of individuals (e.g., community members and agents of the criminal justice system) in the resolution of the offense (Rodriguez, 2007). Restorative conferencing, also known as family conferencing or group conferencing, originated in New Zealand and was based primarily on the ancient tradition of the Maori as a “means of diverting young offenders from formal adjudication” (Bradshaw & Roseborough 2005, p. 2). Past research on restorative conferencing with youth in the United States focuses on quantitative research and has found positive outcomes related to victim and offender satisfaction, reparation, reintegration, and reduction in recidivism (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2002). Although there is a growing body of research evidence of the efficacy of restorative conferencing processes, some argue that this research has contributed relatively little to understanding of the participants’ accounts of their experiences (Forget, 2003). According to Bazemore and Green (2007), the implementation of qualitative analyzes is critical to determining how restorative justice programs are implemented and how offenders understand restorative justice values and principles, to make effective interventions for rehabilitating offenders. Thus, it is essential to conduct research, which describes and interprets the restorative conferencing processes. Within the ADP initiative at the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, New York, the Young New Yorkers program provides an ideal opportunity to gather this knowledge.

The Young New Yorkers Program. The Young New Yorkers (YNY) is an eight-week court-mandated, restorative justice media-arts program for 16- and 17-year-olds possessing at least two characteristics: participants were charged with either a violent or non-violent misdemeanor, and they have open cases. Eligible defendants have the option to participate in Young New Yorkers rather than do jail time, and have a lifelong criminal record. Participants in

the YNY workshops that satisfy the other requirements of their sentencing can avoid jail time, get their criminal charges dismissed, and criminal records sealed.

The program uses the combination of restorative conferencing philosophies and media arts practices, specifically digital storytelling. Each workshop is framed by a relevant theme: community, choice, accountability, responsibility, contribution, and leadership. These topics are explored, as they relate to each participant, in conversation with the group and through utilizing various digital activities, such as photography, video, illustration, and design. The workshops culminate in a final exhibition, which includes digital stories about each participant's arraignment, interviews with their families about how their crimes have affected the family, reflections on their crimes, community public art ideas, and the restorative conferencing processes. This hybrid-model lends itself to the need for restorative conferencing programs to focus on participant's accounts of the process by documenting participants journey through the program and then reexamining the process at the end of the program.

Multimodal Media Production & Digital Storytelling. Due to technological enhancements and access in the 21st century, media production contains expanded possibilities for multimodal representation, shared authorship, and interactivity (Gubrium & Turner, 2011). Multimodal media production (MMP) consists of a myriad of modalities people use to understand the world they live in and express themselves, including documentaries, digital stories, computer games, youth radio, social media, blogs, wikis, and others (Turner, 2011). Digital storytelling is a one of many MMP methods non-profits and community-based organizations use to investigate individual, group or sociocultural understandings of issues of public concern, while also increasing community members' participation and input (Gubrium, 2009).

Digital storytelling uses a combination of narrative theory and multimodal frameworks as a means of changing the way individuals engage in our communities, inspiring and promoting democratized media practices and civic involvement (Couldry, 2008). YNY uses the digital storytelling process to promote restorative conferencing principles and the reconstruction of court-involved youth identities to more civic-minded identities. According to Bass & Halverson (2012), through media production and distribution experiences, participants can explore their attitudes, values and ethics and represent their changing identity. Further, the digital stories make it possible to perform and author new selves that offer both counter-narratives and new sites of inquiry and exploration (Vasudevan, 2006).

The Present Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how the YNY organization engages its youth participants in two main goals of restorative conferencing (a) critical reflection of their offense and (b) critical social empowerment to enhance participants capacity to contribute to and work in collaboration with others in their community. Critical reflection includes the participants ability to take personal responsibility for their crime and understand what emotional or materials goods they were trying to attain through their behavior. Critical social empowerment entails a participant's awareness of processes and structures that affect their everyday lives, in order to determine how to live more productively within these social spaces (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Messias, McLoughlin, 2006). The secondary purpose of this study was to investigate how the use of digital storytelling in the program may or may not have helped the participants achieve the two primary goals. To this end, the following research questions were raised with related sub-areas of investigation:

1. What are the conditions under which YNY participants' digital stories are being told?

- a. What is the structure of the YNY program?
 - b. What curriculum does YNY employ?
 - c. What are the overall goals of YNY? What does YNY hope youth participants will gain from the experience?
2. What are the personal narratives that YNY participants create about their crime, in relation to the YNY curriculum?
- a. How do the participants critically reflect about their crime?
 - b. How do participants' stories demonstrate the concept of social responsibility (ex. contribution and reconnection with the community)?
 - c. How do these stories reveal the larger social and political worlds that these participants are connected to? If so, how?
 - d. How did participants' relationships with one another influence the stories they create?
3. What role, if any, does the production of digital stories play in the processing of restorative conferencing principles?
- a. How are the various types of digital media visible in the story?
 - b. How did digital media influence their stories? How did the process of creating visual images influence the stories?
 - c. What are the participants' interpretations of the digital media parts they have selected?

Design and Methodology Overview

This study primarily involves an instrumental case study approach in which the case of implementing digital storytelling in a restorative justice program is examined to provide insight

and to facilitate understanding of the restorative conferencing process and the general use of digital storytelling practices in restorative justice interventions. In addition, the research approach is descriptive and exploratory (Yin, 2014), seeking to provide an in-depth account of YNY participants' interactions with creating their digital stories under the framework of a restorative conference. Therefore, for this study, the YNY program will be the case, while the participants in the program will be looked at as sub-units situated within the larger case. This consideration will enable the researcher to compare and contrast the themes and patterns within and across cases.

As a framework, an arts-informed methodology was also selected because this calls for the examination of all digital artifacts produced in the YNY program, to explore the interactions, experiences, and meaning constructed by YNY participants throughout the process of creating their digital story about their crime. Data was analyzed for how YNY participants recontextualized and rearticulated restorative values into their digital stories, using multimodal discourse, which contains four essential parts: discourse, design, production, and distribution (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). These four parts directly related to the research questions which focus on 1) conditions, 2) design and selection of personal stories, 3) production of a digital story through multiple forms of media, and 4) distribution of personal stories to other YNY participants, and eventually to their community.

Significance & Implications

Implementing restorative justice and multimodal media production with youth offenders signifies a positive trend in influencing adaptive behaviors that are essential to rehabilitating offenders and promoting positive youth development. As the number of adolescent diversion programs increases in response to the problem of the mass incarceration of minority youth, the

researcher believes it has become imperative to shift away from quantitative research methods to qualitative methods in order to develop an understanding of how court-involved youth are making sense of their experiences within the justice system. This dissertation asserts digital storytelling as one way for these young people to share their experiences in restorative justice programming.

Implications from this study will add to the both the restorative conferencing and digital storytelling literature. As previously mentioned, research on restorative justice conferencing has not focused on participants' perspectives of the programming. With greater information and understanding of participant's perspectives, restorative justice initiatives can be customized and improved to promote increased and more consistent behavioral and cognitive changes for youth. By exploring the role of digital storytelling in encouraging young people to engage and reflect on the world and their potential impact on it, the current study will contribute much-needed research to the digital storytelling literature (Charmaraman, 2011). Many argue for the increased use of digital storytelling and other visual modalities in research with youth and for the exploration of how these technologies are engaged and used for social positioning and identity work (Vasudevan, 2006).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review will first provide an overview of restorative justice, regarding its foundational principles, theoretical background, and types of interventions. First, the discussion will focus on restorative conferencing with youth in the United States. This literature review will draw the reader's attention to how these initiatives signify a positive trend in influencing adaptive behaviors that are essential to rehabilitating court-involved youth and promoting positive youth development. Further, this review will demonstrate the need for more qualitative research in the growing restorative conferencing literature, as much of the current research lacks participants and staff perspectives on these interventions.

The second part of the literature review will provide an overview of the importance of digital storytelling, as well as the analytic frameworks used to examine digital stories concerning self- and community portrayal. Further, the literature outlines how individuals learn through the production of digital stories. Here, the researcher hopes to show the necessity for further research on digital storytelling, as it is an emerging field, as well as a focus on how the group work within the digital storytelling process facilitates identity development.

What is Restorative Justice?

Criminologist and pioneer of the modern concept of restorative justice, Howard J. Zehr, defines it as " a process" to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (2002, p. 37). Zehr (2002) argues traditional retributive methods within the criminal justice system encourages pain for the offender in order to defend the victim. In contrast, Zehr (2002) asserts restorative justice brings together multiple stakeholders to acknowledge the harm caused by the criminal behavior and find ways to ensure

the offender does not return to criminal pursuits after being released from incarceration (Umbreit, Vos, & Coates, 2005). These purposeful activities create the potential for positive change out of an adverse situation, which otherwise often produces future negative outcomes for offenders (Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005). According to McCold (2008), "In the evolution of restorative justice, practice preceded theory. [Restorative practices] were used to respond to criminal cases before there was an understanding that these practices were 'restorative justice'" (p. 24).

Restorative justice began as a set of experimental practices or programs in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom, in the mid to late 1970s (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). These practices developed in different parts of the world but all shared common characteristics, specifically to acknowledge and repair the harm caused by wrongdoing. For example, the restorative practice that originated in New Zealand emerged with the primary intent to respond in a more culturally competent manner to the country's Maori and Pacific Island Polynesian peoples (Moore, 1993). In Canada and the United States, restorative practices emerged with strong support from the Mennonite population who sought to respond to community wrongdoing in a way that more closely reflected their religious values (Zehr, 1990/2005). Not until the 1990s did these somewhat distinct practices become grouped under the concept of restorative justice.

Foundational Principles of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice principles are grounded in human rights values, emphasizing human dignity, relationships, community, freedom, and empowerment for both the victims and the offenders (Umbreit & Armour, 2010). The foundational principles of restorative justice principles are: to maintain a focus on the harm done; emphasize the future; and to strive for

personal accountability, and inclusivity (Umbreit & Amour, 2010). Walgrave (2002) suggests, “a focus on the harm done by the offense is the key to understanding restorative justice and to distinguishing it from traditional retributive and rehabilitative justice models” (Walgrave, 2002, p. 103). An important factor in maintaining this focus is that the obligations to repair harm are attainable. The offenders are aware that they are not intended to be punitive or hurtful in order to reintegrate offenders into society so they will be less likely to re-offend in the future (Zehr, 2002). Thus, restorative justice is not solely focused on past harm; it also maintains a future orientation. “The purpose of the dialogue is to deal with the past but to do so in a future-oriented way. Indeed, the whole purpose of accountability and truth telling is to bring people into a process that contributes to the future” (Umbreit & Amour, 2011, p. 105). Finally, personal accountability in response to harm is emphasized:

Restorative practices invite offenders to respond actively to their crimes and to communicate directly with victims and members of their communities. Offenders are expected to explain their actions and to listen to what others have to say to them including how they have affected, even changed, the direction of people’s lives. In this process, they are treated both as capable of understanding and feeling, through the victim’s experience, the effects of their actions and capable of acting morally in response to the victim’s need and what they owe back. (Umbreit & Amour, 2011, p. 92).

The accountability process focuses on helping the offender become a productive member of society, which should minimize the offender’s future deviant behavior (Marshall, 2003).

A final essential principle to the practice of restorative justice is inclusivity (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). Within restorative justice, inclusivity refers to the reliance on the exchanging of ideas, discussion, and collaboration between the victim, the offender, as well as their families

and their communities. Distinctively within restorative justice, each party has a stake in the offense by partaking in a group discussion of the full picture of what happened, why, and its impact. All stakeholders can tell their story and how they were affected by the crime, and collectively decide the sentencing arrangements for the offender (Umbreit, Vos, Coates & Brown, 2003). Inclusivity refers to the principle of actively engaging persons directly affected by a particular crime in an effort to understand the criminal act and recover from its harmful effects.

Collectively, the principles that guide restorative justice include all persons directly impacted by a crime in a broad-ranging dialogue that includes subjective accounts and personal stories of how each person has been affected. Restorative justice seeks to address public safety and community protection, offender accountability, and offender competency and character development (Levrant, Cullen, Fulton & Wozniak, 1999) by rebuilding weakened informal networks of community, social control, and support (Kraft, Muck, & Bazemore, 2001). Such connections are built through restorative processes that place both victims and offenders in roles that encourage dynamic, interpersonal, and collaborative problem solving to repair the damage inflicted by the crime (Zehr, 2002). Additionally, restorative justice holds that if offenders have pro-social support systems, they are less likely to behave in a deviant manner and are more likely to behave in socially appropriate ways (Wachtel, O'Connell & Wachtel, 2010). The theory, which lays the groundwork for practitioners to assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and which has acquired wide recognition in all fields of restorative justice, reintegrative shaming.

Reintegrative Shaming Theory. According to Hosser, Windzio and Greve (2008) shame and guilt are conditions that control the reduction of deviant behavior. "... shame and

guilt can motivate persons facing several options of behavior to decide to act in a way that does not lead to the anticipated feelings of shame or guilt” (p. 150). The theory of reintegrative shaming is modeled from the social environment of a loving family, which includes the use of clear standards of conduct and punishment (Braithwaite, 1989). Within society, Braithwaite (1989) argues most sanctions consist of shaming from friends, family, and the community. The resulting guilt from the shaming process is said to serve as a social process to build our conscience and can act a form of social control when wrongdoing occurs (Monogold & Edwards, 2014).

There are two basic forms of social control, or two ways of preventing and responding to crime: disintegrative and reintegrative shaming and the latter is associated with lower crime rates (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). Braithwaite (1989) argues against disintegrative shaming as it is closely connected to stigmatization. The stigmatization in disintegrative shaming is seen as counter-productive, as it may have negative consequences for an individual’s self-esteem and self- identity (Weitekamp & Kerner, 2011). Stigmatizing offenders as rejects from the community is likely to provoke a rebellious attitude and perpetuate future criminal behavior (Braithwaite, 1989). Instead, Braithwaite promotes the notion of reintegrative shaming, as a way to reduce criminal activity.

Reintegrative shaming is opposed to the notion of shaming someone and ostracizing him or her from society. Within the criminal justice system, reintegrative shaming focuses the punishment on the criminal act instead of the individual (Braithwaite, 2006). Reintegrative shaming is “directed at the evil of the act rather than the evil of the person” (Braithwaite, p. 100, 2006). Braithwaite (1989) argues reintegrative shaming has high levels of both social control and social support to assist the offender in reintegrating back into the community successfully.

By focusing more on the criminal act and less on the identity of the offender, reintegrative shaming allows offenders separate their identities from the crime that was committed and realize that just because they did a bad thing does not make them bad (Braithwaite, 1989). The theory of reintegrative shaming provides a useful framework for understanding how the restorative justice processes work (Choi, Green, & Gilbert, 2011).

The Restorative Justice Process

All restorative justice practices have three stages: (a) preparation, (b) dialogue, and (c) follow-up (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). Preparation begins with an initial referral. During this initial stage, a facilitator meets individually or in small groups with prospective participants-victims, offenders, and other directly affected persons such as friends, family, or community members. The purpose of these meetings is to provide participants with an introduction to the nature of the process; discuss their expectations, objectives, and concerns; and set ground rules for sessions (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). Above all, within the preparation phase of restorative justice, a primary concern for facilitators is to establish a climate of safety and respect in order to have a safe space for both victims and offenders to share (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2007).

The next stage in restorative justice process is the dialogue or group discussion. This stage has two main parts: storytelling, and reparation agreements (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). The victim, the offender, and the family, friends, and key supporters of both the victim and the offender are given the opportunity to tell their stories and to express their emotions about the violations (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001). Participants construct the meaning of the crime together through these different perspectives (Shenk and Zehr, 2001). The multiple perspectives assist the offender and his or her community in the creation of a to create a joint story about the offense and identification of next steps (Shenk and Zehr, 2001).

Within the restorative justice literature, storytelling is frequently described as a valuable means to communicate thoughts and feelings. Researchers argue that participants engagement with storytelling enables them to unburden themselves of difficult or painful emotions and in doing so build bonds with others (Umbreit & Amour, 2011). The dialogue thus promotes and develops empathy, which in turn humanizes others. Storytelling can also aid the development of appropriate reparative acts.

Telling the story builds a larger perspective so that everyone present can see more than they did before. Indeed giving the full context provides an increased understanding of the offense and all that surrounds it so that participants can better see what needs to be done, by whom, and when. (Umbreit & Amour, 2011, p. 100)

Walgrave (2002) argues that by telling their stories surrounded by family and friends, offenders feel necessary remorse.

The final aspect of the restorative justice process involves reparation agreements. Reparation agreements allow offenders to play an active role in their rehabilitation (Wachtel et al., 2010). Offending youth builds social capital and learns to express themselves, which likely contributes to improved long-term outcomes such as a greater sense of capacity and stronger attitudes toward mutual responsibility and interdependence, for offending youth (Bazemore & O'Brien, 2002). Shenk and Zehr (2001) further argue that the measures of success for restorative justice are derived from the journey of healing for all participants, resulting in the increased strength of the relationships between them.

Restorative Justice as an Intervention

The previous sections of this literature review provided a historical backdrop and conceptual framework for restorative practices, the next section describes the applications of

restorative justice. Restorative justice as an intervention is referred to as restorative justice dialogue (Umbreit & Armour, 2011). This distinction separates the idea of restorative justice as a movement from its implementation. The concept of dialogue, rather than merely an act of communication, frames the restorative justice process. Umbreit & Armour (2011) posit, “a dialogue is a relational framework that has the potential to transform difficult conversations into profound experience of connectedness with ourselves, each other and the larger ecology in which we live” (p. 83). Dialogue is used as the medium to create or restore “relational justice” between victims and offenders because it provides the structure for safe and respectful engagement and offers the possibility of healing, meaningful accountability, authentic engagement, and life-generating outcomes (Umbreit & Armour, 2010).

Restorative justice interventions take on four main forms: victim-offender mediation, community reparative boards, circle sentencing, and restorative conferencing (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001). Victim-offender mediation allows the victim and offender to come together and discuss the crime that occurred as well as discuss an agreed upon the sentencing arrangements for the offender (Umbreit, 2001). The face-to-face mediation, which occurs between the victim and offender, facilitates healing for the victim and promotes remorse and healing for the offender by humanizing both parties in each other’s eyes (Abrams, Umbreit, & Gordon, 2006). In community reparative boards, the community plays a stronger role than the victim does. The offenders meet with members of the community to discuss the impact of their crimes on their communities and how their behaviors have harmed their communities (Bazemore and Umbreit, 2001). This method assists the offender in comprehending how their actions harm more than just people or property but rather affect their entire community (Bazemore and Umbreit, 2001).

Circle sentencing involves all those with a stake in the particular offense including the victims, the offenders, community members, family members, and friends. This collectivist approach brings all stakeholders together to understand the offense that occurred and to search for a manner to restore the offender, victim, community, and families (Bazemore and Umbreit, 2001). Finally, restorative conferencing includes a wider range of individuals such as members of the community and “agents of the criminal justice system” such as probation officers assigned to the offender (Bazemore and Umbreit, 2001). Restorative conferencing is usually a planned face-to-face conference in which a trained facilitator “brings together offenders, their victims, and their respective kin and communities, in order to decide what the offender should do to repair the harm that a crime has caused” (Strang, Sherman, Mayo-Wilson, Woods & Ariel, p. 2013, p. 216). This model closely resembles the framework of the YNY program, and thus will be discussed in further detail in the next section of this literature review.

Restorative Conferencing. Restorative conferencing, also known as family conferencing, group conferencing or community conferencing, originated in New Zealand and was based primarily on the ancient tradition of the Maori as a “means of diverting young offenders from formal adjudication” (Bradshaw & Roseborough 2005, p. 2). This model is most often used in juvenile offender cases and includes family members as one of the most pertinent parts of the process (Rodriguez, 2007). The use of restorative conferencing began in the field of child welfare and youth justice, but now is used in mental health, education, domestic violence, and other applications (Duncan & Dickie, 2013). Restorative conferencing is strongly supported by legislative mandates as a mechanism to reduce overcrowded courts, provide a pathway for responding to disadvantaged and overrepresented groups with greater sensitivity to cultural, and empower families to respond more effectively to the needs of children and youth (Umbreit &

Armour, 2010). Offenses that are typically resolved through restorative conferencing include theft, arson, minor assaults, drug offenses, and vandalism (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001).

Umbreit (2000) discusses four significant advantages of restorative conferencing over other models of restorative justice.

The first advantage of restorative conferencing is its incorporation of the entire community, which therefore allows for the empowerment and healing of the larger social group. Umbreit (2000) states, “By involving a broader range of people affected by the crime, far more citizens become direct stake holders in the criminal and juvenile justice processes (p. 5). Secondly, restorative conferencing recognizes a wider circle of “victims” of the crime, namely, community members and family members of both the victim and the offender. This larger circle addresses the full impact of victimization because it involves both primary and secondary victims. Third, volunteers are more likely to offer follow-up support for the victim and offender once the initial conferences are complete. This permits more people to be involved in the day-to-day reintegration of the offender back into the community. Finally, restorative conferencing acknowledges the important role of the family in a juvenile offender’s life. This connection between the offender and his/her family creates the potential for strengthening accountability and successful rehabilitation (Umbreit, 2000).

Empirical Research on Restorative Conferencing and Youth Offenders. Studies, which seek to investigate the efficacy of restorative justice interventions, focus on the satisfaction rates of victims and offenders concerning their restorative justice programs (Choi et. al, 2011). The following section will review this literature, the main findings of each study, as well as provide a discussion of what is lacking. Although limited, there are several empirical restorative conferencing studies that focus on juveniles in the United States that have found positive

outcomes related to victim and offender satisfaction, reparation, reintegration, and reduction in recidivism (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2002). Reviewing these studies and addressing these gaps is important to both the restorative justice and restorative conferencing, as it can enhance our understanding of what is working and not working within the process for all stakeholders involved.

McCold and Watchel (1998) compared first-time juvenile offenders whose cases had been processed through formal adjudication to cases diverted to a restorative conferencing intervention operated by the police in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In this study, 150 juveniles convicted of property offenses (e.g. burglary or theft) and 75 juveniles convicted of violent offenses (e.g. assault, murder, and rape) were randomly assigned to a control group (formal adjudication), restorative conferences, and offenders selected for conferencing in which the individuals involved did not participate. Data included observations of restorative conferencing sessions, interviews with participants, and an analysis of juvenile case records. McCold and Wachtel (1998) reported that 32% of juveniles who had committed a property offense and were members of the restorative conferencing group had reoffended, whereas only 21% of offenders in the control group had reoffended. In contrast, for violent offenders, 20% of individuals who had participated in the restorative conferences reoffended compared to 35% of those in the control group. Furthermore, the results revealed a participation satisfaction rate of 96% and that 94% of the restorative conference intervention of the offenders were in full compliance with restorative actions. This study was the only to demonstrate the possibility restorative conferencing might be effective for offenders charged with violent crimes.

Hines (2000) compared the recidivism rates of 281 juveniles who had participated in the restorative conferencing process in Woodbury, Minnesota, between 1995 and 1999 to a sample

of non-conferencing juveniles in 1993. The results indicated that 33% of the restorative conferencing youth reoffended compared to 72% of the non-conferencing youth. The Restorative Justice Conferencing Experiment in Indianapolis (as cited in McGarrell, Olivares, Crawford, & Kroovand, 2000) involved the random assignment of 232 youths to restorative conferencing and 262 to other diversion programs. Recidivism rates were measured by contact with the court during a 6- and 12-month period after the original offense and contact with the court after the individuals had completed the diversion program. The results showed a statistically significant reduction in recidivism rates at 6 and 12 months after the initial crime and 6 months post- restorative conferencing program completion.

In 2005, Bradshaw and Roseborough conducted a meta-analysis of research studies of restorative justice programs for youth offenders. The meta-analysis only included studies investigating recidivism as an outcome measure and employed a comparison group. In all, 19 studies examined restorative conferencing and victim- offender mediation intervention with 11,950 young offenders from 25 different sites. Out of the 19 studies, 15 yielded positive effect sizes, three studies had negative effect sizes, and five studies showed no intervention effects. The restorative conferencing and victim-offender mediation interventions were said to contribute a 26% decline in recidivism. The researchers also noted that the average effect size of .26 is more than double the effect size of .10 reported in an earlier study for traditional justice programs.

Rodriguez (2007) analyzed the Maricopa County Juvenile On-Line Tracking System database from 1999 to 2001 in Maricopa County, Arizona. Researchers compared juvenile recidivism rates of 1,708 male and female youth after 24 months of successfully completing the restorative conferencing program with 3,262 male and female youth who had undergone regular

court processing. Data revealed there were no significant effects; juveniles in the restorative justice program had slightly lower rates of recidivism, respectively 34.0% vs. 35.9%. Further, restorative conferencing participants with zero or one prior offense also had lower rates of recidivism than offenders in the comparison group, suggesting restorative conferencing may be more effective for first-time offenders.

Finally, Jeong, McGarrell, and Hipple (2012) examined the long-term effects of restorative conferencing on recidivism of juvenile offenders on the Indiana Experiment conducted by McGarrell, Olivares, Crawford, & Kroovand (2000). An experimental design was used with a sample of 782 cases. Data was analyzed first by logistic regression measuring the prevalence of re-offending based on whether the youth ever was re-arrested during the 12-year follow-up period. A second analysis was also employed using Cox Proportional-Hazards Regression to examine time until first re-offense. Results did not reveal any significant difference between individuals who had exposure to the restorative conferencing group and those who do not. The implication of the findings is that more research should be conducted regarding the long-term benefits of restorative conferencing since the majority of research is based on short-term benefits.

Major Critique of Restorative Conferencing

The previous review of restorative justice and restorative conferencing literature highlighted that both the movement and interventions have grown over the past two decades in the United States. Restorative initiatives are seen as a way to reduce reoffending by providing an avenue to manage feelings of shame; by building social capital which could support change; and by the conference as a whole suggesting individualized paths to overcoming practical life obstacles (Horan, 2015). Bradshaw and Roseborough (2005) recommend restorative

conferencing should be classified as a “promising, but experimental intervention” for preventing recidivism in young offenders (p. 19). Scholars note there is a continued gap in the literature when it comes to how and why restorative approaches work for youth offenders (Bazemore and Green, 2007).

In particular, this literature review focused on the importance of the restorative justice dialogue that emerges out of the harm done because of a criminal act. Within a restorative conferencing intervention the dialogue is the space where all the parties with a stake in a particular offense come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future" (Marshall, 2003). Although, noted as highly crucial to the restorative conferencing process the limited current empirical literature on youth offenders focuses solely on quantitative results, specifically results in terms of recidivism rates and satisfaction rates.

In order to advance the development and the efficacy of the restorative conferencing process, researchers call for describing and critically assessing restorative justice processes with both victims and offenders by assessing their experiences (Choi et. al., 2011). According to Forget (2003), understanding the participants’ accounts (narratives) of their experiences “would benefit the participants as much as it would provide information needed to improve the justice process and promote the new vision of justice” (p. 5). The researcher believes conducting more in-depth qualitative research on the way the restorative conferencing dialogue reaches the offender, specifically through the mechanism of storytelling, will help answer this call. Specifically, this dissertation sought to investigate how the YNY program contributes to the offenders’ understanding of their crimes, the intention to repair past harm, and the intention to prevent future harm by focusing on the social conditions in which harm occurs.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling (DST) is a multimodal media production or media arts practice characterized as a form of narrative technology that combines visual (including media images), audio, animation, written, and kinesthetic/interactive modes of communication (Hall, 2012; Pepler, 2010). The term arose from a grassroots movement that uses multi-media digital tools to help individuals tell their “true stories” (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012). Digital storytelling inherits from oral storytelling its emphasis on the personal voice. It also shares with conventional genres of storytelling the need to learn from and grow through storytelling. Digital storytelling tools also function to extend the scope, reach and power of storytelling by drawing on both conventional and multimodal technologies of communication. At present, digital storytelling is often used to describe a broad range of digital, multimodal compositional activities, such as an individual creating a short video to be circulated on Snap Chat, YouTube, or Vine. Within this dissertation, I describe digital storytelling as a short autobiographical narrative consisting of a collage of images (i.e. digital photographs, digital drawings), audio, texts, and video clips.

Digital storytelling as a practice has rapidly developed since the first digital storytelling workshop at the American Film Institute in 1993 (Lambert, 2006) and currently follows the model of the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) (see www.storycenter.org). CDS facilitates workshops where ideas are shared within a “story circle” of individuals who share common experiences (i.e. community injustice) within a stable and supportive environment (Lambert, 2006). Stories can range from autobiographies to collective efforts to portray a community or assert a shared perspective (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012). At the end of the workshops, individual’s stories are presented within the group.

As a form, digital storytelling is a unique non-linear narrative genre, in which storytellers utilize narrative technology to produce personal narratives or creative original stories (Curwood & Gibbons, 2010). Authors can combine verbal narration with visual images and musical background and use various types of digital editing software (e.g. Photoshop, Final Cut, i-Movie). Researchers and educators alike emphasize digital storytelling's use of new media technologies enhance the symbolic quality of supporting and amplifying the narrative message within the story.

According to Lambert (2006), a good digital story encompasses a dramatic arc that is shaped by important personal experiences. A successful digital story, through its portrayal of significant life events, evokes strong emotions. Most digital stories deal with significant emotional experiences in a truthful manner such as significant relationships with a person or place, working through hardships, combating violence and social injustice, overcoming challenges, healing from loss, or celebrating passions and joys in life. Authors of digital stories can establish an actual dialogue during which every story triggers its own evolution and the development of other stories creating a continuously evolving multimodal narrative (Lambert, 2006).

Embracing the notion that everyone has meaningful stories to tell, digital storytelling takes a rather inclusive approach to authorship and encourages amateurs and novices to experiment with a mixture of existing cultural forms (e.g. Vine or Snap Chat) and everyday experiences (StoryCenter, 2015). Many view digital storytelling as a means of changing the way we engage in our communities, inspiring and promoting democratized media practices and civic involvement (Couldry, 2008.) As digital storytelling has risen in popularity, it has also begun to

receive increasing scholarly attention from researchers examining the practice of digital storytelling, resulting in a small body of substantive research that is qualitative in nature.

Digital Storytelling Practices

As a practice, digital storytelling has various analytical frameworks, which serve different purposes in different fields like education, psychology, and anthropology. In this review of digital storytelling, I investigate how digital storytelling has been conceived and treated as an object of scholarly investigation. In what follows, I examine the three analytical frameworks to explore how researchers 1) examine the new semiotics of digital multimodal texts; 2) focus on the discursive work of digital storytelling, which they see as affording engaging, authentic, and productive opportunities for identity play, and 3) the democratic potential of digital storytelling in its use with historically silenced groups (Wang, 2013).

Multimodal Framework. The concept of multimodality or multiple representational modes (visual, audio, linguistic) supports the idea that meaning can be represented and communicated through multiple verbal and nonverbal channels (Kress, 2000). Multimodality has been described as both a theoretical framework and an analytic methodology. As a theoretical framework, multimodality allows individuals to construct the task of meaning making regarding the semiotic resources available (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Building on multimodal semiotic theories, researchers who employ the multimodal framework examine the different organizational principles and semiotic affordances of modes other than the linguistic mode (Kress, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Further, these multimodal researchers seek to advance semiotic theories and develop new analytical tools to reveal the complexities of multimodal meaning-making. As Kress (2000) describes, “the assumption underlying a multimodal approach to communication and representation is that...humans use many means

made available in their cultures for representation precisely because these offer differing potentials, both for representation for communication” (p. 194).

According to, Hull and Nelson (2005), when multiple modes are combined in a digital story, a unique synergy is created to accomplish more than the collective of all the individual modes working in isolation. Consequently, the semiotic potential and power of multimodality resides in the relationship between co-present modes, not within the individual modalities. From this standpoint, the semiotic details within the digital story, such as images, soundtracks, and effects, are chosen for how they elicit greater illocutionary force on personal experiences and the semiotic and aesthetic whole of the story (Gubrium & Turner, 2011). A digital author attends to the complex interplay of modes, seeking coherence and cohesion across a range of semiotic modes. To that end, digital stories are powerful not only because images, animations, and sounds increase the meaning potential of words, but because the co-presence of multiple modal resources affords “not just a new way of making meaning, but a different kind of meaning” (p.225).

Because the potential for authorship “lies not so much in the words, images, sounds...but rather in between them, in the designing of relations of meaning that bind semiotic modes together” (Nelson, 2006, p.57), multimodal research has focused on the composing process within the digital storytelling production process. In his research, Nelson (2006) explores this notion of “synergy”, by drawing on close analysis of six college students’ digital stories. Nelson (2006) argues that the amplifying power of a digital story, in comparison to an essay, resides in its affordance for a deeper and fuller meaning accomplishable through the process of shifting expression across modal boundaries. Thus, synergy can be amplifying when, for example, the same image acquires different meanings when it is repeatedly used, each time with different

words and symbols. Also, an image may accumulate a semiotic power of its own, which comes with the history of its use (e.g. from earlier use of the image as a concrete representation of a person to later use of the image as the symbolic representation of an abstract concept). To achieve a sophisticated understanding of the various modalities, as well as the complexity of production, researchers often work to present the modes visually, arranging modal resources in separate but parallel channels (Nelson, 2006).

Expressivists (Agentive) Framework. In comparison to the multimodal researchers, the expressivists are more concerned with the effects of the storytelling process on the author. The expressivists draw on social theories of narrative to consider digital storytelling as linked to the ancient art of storytelling (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Roche-Smith (2004), Hull & Katz (2006), and Nixon (2008) assert that the act of narration shapes a sense of self by creating a symbolic artifact for self-understanding upon which one can reflect. This symbolic artifact may then serve as the foundation for new projections of the self, and can be used to mediate future activities (Bruner, 1994; Ochs & Capps, 2001). Therefore, storytelling involves the act of self-authoring that is simultaneously dialogic and unique (Bakhtin, 1981), and the narratives offer potential for the making, reworking, and reimagining of the self (Bruner, 1994). To that end, digital storytelling can be a tool for asserting meaning to and reconstructing experiences, refashioning the self, realizing personal empowerment, and achieving social connection and social change (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012).

As documented by research, digital storytelling offers youth, especially “disenfranchised youth”, the opportunity to develop more “agentive” senses of self and to imagine a positive change in the future (Roche-Smith 2004; Hull, Katz; Nixon 2008). Nixon (2008), for example, explores how digital storytelling adds to a traditional pool of semiotic resources to enrich and

expand non-dominant youth's expressive and reflective construction of raced and gendered identities with more "richness and depth" (p. 5). In the Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth (DUSTY) after-school program, youth uses digital storytelling to engage in meaningful identity work that is not otherwise supported. From this perspective, the analytical work revolves around the individual author, who is positioned at the center of a discursive scene and observed for how one takes on digital storytelling to engage in the problematic and complex task of discovering, making sense of, and redesigning the self (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Digital storytelling serves as a venue through which youth learned to describe emotionally challenging events; develop intertextual understandings of race, gender, ethnicity, and power; re-author their social worlds and social identities; and send poignant messages for change (Nixon, 2008).

Cultural Democrat Framework. The cultural democrats often work in tangent with the expressivists by praising digital storytelling as a socially influential cultural practice (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012). As a cultural practice, digital storytelling disrupts established boundaries that separate the commercial and professional media from the novice and transforms the media consumer to that of a media producer (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012). Further, digital storytelling is seen as a powerful discursive tool for disrupting entrenched social structures that are oppressive, discriminatory, and divisive (Wang, 2013). This tool can be used to support the construction of counter-narratives by youth from oppressed communities (Nixon, 2008; L. Vasudevan, 2006; L. Vasudevan, DeJaynes, & Schmier, 2010).

As amply documented by research on digital storytelling, educators are often at the forefront of the cultural democratic mission as they seek to provide youth in underserved communities with access to literacy and technology (Hull & Katz, 2006; Nixon, 2008; Turner,

2008). Vasudevan and colleagues (2010), for example, argue that digital storytelling provides marginalized minority youth with opportunities to explore and tell stories about their own urban life experiences, which otherwise remain unexplored and untold. Vasudevan (2007, 2010), further, discusses in detail how digital storytelling allows one boy, who is usually perceived as reticent, slow, and unengaged, to represent himself as tech-savvy, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable. In addition, digital storytelling invites youth to transcend ascribed roles and to explore ways of expressing themselves that are otherwise not afforded in schools, where modes of participation are limited and predetermined. In this vein, digital storytelling is a venue for youth to challenge dominant social structures and static notions of identities that were imposed upon them.

Similarly, Turner's (2008) research at DUSTY argues that youth's production of multimedia artifacts at DUSTY, such as digital storytelling and public service announcements, is a conduit for the development of literacies and skills that are essential to youth's critical and meaningful engagement with social issues. Through digital storytelling, youth learn to critically examine and fuse popular cultural references with their lived experiences, allowing them to validate their experiences as both unique and telling. To minority youth, digital storytelling becomes a means of articulating their frustrations and aspirations in ways that are real, meaningful, and transformative.

Learning in and through Digital Storytelling

Halverson (2013) recognizes through creating digital stories, storytellers build relationships with knowledge, communities, and even themselves; the relationships built are worked out through an iterative making process that results in the creation of external artifacts. In this way, both the process of making the digital story, and the final product demonstrates

learning. There are two broad themes recognizable within all three analytical frameworks that can be applied to the ways in which young people can learn in and through the digital storytelling process. The first is creating representations or discrete artifacts, which display what, an individual has learned; the second is engagement in developing a portrayal of the self.

Creating Representations. Scholars believe the ability to construct an external representation of a complex idea is the marker of intelligence across disciplines (Halverson & Sheridan, 2014). Digital storytelling, like other art mediums, is a creative process closely tied to the production of external representations (Halverson, 2012). In the case of digital storytelling, the digital story acts as the external representation or digital artifact. The process of creating a digital story begins with developing a story about oneself then focuses on how the available digital tools (e.g. video, photo, etc.) afford representation of that story, and culminates in digital representations (Halverson, 2013). The importance of digital artifact lies in the representations ability to make visible the understandings, discoveries, and misconceptions within a storyteller's story (Kafai, 2006).

Unlike in other narrative genres, the narrative meaning of digital stories is not solely constructed verbally. Visual and musical narratives interact with verbal narration, which creates a multimodal dialogue (Hull & Katz, 2006). The narrativity of a photographic image or video is "dynamically constructed" on the one hand by the author's selection of an image to display, and on the other by the viewer whose spectatorship comes with its own cultural and social (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Nelson 2006). For instance, within digital storytelling, authors may use personal images or images they find on the Internet. While the author does not produce these found images, they do attach concepts and messages to the images that they seek to appropriate for their own stories. Similarly, a piece of music may be included because a producer feels it

conveys a certain personal message, which they then seek to input into their own production. The process of creating representations requires both creativity and design thinking. Design thinking can be described as an iterative process that involves defining a problem, constructing solution, and reflecting on the process through critiques. Researchers who provide evidence for the connection between external artifacts and learning are most often found in the fields of science and math (Halverson & Sheridan, 2014).

Calabrese Barton & Tan (2010) examined the relationship between learning science and agency in science at a “voluntary” after-school science/technology/social club for youth aged 10 to 14 named Green Energy Technologies in the City (GET City). The program promoted young people to create high-quality science documentaries on the relationship between energy use and the health of the urban environment. Within their science documentaries, youth were positioned as both producers and critics of science rather than as mere recipients of scientific ideas. Through this process, researchers found youth communicated complex insights into science and expressed a positive association with science and authored alternative identities (Halverson, 2013). This research begins to unpack how digital videos can provide a space to recontextualize complex science concepts, which allowed the youth to express who they are and want to be in ways that meaningfully blend their social worlds with the world of science (Calabrese Barton & Tan, 2010).

Identity Negotiation. In the previous section of this digital storytelling literature review, the discussion of expressivists and cultural democrats research highlights how the digital storytelling processes can support both individualistic and collectivistic conceptions of identity (Halverson, Lowenhaupt, Gibbons, & Bass, 2009). The empirical studies previously mentioned support positive developmental trajectories for young people because the activities within a

digital storytelling production support identity exploration. Further, these studies point to the importance of the social context in which digital stories are authored and disseminated (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012). Evidence that the process of digital storytelling can affect identity formation has come primarily out of settings like extended after-school and community settings in where youth are united by shared experience such as minority status in respect to a larger social context, have spent an extended time authoring stories in a supportive and trusting community (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012, p. 55). Thus, a digital story involves complex relationships between technical tools, narrative, imagery, and setting (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012).

Looking at children's digital storytelling at a Fifth Dimension after-school program, Davis (2004) discusses how the processes of creating digital stories guided children to arrive at a clearer conception of how events in their lives had consequences and how such events could lead to changes in future actions and feelings. Moreover, digital storytelling provides a space where youth can experiment with and appropriate identities that are otherwise not afforded. In his research, Davis (2004), describes how digital storytelling allows one youth to think about conflicting messages he receives daily from participating in multiple "figured worlds". By putting one version of himself (e.g. a student who is pushed to succeed) into a digital story and presenting it as a finished object, the author takes a step towards embracing one potential identity over another and externalizing it as the foundation for conceiving his future.

Critique of Digital Storytelling

In general, the literature on digital storytelling is still very much in its infancy. Implicit in all analytical frameworks of digital storytelling is the argument that this new form of narrative technology engages and motivates youth because the media affords easy creation and

dissemination of digital artifacts. The media carries producers' voices and experiences to a potentially global audience. The creation of these personal narratives with pictures, narrations, video, animation, artifacts and music, supports a greater level of understanding for both author and audience in addition to augmenting the experience of the narrative's meaning (Flottemesch, 2013). In conducting the literature review on digital storytelling presented here, I observed that digital storytelling research has largely focused on the individual producer, rather than the larger community of producers and audience. Whether it is the multimodal, agentives, or cultural democrat's framework, the research primarily praises the creative control of the youth author, obscuring the fact that digital storytelling is, in fact, a discursive practice.

The process of digital storytelling production emphasizes collaborative exchange of ideas, sharing of personal stories and experiences, and the creation of a community of practice (Lambert, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Digital storytelling specifically requires brainstorming sessions, research, and resource building activities, script writing, peer responses, storyboarding, and sharing. Therefore, digital storytelling workshops and digital stories themselves are “mediated by a range of discursive, practical, and material structures, which bring meaning, shape, and structure of the individual's discursive work” (Wang, 2013, p. 48). Thus, digital storytelling research also needs to focus on the dynamic configuration of people, texts, tools, and activities. discussion of the discursive element of digital storytelling, researchers can help facilitate an understanding of how youth authors of these stories can engage in productive identity play, critical conversations around power, and positive individual and social change.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The previous sections of this literature review placed a strong emphasis on narrative, the act of story production, and identity. In both restorative justice and digital storytelling, understanding the importance and function of personal narrative for the individual in a process of identity development requires attention to narratives. Scholars from numerous disciplines have researched the importance and purpose of personal and social uses of narratives (Bruner, 1994; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Heath 1994; Ochs & Capps, 1996, Smith & Watson, 1996). These range from the unconscious functions of narrative in individual psychology (Bruner, 1994) to the implications of consciously constructed autobiography for personal, educational, and social change (Smith & Watson, 1996; Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Dyson & Genishi, 1994). Moreover, constructing and telling a personal narrative can promote an individual to explore meaning and integrate their previous life experiences, which is of particular importance in late adolescence and early adulthood (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). For this study, a narrative approach to identity development offers the most appropriate means to examine how individuals can associate meaning to their experiences, which can lead to personal growth.

Narrative Identity

The term narrative identity is viewed as a psychosocial construction, reflecting the ways in which one makes sense of the personal past, one's current self, and future expectations (McAdams, 1993). At its core, narrative identity theory proposes that the act of narration shapes a speaker's sense of self by giving meaning to personal experiences, which in turn teaches values and beliefs, and assists in the construction and reaffirmation of one's identity (Koenig & Trees, 2006). McAdams (2006) argues that part of the creation of who we are includes the integration

of our experiences into a story. Consequently, examining narrative accounts of momentous life events affords an author better understanding of how people perceive these experiences, their significance in a personal narrative, and how well they integrate into a larger life story (Bauer & McAdams, 2004). Further, the process of incorporating past experiences into a life story and interpreting the event or the life story is essential for life story coherence and may influence further identity development, psychological functioning, and well-being (Dumas, Lawford, Tieu & Pratt, 2009; McAdams, 2001).

McAdams (1996) traces the capacity for development of storytelling ability and narrative identity to early childhood. His work builds on Erikson's social identity theory. Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of identity argues that during adolescence there is a complex interplay of psychological, social, and developmental forces, which prompt the individual to search for, consolidate, and affirm a sense of self. Individuals try to answer the questions "Who am I?" "Where have I been?" "Where am I going?" and "How do I fit in the adult world?" Erikson maintains that in late adolescence (the fifth of eight stages in his developmental scheme), individuals begin to experiment with a broad range of social roles, with the aim of consolidating their beliefs and values into a personal ideology (McAdams, 2001).

McAdams (2001) argues that during this stage identity itself takes the form of a story, complete with setting, scenes, character, plot, and theme. Adolescents, for the first time, begin to reconstruct the personal past, perceive the present, and anticipate the future in terms of an internalized and evolving self-story, an integrative narrative of self. McAdams (1997) argues that these new abilities to reason prompt the adolescent to look back on their life and note inconsistencies, such as occasions when they acted in one way but could have acted in another.

According to McAdams (1997), the solution to this confusion is to find a way to incorporate these many behaviors or selves into a coherent life narrative.

Activities that enhance individuals' identities through the crafting and supporting of narratives are often referred to as identity talk (Snow & Anderson, 1987) and more recently, narrative identity work (Case & Hunter, 2012, 2014; Opsal, 2010). Narrative identity work is defined as the "range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (p. 1348). In all, narrative identity work enhances identities through the crafting and supporting of narratives not only about a person's experiences, but also about how those experiences shape and influence which he or she is (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007, Snow & Anderson, 1987).

Narrative identity, offender rehabilitation, & redemptive narratives. As previously stated, narrative identities are established from the pursuit and achievement of personal goals (Bruner, 1990). Under this pretense, narrative theorists believe criminal behavior arises from an individual's maladaptive attempts to meet their need for one more "primary good" or goal (Ward & Marshall, 2007). According to Ward & Marshall (2007) offenders lacking a clear narrative identity, or having a maladaptive narrative identity (e.g., "I do bad things because I am a bad person"), likely do not have the skills, attitudes, and discursive resources necessary to lead what society deems as a fulfilling life. Moreover, these individuals will probably be unclear about their goals for achieving a good life and a prosocial identity. Therefore, the construction of a prosocial narrative identity is an essential aspect of the effective rehabilitation for offenders. The process of developing such an identity depends on the acquisition of capabilities and resources that will enable an offender to effectively implement socially acceptable life plans and goals.

Accordingly, the narrative approach of offender rehabilitation requires offenders to complete narrative identity work by identifying what "primary good" they were seeking through their criminal behavior. Next, offenders examine why they attempted to attain these goods through the problematic means used. Finally, rehabilitation requires equipping offenders with the resources to obtain these goods through legitimate and adaptive means. To accomplish these tasks, offenders must turn the story of their crime into a redemptive narrative.

Redemptive Narratives. McAdams et. al. (2001) identify two types of stories that may emerge from many life events: a contamination story or a redemptive story. A contamination story occurs when positive events shift from an initially healthy to unhealthy state. In this situation, a positive event is often overshadowed by negative affect, which erases the effect of the preceding positive event. In contrast, a redemptive story follows a pattern in which the individual faces a challenging life event or situation and can move from an initially bad state to a more positive state. Here, the initial negative state is redeemed by the good that focuses, such as gaining positive meaning, conclusions, or insights (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Redemption stories are usually expressed in terms of growth in an individual, which is marked by a change in goals, and communal growth such as giving back to the community (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006).

Dimensions of Redemptive Narratives. The following dimensions illustrate constructs used to understand narrative identity theory in offender rehabilitation. Maruna (2001) employed narrative identity theory to explore the process offenders used to reconstruct their identities to lead more social and productive lives. Maruna's (2001) narrative theory of desistance outlines how the creation of a redemptive narrative requires the individuals to explore their past experiences and recast negative experiences to focus on an individual's core goodness as

necessary acts in order construct a prosocial identity. By identifying common themes in redemptive narratives, we can begin to understand how offenders may perform narrative identity work to interpret past failures and traumatic experiences as necessary precursors to developing a prosocial identity leading to current and future success and offender reform (Stone, 2016).

The first common theme, identified by Maruna (2001) is the establishment of the ‘true self’ or ‘core self,’ the ‘real me’ that is ‘good self’ and ‘normal.’ Here individuals can establish their core beliefs. In Maruna’s (2001) research this idea was characterized as “even when they were at their worst, the desisting narrators emphasized that deep down they were good people (p. 88). The second theme is the identification of an external negative force that is responsible for an individual’s bad behavior and experiences. The third theme is empowerment or the acknowledgment of helping others or a higher power that believes in the individual’s potential and shows individuals they have worth and value. These "helpful others" are often described as seeing the person for who they “really are” (i.e. good and normal) when others could not. A fourth theme is that of ‘redemptive suffering.’ As individuals narrate their redemptive stories, they have the ability to connect their negative past experiences with more positive futures. This notion is vital for achieving a coherent prosocial narrative identity. For instance, ‘If I hadn’t gone through that, I wouldn’t be the person I am today’ (p. 95). Finally, redemption narratives forecast a purposeful future. The narrator demonstrates a commitment to generating products and outcomes that can foster the development and well-being of individuals and social systems that will outlive the self (Stone, 2016).

Audience & Counterspaces

Narrative identity recognizes we are not the sole creators of our identities; we live in a social world full of other storytellers. The role of audience is particularly important in

developing a narrative identity in two primary ways: audience affects narratives and narratives affect audience. Bruner (1994) contends the people we are addressing change the way we present and experience our personal narratives. The choice a storyteller makes regarding content, style and form, purposely aligns with or excludes their audiences. Fisher (1985b, 1989) posited that narrative functions as an argument wherein storytellers present their interpretations of experiences, and audiences respond to whether those interpretations “ring true”. It is the ongoing dialogic process of reflection and expression that the “self” exists and that we create positions from which to act Bakhtin (trans. 1981).

Narrative also connects us with others in that they are necessarily produced as acts of sharing. In voicing our narratives publicly, we provide ways for others to connect and relate to our experiences, possibly providing the impetus for them to explore their experience, construct personal narratives, and share narratives that might have gone unspoken (Heath, 1994). For the storyteller, sharing their narratives may help them feel validated and supported. Narratives also create a foundation for new understanding and new narratives, both individually and socially (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). The sharing of narratives is particularly important for marginalized communities, as their voices are not always presented in everyday life; this notion is often termed as counternarratives in counterspace.

A counterspace is a setting where groups interact in ways that challenge deficit notions concerning their marginalized identity and that creates an identity-affirming environment (Case & Hunter, 2012). Research suggests these and other stigmatized groups resist marginalization by contesting societal designations concerning their identities through narrative identity work in counterspaces (Opsal, 2011). Counterspaces help construct counternarratives that permit a space where marginalized groups can speak out, assert their ability to overcome oppression and their

claims to equal treatment, or redefine themselves in an affirming manner (Case & Hunter, 2014). Narrative identity work in counterspaces often leads to individuals developing themes through the patterns they recognize in their stories, such as agency or communal growth. In these settings, agency expresses the desire for power, status, impact on others and independence. Communal themes are concerned with friendships, affiliations, and love (McAdams, 2001). For example, Black and Latino youth are often labeled “deviant”, “threatening” and “defective” by media outlets and police. When they are provided counterspaces to talk about their marginalized identities, they may develop friendships or affiliations with similar social identities and develop ways to challenge these identities, in order to develop a more positive self-regard (Hull & Katz, 2006).

Narrative Identity, Digital Storytelling & Restorative Conferencing

The previous section on narrative identity theory posits individuals form their identity by integrating their life experiences into an ever-evolving story that provides the individuals with values and beliefs and a sense of purpose (McAdams, 2001). Offenders may lack the skills, attitudes, and resources necessary to create a clear narrative identity. Thus, rehabilitation of an offender requires narrative identity work, where offenders have the opportunity to examine the experiences that surround their crime, in order to accommodate their meaning. This process promotes a greater opportunity for these narratives to become a redemptive story. Redemptive stories can lead individuals to have a greater understanding of their past indiscretions, develop a clearer sense of purpose and meaning in offender lives, resulting in a coherent prosocial identity.

Research also recognizes the importance of audience and counterspaces in sharing of narratives. A narrator’s identity is created through personal narration and through interaction with others, who listen and validate or invalidate the narratives we tell (Heath, 1994). For

marginalized identities stories told within counterspaces can offer opportunities for positive endings to help heal “emotional” pain caused by societies stigmatized identities. The researcher believes, understanding the processes that transpire during this redemptive storytelling process can provide restorative conferencing researchers a framework for understanding how the conferencing processes may work for offenders.

If the restorative conferencing process for an offender is seen as an identity challenging experience that promotes a redemptive story, one can apply narrative identity theory to understand how the process can be seen as a catalyst for positive self-transformation (Pals, 2006). Within the restorative conferencing process, participants confront their violations by telling their stories of, and express their emotions about, their offenses. Offenders are challenged to think how their actions caused others harm, presented with opportunities to acknowledge the suffering of victims, their families, and the surrounding community. Thus, the entire process of making amends through a restorative conference can likely influence an individual’s strategies and narrative identity, allowing offenders to reexamine their offense, and reinterpret their current situation in a new light (Horan, 2015).

The conferencing process also provides a counterspace for reflection and revision, the opportunity to make conscious discursive choices about how the offender understands their actions and the ways they will seek to repair harm. Finally, within restorative conferencing, the perspectives of the offender are juxtaposed against the perspectives of those people they trust. The meaning of the crime is understood and constructed through these different perspectives (Shenk & Zehr, 2001). These multiple perspectives may assist the youth offender and his or her community to create a shared understanding of their crimes and find a way to repair harm (Shenk & Zehr, 2001).

The YNY program advances the restorative conferencing process by using digital storytelling to help offender's process their crime. The production of a digital story may help facilitate the (re)interpretation of their crime with stronger emotional and psychological consequences than just an oral re-telling of their account, due to the multimodal artifacts created. Research suggests the creation of these artifacts communicates a more nuanced representation of the understanding of their crime, because of the unique synergy between multiple modes. For example, YNY's use of video diaries and digital photography to confront their violations may create a new way of meaning-making. The process of creating a digital story in YNY also offers youth an opportunity to negotiate their identity in a counterspace with other offenders to repair the harm they have caused, promoting agentic and communal themes within their digital stories, which narrative researchers believes promotes positive well-being in the future. With this hypothesis in mind the following research questions were devised:

1. What are the conditions under which YNY participants' digital stories are being told?
 - a. What is the structure of the YNY program?
 - b. What curriculum did YNY employ?
 - c. What are the overall goals of YNY? What does YNY hope youth participants will gain from the experience?
2. Within the practice of digital storytelling, what are the personal narratives that YNY participants create about their crime?
 - a. How do the participants critically reflect about their crime?
 - b. How do participants' stories demonstrate the concept of social responsibility (ex. contribution and reconnection with the community)?

- c. How do these stories reveal the larger social and political worlds that these participants are connected to? If so, how?
 - d. How did participants' relationships with one another influence the stories they create?
3. What role, if any, does the production of digital stories play in the processing of restorative conferencing values?
- d. How are the various types of digital media visible in the story?
 - e. How did digital media influence their stories? How did the process of creating visual images influence the stories?
 - f. What are the participants' interpretations of the digital media parts they have selected?

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The primary aim of this study was gain greater knowledge and understanding of participants' perspectives of restorative conferencing, in terms two main goals: (a) critical reflection of their offense, and (b) critical social empowerment to enhance participants capacity to contribute to and work in collaboration with others in their community. The New York-based Young New Yorkers program, in particular, has incorporated digital storytelling into their restorative conferencing process to gain a deeper and more nuanced perspective and experience for their participant's experiences with the two primary goals.

Currently, there are no studies that examine digital storytelling in the restorative conferencing process. Additionally, digital storytelling research does not attend to the fact that the creation and construction of stories take place within a social context. Gaining a greater understanding of participants' perceptions of how the group dynamics affect the digital storytelling process may aid the understanding of how digital storytelling can be as a means of empowerment and social change. Thus, this study investigates the digital storytelling process in YNY regarding the two primary goals of restorative conferencing. This chapter describes the study's research methodology and includes discussions around the following: (a) the rationale for using qualitative research methodology, (b) overview of research design (c) description of the research sample (d) methods of data collection, (e) analysis and synthesis of data (f) issues of trustworthiness (g) reflexivity (h) limitations of the study.

Overall Approach and Rationale

Qualitative scholars (see Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, Marshall & Rossman, 2014, Patton, 1990) argue that the intent of their research is to examine social situations or interactions by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempt to achieve a holistic rather than a

reductionist understanding. Thus, qualitative methods emphasize discovery and description, and the goal of extracting and interpreting the meaning of experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, Denzin & Lincoln 2008a, Marshall & Rossman, 2014). These objectives, at the extremes, can stand in contrast with those of quantitative researchers, whose general aim is to test a hypothesis to establish facts and to designate and distinguish relationships between variables (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

At present, the majority of studies about the effectiveness of restorative justice employ only quantitative measures. Quantitative methods have hindered researchers' understanding of the participant's perspective on the restorative conferencing process. Creswell (2007) has argued that qualitative research should be conducted whenever an issue needs to be explored in depth. Further, qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than specific outcomes or products. It is the researchers' belief that a qualitative inquiry provides a vital opportunity to delve into participants understanding of the restorative conferencing process in a more meaningful way.

Arts-Informed Case Study

A qualitative art-informed case study serves as the framework to investigate how Young New Yorkers participants experience the process of creating a digital story about their crime. Case study methodology was selected because this type of inquiry is unique in its ability to reveal information about a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2014). An arts-informed qualitative research was selected because this methodology combines various forms of literary and visual arts with the intent of expanding scholarly inquiry for purposes of advancing knowledge (Knowles & Cole, 2008). Specifically, this dissertation explores the

interactions, experiences, and meaning constructed by YNY participants as they engaged in the digital storytelling process.

Case Study. Creswell (2007) and Stake (2005) define case study as an in-depth investigation of an individual or individuals, event, activity, program or phenomenon bounded within a physical temporal, social, or historical context. There are many variations of case study research: instrumental, intrinsic, or collective (Stake, 2000). An instrumental case study is used to gain insight and understanding of a particular situation or to redraw a generalization. An intrinsic case study is undertaken when the researcher has an intrinsic interest in the subject and, therefore, may have limited transferability. The collective case study holds even less intrinsic interest as the researcher investigates a phenomenon, condition, or population in a collection of several cases which may or may not display common characteristics. Although, most studies do not fit neatly into one category, this study primarily involved an instrumental case study approach in which the case of implementing digital storytelling in a restorative justice program is examined to provide insight and to facilitate understanding of the restorative conferencing process. In addition, the research approach is descriptive and exploratory (Yin, 2014), seeking to provide an in-depth account of YNY participants' interactions with digital stories during the restorative conferencing process.

According to Stake (2000), readers can learn vicariously from one encounter with the case through the researcher's narrative description. The in-depth descriptions in a case study can create a framework for future studies seeking to establish transferability or generalizability (Yin, 2014). By examining the interactions, experiences, and processes, the intention of this case study was to draw inferences from what participants were saying or thinking about and doing as

they were creating their digital story. These insights could have application in similar learning contexts, or form the basis for further research in restorative conferencing or digital storytelling.

Arts-informed Inquiry. According to the pioneers of arts-informed research, J. Gary Knowles & Adre L. Cole (2008), arts-informed research grounded in the relationship between the art form and the research process, in which the former informs the latter. Underpinning the use of arts-informed inquiry is the notion that different forms of data allow for various types of analyzes and sense making. Therefore, arts-informed inquiry draws from creative strategies in the arts, where art is produced for the sake of inquiry. Arts-informed inquiry differs from other arts-based methodologies, namely arts-based research. These two modes of inquiry share a commitment to using artistic tools, but they are enacted in different ways. Arts-based research is defined as the systematic application of arts-based tools and the creation of artistic products during all phases of the research, from initial conceptualization to final representation of findings (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 1998, 2008). Within arts-based research, the quality of the art becomes an important consideration (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 1998, 2008). An arts-informed inquiry is different in that art making is viewed as playing a supportive role within a holistic inquiry (Stanley, 2009). The quality of the art is less important than the ways that the art informs understanding; this is critical when considering the role of digital storytelling in restorative conferencing.

As a framework, arts-informed inquiry also can serve as a methodological enhancement to other research approaches (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The process and artistic pieces are incorporated in the development, data collection, and analysis of the project (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The YNY program uses many forms of art within the digital storytelling process to enhance participants understanding of various restorative justice concepts. It is of

critical importance to investigate these activities, and the artifacts created from these activities. Therefore, it seems appropriate to employ arts-informed methodology, in this dissertation, as a methodological enhancement to conduct a case study.

As stated above, within this study the artifacts are less important than the ways the pieces inform participants' understanding of the restorative conferencing process. For this research, I will be focusing on the tools and artifacts produced. Artistic tools refer to skills enacted in a variety of genres that might include, but are not limited to photography, collage, drawings, and video narratives. Although each genre has distinctive elements, they share a view that encompasses multiple creative processes and media as a method of communicating.

The Setting: YNY Program

As previously mentioned, YNY is a court-mandated, restorative justice media arts program for 16- and 17-year-olds in Brooklyn, NY. The YNY programs are administered through the Center for Court Innovation and Kings County Criminal Court, in Brooklyn, NY. Few New York City neighborhoods have greater needs than those in South Brooklyn. Even in the midst of unprecedented citywide revitalization, South Brooklyn is continually plagued by high crime rates and a depressed quality of life (Lee, Chessman, Rottman, Swanter, Lambson, Rempel, & Curtis, 2013). Areas within South Brooklyn have the highest concentration of public housing in any neighborhood in the nation, a median household income under \$18,000, and the lowest educational achievement rate in Brooklyn (Lee, Chessman, Rottman, Swanter, Lambson, Rempel, & Curtis, 2013).

YNY was chosen for this study because it uniquely uses restorative conferencing and media arts practices in order to promote the taking of personal action and responsibility among participants as well as to raise awareness of participants' own capabilities in coping with

adversity in a variety of ways (YNY program, 2014). The YNY curriculum encourages individuals to connect with their families and communities while concurrently taking responsibility for their unlawful actions through eight workshops, which use various art exercises including photography, video, illustration, and design. The workshops culminate in a digital story about each participant's arraignment, interviews with their families about how their crimes have affected the family, reflections about their crimes, and community public art ideas.

The researcher previously conducted an exploratory evaluation of the eight-week YNY pilot program in 2013. Findings from this study suggested the digital storytelling process allowed participants to create a narrative discourse about their crimes, their impact, and ways to improve their communities. Further, the examination of participant artifacts revealed the recontextualization and rearticulation of restorative conferencing values. However promising, the study did not interview any YNY participants, which was a major limitation. The current study seeks to address that limitation by interviewing both YNY participants, and YNY staff who were involved in the eight-week workshops held after September 2014.

Study Population

Youth Participants. This arts-informed qualitative study examined an on-going program with previously selected participants. It is important to note that the YNY program would have taken place regardless of whether the study was conducted. Therefore, convenience sampling was as participants were chosen by YNY without the researchers' involvement. All YNY participants digital stories who completed the entire 8-week program between September 2014-September 2016 are included in the sample (N=18). Of these eighteen participants, nine participated in a semi-structured interview, seven males and 2 females. At the time of this research, YNY had only conducted one eight-week program with female participants.

Table 1. YNY Participant Demographics

Name ¹	Race:	Age	Sex	Infraction	Interviewed	Cohort
Cameron	Black	16	M	Graffiti/Trespassing	Y	2016
Danilo	Latino	16	M	Grand Larceny/Assault	Y	2014
Fredrico	Latino	17	M	Criminal possession of controlled substance	Y	2014
Holt	Black	16	M	Petit larceny	Y	2016
Jupiter	Black	17	M	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	Y	2014
Kai	Black	16	M	Criminal possession of a weapon in the 4 th degree	N	2014
Kate	Black	16	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2016
Kathryn	Black	16	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2015
Kyle	Black	16	M	Disorderly Conduct	Y	2016
Maurice	Black	17	M	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2016
Olive	Black	16	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2015
Princess	Black	17	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	Y	2015
Raymond	Latino	17	M	Disorderly Conduct	N	2016
Sarah	Black	16	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2015
Shawn	Black	17	F	Criminal possession of a weapon in the 4 th degree	Y	2015
Taylor	Black	17	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2015
Valerie	Black	16	F	Assault in the 3 rd deg.	N	2015
Yale	Latino	16	M	Disorderly Conduct	Y	2014

Recruitment Procedure of the YNY Program. Participants in the YNY program are identified by the presiding judge, District Attorney of Brooklyn, and the staff at the Red Hook Community Justice Center. Participant recommendations are based on (1) the severity of their crime, (2) age, and (3) past involvement with the criminal justice system. Participants' violations could be no more than a Class C felony, which equates to second-degree burglary, second-degree robbery, and second-degree possession of a weapon. Eligible participants must be at least 15 years of age and no older than 17 years and five months. Finally, the presiding judge evaluated participants previous criminal record looking for either; first-time offenders or youth

¹ All names reported here are pseudonyms.

who had received no more than a misdemeanor, such as petty larceny, trespass, assault, criminal mischief, or criminal possession of a controlled substance, marijuana, in previous court appearances.

Once a potential participant has been identified and met all stakeholder qualifications, at their arraignment, the presiding judge offers potential participants the opportunity to take part in YNY. The YNY Executive Director attends the eligible participants arraignment and holds informal interviews with interested participants and their families at the courthouse. If the youth offender is interested in participating in the YNY, the director then required a verbal and written agreement between the selected youth and their families concerning full participation and cooperation the YNY process.

Staff Participants. YNY staff is comprised of four core members: The Executive Director, Rae, and three support staff. The Executive Director of YNY also acts as the leading facilitator of all YNY workshops. The other support staff also act as facilitators to the program by assisting the director and visual artists in each workshop by 1) calling all participants and their families once a week before the workshop to “check-in”, 2) taking attendance as participants arrive at each workshop or tracking down late or absent participants, and 3) making sure each participant is on task during each workshop. These four staff attend every workshop and, therefore, have substantial detail about the process of how each participant created their digital story and their perspectives about the general program.

Human Subjects. In order comply with Human Subjects Research Institutional Review Board (IRB) the researcher had YNY staff members and interview participants complete consent forms. To protect the participants’ confidentiality, all of the interviews and fieldnotes were transcribed and stored in an encrypted client-side cloud database. During this transcription

process, abbreviations and then pseudonyms were used for each participant. The participants' real names were stored in a separate list on an encrypted client-side cloud database. A copy of the consent forms can be found in the UCLA IRB application, which is located in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Creswell (1998) posits that the essence of qualitative research is an extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information including observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. Given that the YNY program includes various activities for youth participants, a wide range of data was available for providing in-depth descriptions. This research study comprised of mostly secondary data. Table 2 provides a description of each method and the rationale for its use.

Table 2. Research Questions & Data Collection Procedures

Research Questions	Data Collection Procedures
1) What are the conditions under which YNY participants' digital stories are being told?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document analysis of curriculum 2. Semi-structured interviews with YNY staff 3. Review of archival digital videos of workshop sessions 4. Semi-structured interviews w. youth participants
2) What are the personal narratives that YNY participants create about their crime?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of archival digital videos of workshop sessions 2. Collection of participant multimedia artifacts from their digital story 3. Semi-structured interviews w. youth participants
3) What role, if any, does the production and sharing of digital stories play in the processing of restorative conferencing values?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of archival digital videos of workshop sessions 2. Collection of participant multimedia artifacts from their digital story 3. Semi-structured interviews w. youth participants

Documents and Artifacts. First, the researcher collected all YNY curriculum materials. The researcher used the curriculum to understand and highlight how restorative justice values were used in various activities, which will help focus data analysis. Second, the researcher collected all YNY participant documents and artifacts from the YNY program. The materials consisted of weekly digital video diary assignments, and all in-class workshop written and art assignments, including self-portrait collage, word collage, restorative justice interviews and public-art idea storyboards.

Review of YNY Workshops via Digital Archival Video. Digital video (DV) is becoming increasingly attractive as a data collection and analysis methods (Banks, 2001; Pink, 2013). Digital videos enable the collection of authentic data about cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and behavioral processes within the learning context (Bene, 2014). Digital videos have also led to new ways of reading, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data. As a recording tool, DV lends itself quite naturally to visually documenting the activities of youth participants (Banks, 2001; Pink, 2013). Haw & Hadfield (2011) described the most frequent uses of video as observation (including data collection and analysis), documentation of processes, video stimulus feedback and reflection, and video conferencing. Further, they point to two significant advantages to using digital video data. The first is that it is a permanent record of the events, which can be revisited as many times as needed to confirm, delve deeply into, and derive multiple interpretations. Second, because of its ability to provide aural, visual, and behavioral information, a video is an important and flexible instrument for collecting information on complex interactions (Powell, Francisco, Mahler, 2003).

Heath, Hindmarsh, and Luff (2010) explored video as a tool for repeatedly scrutinizing and conducting a fine-grained analysis of moments of social life. “Video captures a version of

an event as it happens. It provides opportunities to record aspects of social activities in real-time: talk, visible conduct [including gaze, gesture, facial expression or body posture, movement, and carriage], and the use of tools, technologies, objects, and artifacts” (p. 5-6). Further, the fact that video records audio in tandem with action and context simultaneously allows researchers to study meanings as constructed through the semiotics of signs and symbols (Tochon, 2007).

Video can also be used to illustrate critical aspects of the findings (Walker, 2002).

Actual visual examples of participant voice, gesture, expression, body movements, and actions build a more reliable connection with the intended audience than text alone. Thus, video clips can be used to corroborate and validate other data sources in the process of triangulating data findings. The YNY program uses DV at every workshop to primarily document the workshop for public relations reasons. For this study, the researcher used the DV, which YNY tapes, as an observation tool for data collection and analysis as well as documentation the digital storytelling processes within the YNY workshops.

During the eight-week sessions of the YNY program, the researcher observed the ways the participants engage in the collaborative process of digital story production when discussing possible themes and topics and doing peer reviews of the various artifacts from each session. The researcher observed the ways the participants collaborate and interact when discussing and working on their digital stories. The researcher paid particular attention to how the students expressed their opinions when discussing the restorative justice principles in digital stories and if and how they gave feedback to each other throughout the process of digital story production. In each workshop, the researcher also took observation notes of all YNY activities about the process of digital story production.

Participant & Staff Interviews. After watching all the DV footage from the YNY program, the researcher then interviewed available participants and the staff. Talking to participants was crucial to the understanding of how working with digital storytelling affects the processing of restorative conferencing values. The researcher conducted thirty- to forty-five minute semi-structured interviews with nine participants from the YNY program. The intent of these discussions was to explore participant experiences during project activities, including the decision-making processes they used for story selection, story construction, and their presentation of the finished products to other YNY participants, YNY program staff, district attorneys, judges, and family members. The researcher conducted one-hour semi-structured interview with the Executive Director and one facilitator, Carol. These interviews explored the process of how each participant created their digital story and their perspectives about the general YNY program. *See Appendix B for participant and staff interview questions.*

Data Analysis

Multimodal discourse analysis theories were used to develop the analytical framework for investigating the participants' digital stories (Gee, 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2003; Nelson, Hull, and Roche-Smith, 2008). The multimodal discourse framework is an extension of discourse analysis that applies the philosophies of double articulation to multiple articulations (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodal discourse consists of four essential parts: discourse, design, production, and distribution.

- Discourse. This describes the social practices surrounding the production of a text as well as the socially constructed knowledge that forms the basis of such practices.
- Design. This central component of all forms of multimodal expression “stands midway between content and expression”. It figures in communication situations (classroom,

coffee shop, conference) and translates situational cues into particular kinds of expression that are connected to a particular set of resources.

- Production. This is the actual process, in terms of both material and action, of creating a text, also called a “semiotic event”. A semiotic event encompasses both process and product including the intent of the author and the materials by which the event is constructed. For example, a short video with graphic elements.
- Distribution. This refers to the movement of media and meaning using new information and communication technologies. It has influence on the interpretation (for example, when a media text is posted on a blog, or sent virally through a YouTube video, it instantaneously reaches multiple, diverse contexts) and is used to create an entirely new text for a communication event because of the interactive nature of social media where the text is distributed.

These four parts of multimodal discourse map directly onto the research questions that focused on 1) conditions, 2) design and selection of personal stories, and 3) production of a story through the use of multiple forms of media. The use of discourse theory to conduct close examinations of YNY digital stories provided a framework for connecting participants’ decisions about text, images, and audio to a more sophisticated understanding of representation and articulation.

Using the concept of discourse allows for the connection of language, and the production of signs and meaning, to systems of knowledge and power (Hall, 1997). The analysis of participants’ digital stories focused on how participants construct their stories, the decisions they make about what to represent or not represent, and how they employed intertextual elements (text, audio, video, still image).

Data Analysis Procedures. The data analysis process is informed by the three phases of qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) describe three overall phases of qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. After preliminary data had been collected, data reduction began by transcribing the staff and participant interviews and viewing digital video observations. The stories were analyzed and coded by “matching them” with the detailed qualitative data collected from YNY participant interviews. All data were then entered into Dedoose, a web-based tool used for qualitative analysis of video and audio data. Dedoose includes the capacity to transcribe and code word documents, images, and video. All forms of data can then be linked allowing users to see relationships within and between their codes and tags. (See Appendix B for screenshot of program interface)

Throughout data reduction, the researcher analyzed the data (field notes, artifacts, digital stories, digital recordings), and wrote analytic memos. Miles and Huberman (1994) state this process “ties together different pieces of data into recognizable clusters (p. 72)”. Memo-ing allowed the researcher to write continuously about how the data are coming together in clusters or patterns or themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

The second phase, data display, involved constructing an organized visual presentation of the information collected, to assist in the writing process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Dedoose’s analytical tools allow for data to be displayed by in a variety of data visualization tools, which exposes patterns and variations between codes. Dedoose allowed for the mapping both the design and production of YNY digital stories. Throughout these processes, the researcher was not interested only in the intricacies of the multimedia texts that the participants created, but also how, and to what effect, YNY participants decoded restorative values from YNY workshops and

repurposed the messages through texts, images, photographs, and music in their final digital stories. As Gee (2001) argued, “We are not interested in simply describing data so that we can admire the intricacy of language. Rather we are interested in going beyond description, in illuminating and gaining evidence for our theory of the domain, a theory that helps to explain how and why language works the way it does when it is put into action” (p. 8).

In the final phase, the researcher summarized and verified findings to draw conclusions by exporting the data from Dedoose and stacking the media parts of the eight interview participant's digital story. The stacked data for each digital story was then analyzed for primarily coherence and meaning-making. The stacking process also acts as a form of triangulation to cross-check the data to increase the credibility and validity of the study. This strategy for multimedia analysis, developed by Nelson, Hull, and Roche-Smith (2008), deconstructs multimedia text into individual parts to find “interactions of meaning” between the parts (p. 427), like Hull & Katz (2006) investigation of the DUSTY program, previously discussed. Finally, once the conclusions from the stacking process were complete, the researcher used the interviews with participants and checked in with the YNY Executive Director to compare perspectives on the data.

Codes. After conducting the relevant literature reviews, the researcher developed an initial literature-based coding framework for the dissertation proposal, based on redemptive imagery and restorative justice values. As the researcher viewed each artifact and conducted interviews with participants, codes were expanded, and some were eliminated. In all, a set of 19 codes was used to analyze the data. In this code set, there was a total of six parent codes, and each of these main categories covered a major topic within the YNY curriculum and redemptive narratives within narrative identity theory. These codes include empowerment, relationships,

personal growth, reflection, future, and community. The highest number of codes came from the public art project designs, as these artifacts tended to summarize the participant's experiences within the program and potential goals.

For these main categories, subcodes were developed to show some of the variability within the main categories. For empowerment, these subcodes were related to human dignity and counternarratives, to describe when participants addressed issues of racial profiling, self-preservation, sexism, and sociopolitical processes within their artifacts. The subcodes for reflection were accountability, choices, meaning-making, and remorse. These codes were related to participants ability to understand and making meaning of the multiple choices that led to their arrest, while also taking accountability for these choices and showing remorse. Finally, the code future, had the subcodes leadership, self-care, and story resolution. These codes intended to capture how participants talked about the next steps of their life. For instance, many participants created artifacts or spoke about taking on a leadership role within their schools or communities. Participants also recognized how they wanted to take care of themselves personally in the future by eating better or dealing with their emotions in a more productive way than fighting. (See Appendix D & E for coding scheme chart and code applications).

Criteria for Demonstrating Trustworthiness

The next section describes the research methods to ensure internal validity. The researcher will use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) guidelines for establishing trustworthiness, which involves" addressing credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. Throughout the data collection and analysis process the researcher used member checking by sharing the data, interpretations, and conclusions informally with YNY Executive Director to check the researcher's perspective and interpretations against their

perspectives. Next, the researcher used peer debriefing, defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a “process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session” (p. 308). The researcher enlisted the aid of colleagues, Dr. Shabnam Javdani and Dr. Maxine Nwigwe and as “debriefers” to ensure the researcher is aware of any biases, assumptions, and attitudes towards the data and any emerging interpretations of it. Both Dr. Javdani and Nwigwe are clinical and community psychologist that have worked directly with the juvenile justice system but who were not directly involved in this research.

Dependability. Dependability speaks to the consistency of findings in a given study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The Dedoose program has a built-in training center to build and maintain inter-rater reliability. Once the researcher created the coding template, two students were trained via the code application tests, and then coded nine digital stories each. The researcher also conversed with Dr. Javdani and Dr. Nwigwe to verify that interpretations of the codes were consistent and dependable. The researcher also shared preliminary findings with these colleagues and seek feedback in making sense of the data.

Confirmability. Marshall and Rossman (2014) define confirmability as “the ways in which qualitative researchers can parallel the traditional concept of objectivity” (p. 253). Thus, confirmability concerns the degree to which the individuals involved in the study, rather than the researcher ‘s bias, shape the findings (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). To establish confirmability the researcher used triangulation. This process involved using multiple data sources, such as archived video diaries, multimodal artifacts, and interviews to attain a robust understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Patton (2002) explains that the point of this approach is not to reach perfect consistency across data sources. Patton (2002) explains that inconsistencies may

be the result of the strengths of various approaches and offer space for more in-depth questioning.

Statement of Reflexivity

I came into this study with a history of using photography, video, and now new media to explore self-expression. This interest stems, historically, from exposure to the arts, primarily photography, from a young age due to my father's professional photography career. Further, the researcher has an interest in education and the learning sciences, specifically the maker and STEAM movements, and the importance it places on improving learning through doing.

I have worked with various informal educational organizations who promote education and learning through these methods. Therefore, when a close friend introduced me to the YNY program, I became excited at the chance to work with a program, which uses the skills mentioned above and techniques to bring to light an important issue within New York State.

I was first introduced to the YNY program in the fall of 2013, where I met with one of the founders to briefly talk about the program and possible ways for me to assist the program goals. After that meeting, I decided to conduct my comprehensive paper, on the pilot study of YNY, which occurred in the summer of 2013. Thus, I have a long relationship with the program, before I started my dissertation research.

Unfortunately, while working on this dissertation with the YNY program, there have been many tumultuous moments, like most start-up nonprofits. During the second year of YNY's existence, the two Co-Founders of YNY, Rae, and Samantha, got into a disagreement about the running of the program. This resulted in Samantha leaving and taking away many of her criminal justice resources the program needed to function, leaving the program floundering for a

year and a half. Rae to the reigns of the YNY program, with little experience, which has caused the growth of the program to be an uphill battle.

I found that I became weary about the implementation of the program when watching the YNY archival footage. Most of the eight-week workshops seemed unorganized and under-resourced. Further, many of the activities appeared rushed, not allowing participants to fully grasp the concepts being employed. The biggest problem I noticed was with group dynamics between the lead facilitators and most artists were mostly white females and minority participants. I noticed a general lack of cultural competence at many different points during the workshops, especially when the lead facilitator and artists were talking to the youth participants about how to interact with the police. As a black woman, who grew up in New York, I am very aware of the poor relationship the minority community has had with the police. I believe it was inappropriate at times, for the facilitator to insisted on inviting police officers to workshop sessions, even when they explicitly said they did not feel comfortable with that scenario. I do not believe the bond between the facilitators and youth were strong enough for the participants to fully engage with the police in a meaningful way, and thus should not have been invited. From my perspective, this problem stems from the fact that the facilitators have never worked with this population or youth programming in any capacity. This lack of experience was felt by youth participants, and staff alike, as there was a lack of general organization every workshop and poorly set rules and parameters. I made sure to write memos and explore these biases, so I could be mindful of how these thoughts could potentially influence my analysis.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings from a case study of the Young New Yorkers 8-week program between September 2014-September 2016. The results represent the analysis of semi-structured interviews with YNY staff and participants, field notes from the review of archival digital videos of workshop sessions, and content analysis of eighteen digital stories. Analysis of the data reveals, the YNY program assists participants in the two delicate feats of creating a redemptive narrative; by salvaging a “good self,” by separating their identity as an offender from their actions, and second, creating a pathway to develop a prosocial identity. Further, their stories reveal the use of digital storytelling practices, specifically the use of visual media, was a unique tool in supporting this interplay.

This chapter is organized around the three research questions that guided this study. As discussed in the previous chapter, the use of multimodal discourse analysis provided the framework through which themes emerged from various data sources (interviews and digital stories). Findings thus directly align with the three elements of multimodal discourse theory (Kress, 2001): discourse and social practices; design; and 3) production. At the end of each section, the researcher provides a table summarizing the findings of each research question.

Discourse and Social Practices: The Conditions Under Which YNY Digital Stories Were Created

The first research question asks “What are the conditions under which YNY participants’ digital stories are being told?”. This question seeks to explore the contextual factors and conditions under which the YNY participants digital stories were developed. To understand the conditions under which YNY participants constructed their stories, three main areas were considered: 1) central motivation for the YNY program, 2) the curriculum that YNY developed

and implemented to scaffold the participants' production of their digital stories; and 3) interactions and relationships among the curriculum, the YNY staff, and the participants that affected the stories and the project.

YNY Mission and Vision. Since its inception in 2012, YNY's goal is to "empower participants to transform the criminal justice system through their creative voices." Rae, the Executive Director of YNY, knows the goals of the program sound lofty but tempers her expectations "through small wins." Small wins are defined as creating or making participants aware of "pathways" to help change behavior. Personally, Rae feels "the expectation for an eight-week program to change everything in a person's life is borderline insane, but it is the expectation from funders and the system, to divert them."

Pathways are created through the program's multiple-pronged restorative media arts eight-week programming. YNY, like other programs with a cultural arts format, aims to promote self-expression, empowerment, and confidence building through arts-based activities. However, YNY is unique in that it uses media arts activities to promote the decontextualization and recontextualization of restorative justice values for both youth participants and the criminal justice system in which they are involved. YNY hopes through the viewing of participants artifacts will make connections with the criminal justice stakeholders to humanize the participants, in order to reduce their charge and have their criminal records sealed. YNY participants can make connections with the criminal justice stakeholders to "humanize" them, "so they are given another chance." YNY believes this aspect of the program is crucial to restoring or even establishing more productive connections between participants and the criminal justice system. Rae believes the strengths of YNY rely on the programs:

Ability to create unprecedented connections between prosecutors and our kids that does shift courtroom cultures, and our goal is really to keep the kids out of the system. In this way, we have designed the program as ‘Transformative Justice,’ throwing an examining light not only on our participants but also the system that binds them. YNY would also like to directly address policing practices with law enforcement, but this component has not been created yet.

The Structure and Setting of the YNY 8-Week Program.

Staff. YNY has only two dedicated full-time staff members and numerous volunteers who conduct each workshop. These include Rae, who leads the facilitation of the workshop. Ally, Rae’s assistant, who completes the administrative work in the office and the workshops. These tasks include checking in participants as they arrive, collecting homework, and making sure all forms are completed. Ally also helps to keep the workshops moving at an adequate pace.

Also present are part-time facilitators, Carol and Walter, who ensure youth participants are on task throughout each workshop. They also call participants each week to remind participants when the next workshop is and to check-in on how their week is going. Walter served 20 years in a maximum-security prison in upstate New York, Rae believes this is an essential facet to the program, as both can speak to the “inhumane processing of black and brown bodies.” None of the YNY workshop staff and have any formal training in facilitating groups or any teaching experience of any kind. Rae is trying to change this dynamic, by hiring a program coordinator who has training in social work practice.

There is a YNY graduate mentor present in all workshops. The graduate mentors primary purpose is to speak to the participants “on their level” throughout the workshops. Rae believes this adds credibility to the program because the mentors have been through the same process as

current participants have moved on with their lives and have come back to help others “just like them.” In the past few years, these graduates have been either Danilo or Holt, from the 2013 YNY cohorts.

Throughout the 8-week program, there are also visiting teaching artists and public defenders, whom each participate in one or two workshops. Teaching artists are hired through recommendations of "friends of the program." Each teaching artist focuses on their medium, which consists of photography, graffiti, documentary video, graphic design, and murals. For each of their respective workshops, the teaching artist will conduct a short lecture on their work, discussing how it is relevant to the idea of "social justice." Then they will lead the participants in a media arts activity. Teaching artists are from Brooklyn and provide participants with examples of how to use art to give back to themselves and their communities. Public defenders from the Brooklyn Defenders office are also invited to attend the workshops with heavier restorative justice content. These lawyers assist participants in understanding their rights and the importance of completing the YNY program, in order to get their records sealed.

Setting. YNY runs the 8-week program two times per year, once in the fall and then in the spring. The six workshops take place once a week from 4-7 pm, in a classroom within the Department of Probation office in Brooklyn, NY. The duration of the workshops was shortened from the pilot, which originally included 4-hour workshops, because the workshops are now held during the academic school year, and the program believes its participants will be unable to concentrate for four full hours, after possibly attending a full day of school.

For each workshop, the YNY staff must set up the room with a computer, projector, camera equipment, art materials, and a workspace area for their art creation. The Department of Probation does not provide any materials. The room where the program workshops take place

holds 15 people comfortably and has stacking chairs and chairs with desks attached, and two long tables. The room's walls are a faded Tiffany blue, and the worn and stained purple and gray carpet remind participants of being in a "detention center."

Figure 1. YNY Workshop Room



All YNY youth participants complained about the space where the program workshops took place, describing the room as "depressing," or "feeling like they were going to detention or something, it's so sad," and had no "life." Rae acknowledges,

the space isn't the most inspiring, but the program does not have the funds to have their own dedicated facility. Also, I think the space is good in reminding the participants this is court-mandated since they have to pass through a metal detector and law enforcement as they enter."

Youth participants sentencing to YNY. As previously mentioned, YNY participants are court-mandated to the program by the presiding Brooklyn judge of their case. According to Rae, during the pilot program in 2012, participant charges were offenses such as multiple counts of jumping the turnstile, petit larceny, multiple graffiti charges. However, since their Fall 2014

cohort, the program now receives participants with more severe charges. These include misdemeanors or felonies that have been reduced to misdemeanors.

Rae has seen changes in who is sentenced to the YNY program as promising:

The criminal justice sentencing is in proportionate response to the offense while giving participants the kind of services and support they need to get on the path to success.

During the pilot program participants who completed the YNY program had their adult criminal record sealed. At present, the YNY program is one of a few components that participants must complete to complete their justice involvement. For instance, participants may have a brief social service intervention mandate like drug treatment, education, counseling.

Rae also believes that the YNY program isn't necessarily for artists,

In the first cohort, we did have participants who were arrested for graffiti, so they fit well with the goal of YNY to use art to share their voice, but our participants do not have to be artists. If anything, most of our participants don't have any art background, because it isn't a subject even offered in their school.

It is also important to note that the participants the researcher spoke to knew little or nothing about the YNY program at sentencing. Princess said, "I guess I thought I was sent to YNY because I had directed some talent shows in H.S. and maybe the judge thought that meant I liked art?" Danilo said, "I didn't really care about the program I was being sentenced to, I just didn't want to go to jail."

The Curriculum. YNY has developed a scaffold curriculum that allows participants to reflect on their offenses, while also telling their stories and experimenting with various art mediums. Rae admits that "the workshop itinerary looks overwhelming on paper, but they

generally get through all of the activities.” Rae also explained that since the activities in “workshop two are so heavy, they usually spill over into Workshop Three,” and this extra space is already built into the curriculum. See Appendix F & G outlines of workshop activities and timeframes.

Circle Check-In and Check-Out. According to Rae, the most important thing she learned from this pilot program was that she had to focus on making participants feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported, from the start of the program. Without establishing this rapport, Rae believes it would be tough to get participants to actively participate. Thus, each workshop focuses on creating this welcoming environment by having a circle check-in and check-out at the beginning and end.

Each workshop begins with a circle check-in at the start of each session, a YNY staff member will reiterate “this is a safe space for them to share any and everything they want to.” Then one participant is asked to volunteer to be the “spiritual timekeeper” for the circle check-in, to gently let the speaker know when their time is up. All participants get a stack of notecards. Then each participant gets 1 minute to say “Something Recent, Something Decent.” After each person shares, the rest of the group is given a moment to write down a word or phrase that stuck out to them on their cards.

The circle-check out takes place at the end of each session, after participants have had their pizza dinner and cleaned up from the day's activities. Once again, all participants and staff will return to a circle setting, and each participant will receive two notecards. "On one notecard, participants write a word that describes one of their strengths from the session, and on the other a strength of the person sitting beside them, this way all the participants get to hear something." They go around in the circle and read the cards aloud. Next, the YNY staff thanks the

participants for attending and being engaged in the day's activities". This activity concludes the circle check-out and participants are free to leave.

Workshop One. The first workshop spends at least the first half hour setting the expectations, objectives, and the ground rules for the YNY program and future sessions. Above all, YNY wants to establish a climate of safety and respect, so participants feel safe to share. Therefore, YNY's first activity tries to build rapport by demonstrating participants are more alike than they realize, even though they may come from different neighborhoods and families. The first activity consists of completing a short video diary exercise. In a large circle, all participants and staff stand up, and everyone is asked to interview the person to the right of them with a camcorder. Each participant must answer three questions before they can become the interviewer behind the camera. The interviewer is given a list of questions. The only required question is the first, which asks participants "What choice did you make that brought you here?" This question is followed up by two supplemental questions, which are more personal in nature. For example, "Who are the most influential people in your life?" or "What do you do for fun?"

Figure 2. Picture from video diary exercise



Completing this activity is always very arduous for YNY, Rae says. “It should probably take ten minutes to complete, but it ends up taking closer to twenty or thirty.” Rae or another YNY staff member must always start by asking a participant the questions because there are never any participants who volunteer to go first. Many times, participants ask for the interviewer to videotape their shoes as opposed to their faces. Participants also always respond with very brief statements, “I got in trouble,” and “The courts made me come here.” Rae often nudges participants to be more honest with themselves and the group, and so she continues to ask questions past the three required questions. This often agitates the participants, and they become standoffish and say “Yo you said only three questions, that’s way more, I’m done.” At this point, Rae or another staff reminds the participants this is a court-mandated program, and if they do not want to participate actively, they can call their lawyer and complete their sentence in another way. These little threats seem to work enough to keep participants quiet for the time being.

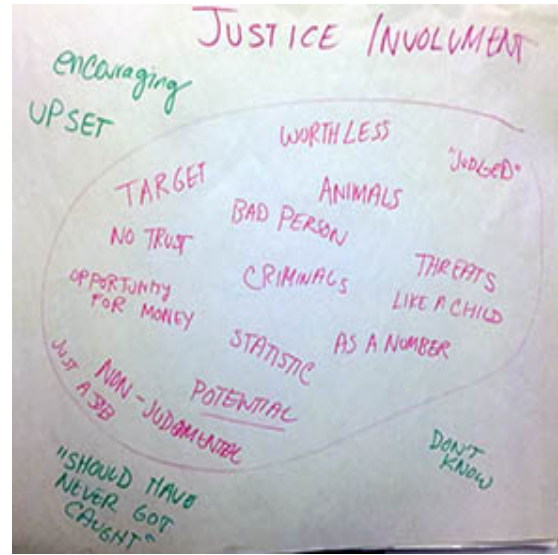
During this exercise, participants also appear hesitant when it comes to asking questions of one another; most check-in with Rae or Ally to see what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it after they ask each question, even if they have seen an example of how to complete the activity by YNY staff and other youth participants. If Rae believes that participants are too uncooperative during this activity, she will ask everyone to go around again. This also gets a lot of moans and groans, and Rae must repeat the court-mandated threat again. Rae thinks this activity is so difficult because “it’s the first thing they do together, they generally don’t know the other participants, or what’s going to happen, so they are very shy.” Although the purpose of this exercise is to help establish that participants are all there for the same reason, this

understanding is not truly accomplished with this first activity. Instead, it appears to frustrate both the youth participants and the YNY staff.

The next activity attempts to reaffirm the ideas of "common ground and community." This time YNY conducts a word collage activity called "Word: Re-creating Our Future." Three workspaces are created at various tables around the room, each with sponge markers, sharpie pens, and large pieces of sticky paper, each titled with different settings: daily life, justice involvement, and YNY community. The participants split into small groups of three or four, and each group is stationed at a different workspace with a YNY staff member. Participants are asked to think for one minute about some words that describe themselves in various settings and write them down on the sheets of paper. The groups rotate around the room until everyone has been to all the workstations.

Figure 3. Word: Re-creating Our Future Examples





This activity proves easier to do than the first video exercise. Carol feels, “it’s because of the smaller groups, the kids feel like they are performing for a smaller crowd.” Further, the presence of the YNY staff members at each table, who are personally able to sit and talk with the participants, appears to put the participants at ease. The YNY staff do most of the writing on the pieces of paper because participants complain their handwriting is illegible. Carol and Rae believe this idea of “calling out the realness” is a critical aspect of the YNY program that is infused into every workshop; it helps validate some of the things the participants see daily.

This activity continues, as participants go back into a larger group circle and are asked to look at all the word clouds and discuss what they observed. Participants acknowledge a few things; the first reflection is that within each setting although the words and phrases describing themselves were dramatically different, however, the words used in each setting were very similar. Participants are also able to notice how YNY is “in the middle”; it is the connection between making the criminal justice system see us in a better light, as well as “our community.”

The final activity for the first workshop is a photography portrait exercise. A teaching artist who practices photography gives a short 5-minute presentation about their work. Next, the

teaching artist and Rae instruct participants to get into small groups and take portraits of each other. Each group is given a camera, and they must take one album cover shot, one Obama shot, and five photos in-between so they can play around and be silly with the camera. The guest artist will also take headshots of participants as they complete this exercise, as these photos will be used again and again throughout the program.

Figure 4. Portrait Exercise Example



There are two underlying goals for this activity, first, to help the participants get to know each other and have fun, Rae feels “if they make a friend they are a million times more likely to come to all the sessions, which is what they need to.” The second goal is to begin to talk about self-representation. Participants are asked, “How does Obama have his portrait taken, How about Biggie? What does that communicate? sometimes it leads to a conversation about how should you present yourself in different contexts like in court.” Further, this exercise

supplements participants' understanding of the word collage activity in a more meaningful way.

Rae says,

the participants look at it as code switching, when they are in the criminal justice system, they need to represent themselves in a different way than they're with their families because all the criminal justice system sees is their sheet and not the kid behind it. Having them take photos with different personalities shows them how easy it can be.

Finally, participants are given a homework assignment to find an example of art that tells a story and is "public." The artwork can be something visible in the streets, like a mural or a sculpture; or something they see in a book, newspaper, Internet. Participants must be able to explain, "What is the story or the message?" or "What is good about it" and "What suggestions do you have for the artist." This activity concludes the first workshop and participants are then able to go and have the pizza and finish with a circle check-out.

Workshop Two. The purpose of Workshop Two is to address the participant's choices relating to their case/s, and the impact of those decisions. Workshop Two begins like all others, with a circle check-in. Ally also attempts to collect the homework from participants. There appear to be no repercussions if participants do not complete it. Next, a lawyer from the Brooklyn Defenders Office presents for 15 minutes about "*Knowing your rights – Collateral Consequences.*" The participants are all handed out sheets of paper with the Miranda rights. Rae clarifies:

We explain to them why it's important to say no, they are not willing to answer any questions, and how when you're in that intense situation you may naturally want to explain yourself but once you are detained it is very important to remain silent.

Once the 15-minute discussion begins, participants are eager to examine instances where they spoke up to the police, and it has gotten them into more trouble, and how unfair it is. "This is where the YNY facilitators, Carol or Walter take over." Rae believes as a white Australian woman; she has little in common with her participant's interactions with the police, so she would rather have individuals who can relate to their experiences. The conversation leads to drawing on a white board of how being arrested and rearrested impacts their lives, futures, and communities. Rae explains:

About half of the time they get to the point where they understand if they don't get rearrested again they are changing the world, and how everything in our lives is a web of our is about choices, so then we begin our choice module.

Next, Rae takes over with a 10-minute lecture on the meaning of the word choice, as "an act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two more possibilities." Rae emphasizes people do not always realize they have choices,

...people often think there's only one thing that we can do, and our choice is either we do it, or we do not. We don't see that there are more choices because we are so used to seeing things a certain way the way we see it, the way we have been taught to see things.

Following this idea, Rae asks participants "Is it a fact that, when we do not have a metro card, the only option we have to get onto the subway is to jump the turnstile?" Often participants respond with an astounding "yes," which leads Rae to let out a deep sigh. Rae then goes on to explain:

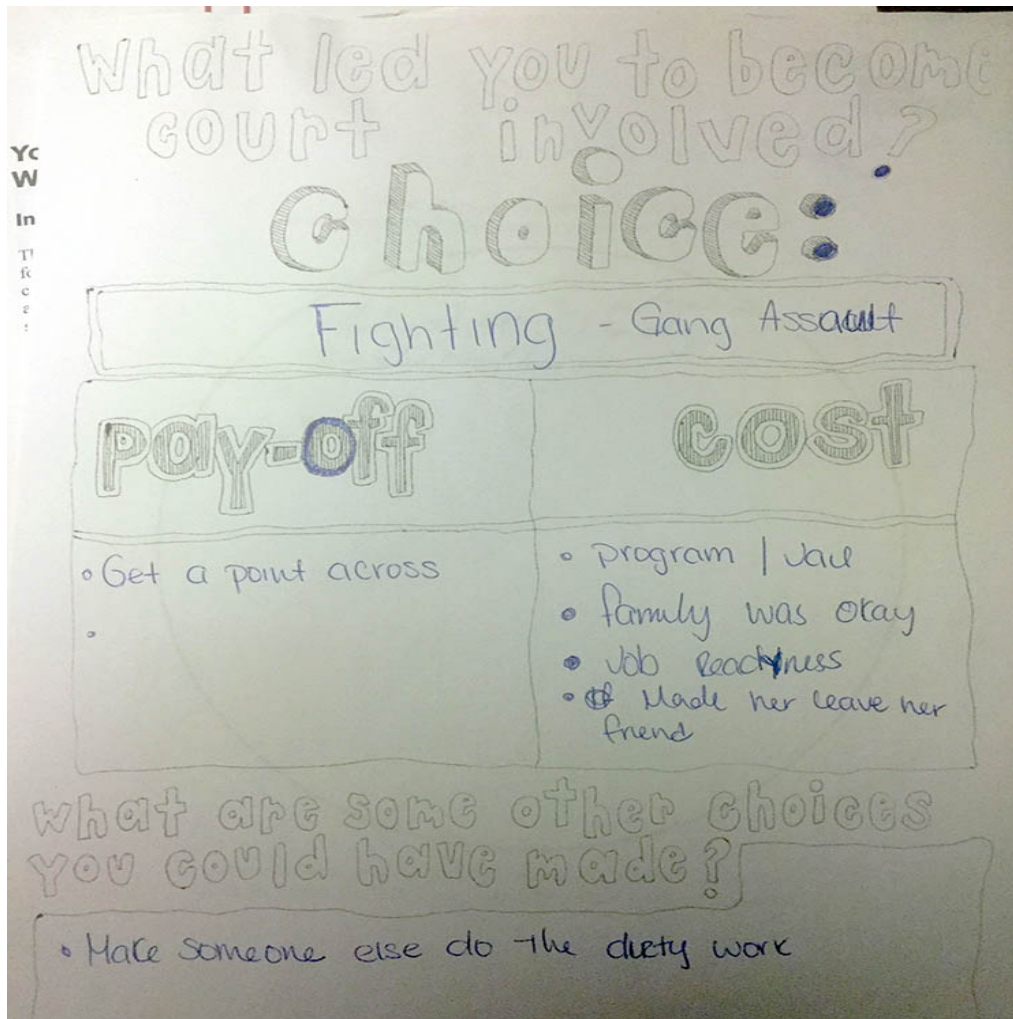
You could buy a metro card! You could ask your family for help and have them buy you the metro cards for help. You could get a job to help pay for your metro cards. You could

budget, so you put money towards the metro cards you need? Instead of Pizza or something else, you spend your money on.

None of the participants are particularly interested in this answer. A typical reaction is to say, "But what if I need to get on the train because I have to go to work, and I do not have one? I need to get to work, don't I?" These responses set up participants to fall into Rae's trap and lead to the next part of the discussion, regarding maturity and self-awareness. Maturity is described as having the ability to use "consequential thinking." Rae emphasizes, "Our life is a result of the choices we make. Ask yourself: Is it worth it? What is a better way? What are my other options? Your life is in your hands".

After about 15-minutes of this discussion, Ally hands out a worksheet, entitled "What led you to become court involved?" The sheet contains four major sections: choice, payoff, cost, and other options, where each participant can draw in or write in their answers. Participants show their resistance to completing this worksheet. Often, they scribble only a few words for each section. However, this changes when participants get to the last question regarding other choices they could have made, giving what Rae calls "smart ass answers." The question is designed to evoke a "responsible" choice, which will lead the participant to take drastically different actions. Most participants respond they would repeat their same actions, but this time they will not get caught. For example, if a participant is arrested for fighting, his or her answer typically was "I would have someone else fight for me."

Figure 5. Choice Worksheet Example



At this point Rae and the YNY staff only slightly push back these types of answers yet; Rae may only ask, “Might that still get you in trouble?” When questioned why she doesn’t push back on such an important topic within this workshop, Rae explains, “We don’t believe in forcing them to say “the right thing” because at the end of the day it’s their life and they are going to make choices around these things, this worksheet is just a first step.”

Finally, YNY participants engage in a 15-minute presentation from either a graffiti artist or photographer. The presentation is a chance to discuss once again the YNY program and its relationship to public art, specifically on developing one’s narrative. Participants are asked to reflect on how their environment influences their lives, either as a list or a drawing in their

sketchbook. The workshop concludes with a pizza and reflection of how participants are feeling about the work that day.

Workshop Three. Like the second workshop, the third workshop continues to address the participant's choices about their case/s, and the impact of those decisions. Unlike workshop two, though, workshop three requires participants to "go deeper," focusing more on the trauma of being arrested. After the circle-check-in, Rae gives a stern reminder of the values of the YNY workshop, notably confidentiality, positive language, and trust. "This reintroduction of the values is imperative as workshop three is the most demanding for most participants."

Before the hard work begins, a guest artist who uses documentary photography or film gives a 15-minute lecture about their work. The lecture focuses on awareness of one's surroundings and how individuals fit into their environment. The lecture is a setup for the next activity, which has participants take an intensive look into the choice that they made which got them court-involved and the scales of impact around that choice. Rae explains, "we are doing this exercise to practice thinking ahead and to bring to light the inherent wisdom that the kids all have from going through this experience."

Participants break-up into pairs or a small group of three, with at least one YNY staff member sitting with them. Each group receives a camcorder. Participants are tasked with doing a role-playing exercise, where they verbally retell the situation that brought them to be court-involved in the present tense. Rae explains, "It is an opportunity to give voice to their experiences but also explore a lot of different perspectives of the choice they made. , the impact of that choice had on their life and the lives of others."

The interviewer holds the video camera while asking the following questions: A) what is happening in the lead up to your choice that had you arrested? B) what are the scales of impact

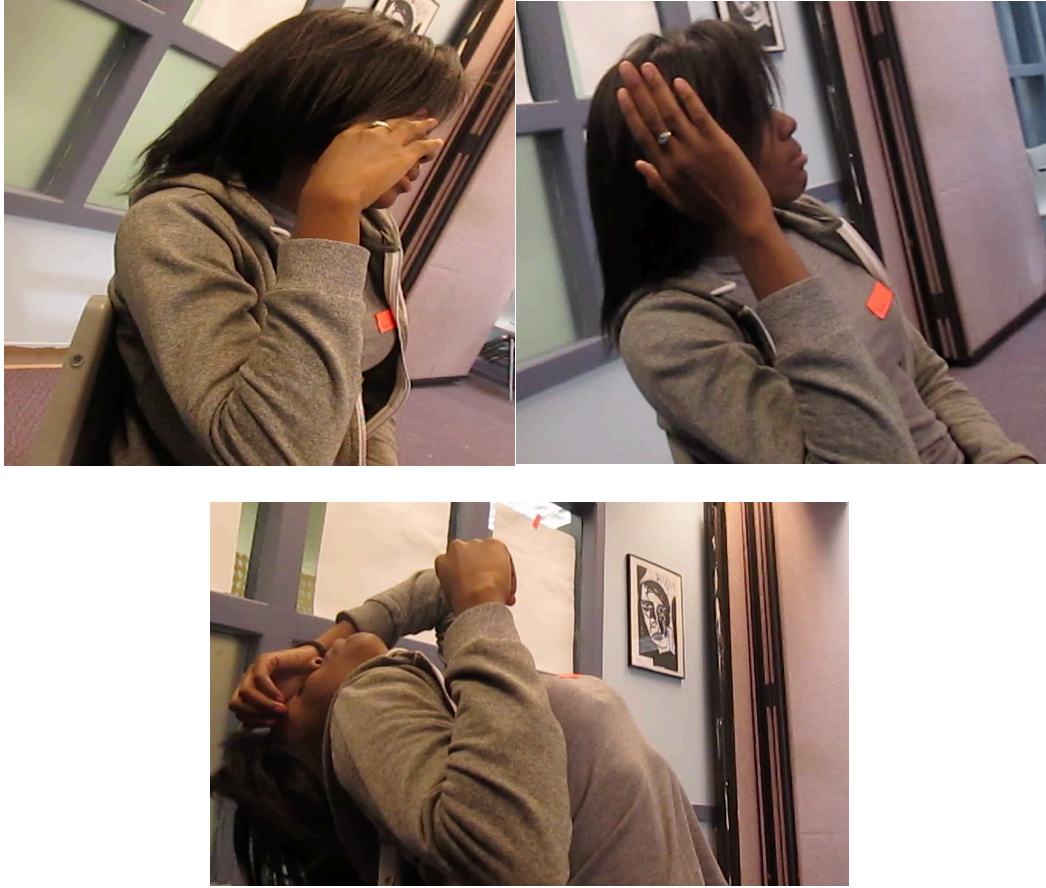
on you and others? C) what other options do you have besides the choice you made? D) what do you need in order to prevent the same thing happening again? E) who are you in the world?

Each question has an about four or five sub-questions, which attempt to get all the details surrounding the circumstances. Rae explains:

The video diary exercise allows participants to be honest with oneself and look at ways they can take responsibility for their lives... It takes courage, to be honest, and really look at how we can take responsibility for our lives. Not in a way that we are making ourselves out to be bad or wrong. However, in a way that knows by taking. Because this takes courage, please be encouraging and supportive with your partner. Listen deeply and with deep respect and encourage your partner to open up and be brave.

Similar to the previous week, participants being interviewed provide monosyllabic answers; rarely does the interviewee look into the camera when being asked questions. The general demeanor of the respondents is to be slouched in the chair, looking down on the floor, or away as they answer the questions. Often participants complain that they feel like they are answering the same questions repeatedly. For instance, participants are asked to explain, "What is happening in the lead up to your choice (that had you be arrested)? Moving along to the next question, they are asked: "Was there a conflict?" Participants exclaim and sigh, "I already answered that!"

Figure 6. Video screenshots of participant reactions to talking about their arrest



Unlike the previous workshop, the YNY staff members press the participants to find another angle from which to respond to the question. This is where the YNY graduate interjects and asks interviewees to explain themselves further or helps to interpret and translate for the YNY staff member if a participant uses vocabulary that they do not understand. The YNY graduates know the difficulty of this process, but they also have the wisdom of what happens after you come to terms with your arrest.

All and all the interviews require 15 minutes to complete for each participant, as there is a lot more back and forth between YNY staff and the interviewee regarding further explanation. Although the YNY staff consistently pushes participants, there is never any anger displayed toward the staff members. Instead, participants appear to be more ashamed, frustrated or embarrassed, as they retell their stories. When the interview is completed, the interviewer is

asked to write down three words that they believe is a good reflection of the best self of the interviewee. Once everyone has completed their interview, the participants and staff share out to the larger group. Each participant will share their reflections from the perspective of both the interviewer and interviewee. As a group, participants are asked to reflect on the issues of self-respect, noticing one's triggers, and rooting themselves in personal power. At this point, everyone in the room is exhausted.

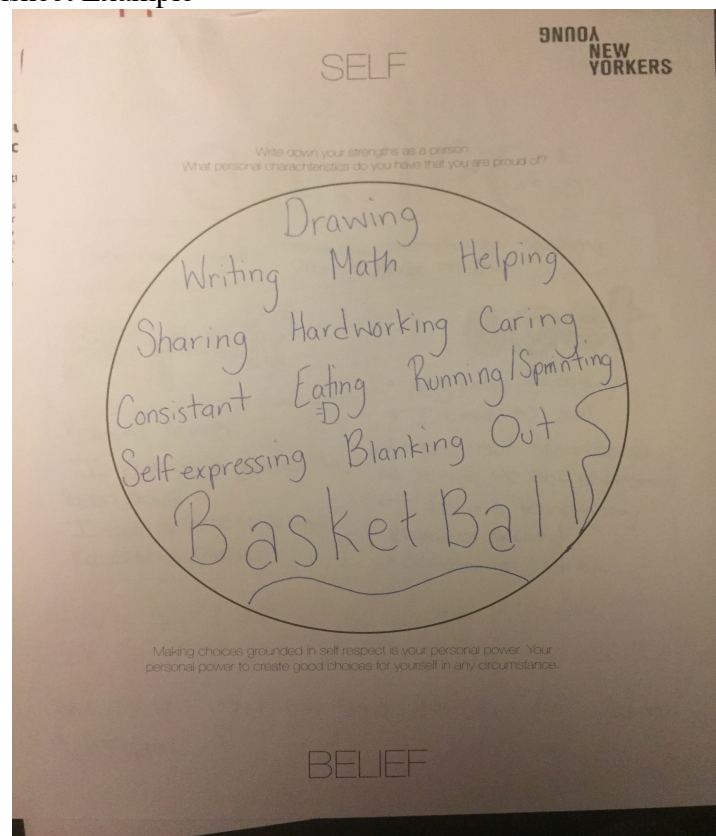
To celebrate such a courageous and honest act, all YNY participants receive their own camcorder, which they are permitted to keep. Participants are overwhelmed and excited by this gracious gift and start playing with it right away. As Ally hands out the cameras to each participant, Rae explains this gift has a homework assignment attached to it. All participants must go home and complete two video assignments. The first requires participants to interview two people, asking them about how the participant's arrest affected them. The second is to do a "World Tour," where they create a video diary of the essentials of their life, like their food, clothing, homes, and neighborhoods.

Workshop Four. Workshop Four begins the process of helping participants to build social capital and learn to express themselves in a more constructive manner. To accomplish this task over the next few workshops, YNY has participants look at their aspirations for themselves and their communities through various media arts activities. Specifically, in Workshop Four YNY focuses on the use of collages. A guest artist who specializes in collage begins the workshop with a 20-minute lecture about their work and the importance of collage. Throughout the presentation, the guest artist continually reiterates how creating collage can be a freeing and playful experience, as there are no rules. The teaching artist explains, "It's a simple way to express their ideas that often go beyond the scope of traditional reality."

Next, the participants individually complete a couple of worksheets which seeks to aid participants in thinking about who they are and what they want to be. The first worksheet focuses on personal strengths. More specifically, the worksheet asks, "What personal characteristics do you have that you are most proud of?" This activity hopes to evoke participants to think about all "the good" in their lives. Rae explains:

Many times, for our kids being court-involved only encompasses a lot of negative talk. Like how in the first workshop we do the Word Exercise, the kids tend to focus more on the negative words than the positive words. At this point in the program, we create a space where we instill some healing, and hope to assist in creating new possibilities and new identities.

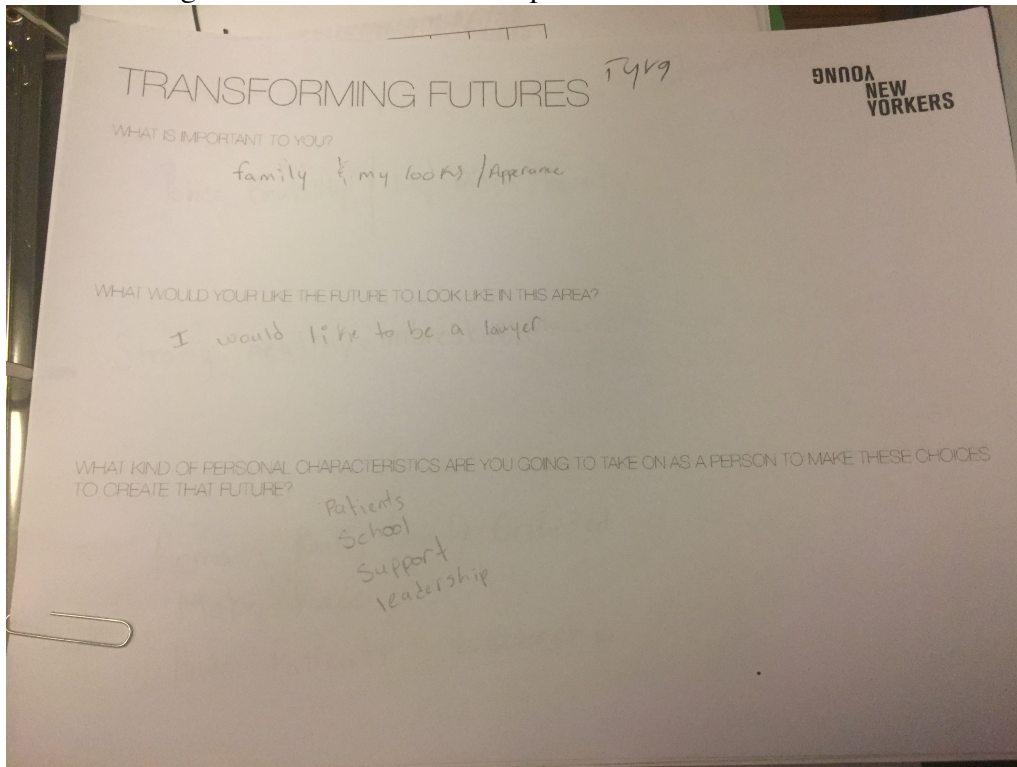
Figure 7. Self-Worksheet Example



Unlike the previous workshop activities, participants are more eager to complete this exercise.

There is usually a lot more laughter in the room, and participants are more vocal yelling out characteristics like "I'm patient!" and "I'm good at sharing." Every answer is accepted here, but the YNY staff do have to keep the participants from yelling too much and writing too little.

Figure 8. Transforming Futures Worksheet Example



After about 15 minutes, the participants are handed out the second worksheet called "Transforming Futures." Transforming Futures asks participants three questions. "What is important to you?" "What would you like the future to look like in the future?", moreover, "What kind of personal characteristics are you going to take on as a person to make these choices to create that future?" This worksheet proves to a bit harder than the first for participants to complete. Rae believes this is because:

It is not a question I think they are pushed to write down. I think people may ask this of them in passing, but to be asked What do you want to be? How will you do it? When we ask for this, I think it begins to really solidify the importance of personal power and control

to foster a better life.

For this worksheet, YNY staff must spread out around the room helping participants concentrate and buckle down on answering the questions in any way they can. As the exercise ends after 15 minutes, participants are led straight into the next exercise.

Participants continue to work on their individual desk spaces and are handed a large piece of sketchbook paper, safety scissors, glue sticks, numerous printed pictures of animals, and a copy of the portrait picture taken earlier during the portraiture exercise from the first workshop. Each participant is asked to assemble a collage employing visual metaphors using their portrait, the animals, and any words or images that the participants would like to draw. Further, the participants are instructed that their collages should explore what they want for their future and what characteristics they would like to emulate, exactly like they did on the previous worksheets, now just through visual imagery. Rae explains, "The idea is to continue to empower the participants to make choices that are aligned with their goals." Participants quickly get to work. This activity is another instance where everyone seems to be enjoying themselves, as laughter and smack talk fill the room. The participants are even attempting to trade pictures with one another so that they can get "better animals."

Figure 9. eCollage Example



After 20 minutes, the participants reluctantly move into a circle and share their work with everyone. There are always a few participants who want to continue working because they do not think their “masterpieces” are finished; some participants even ask to take their pieces home, but this is not allowed. Rae says,

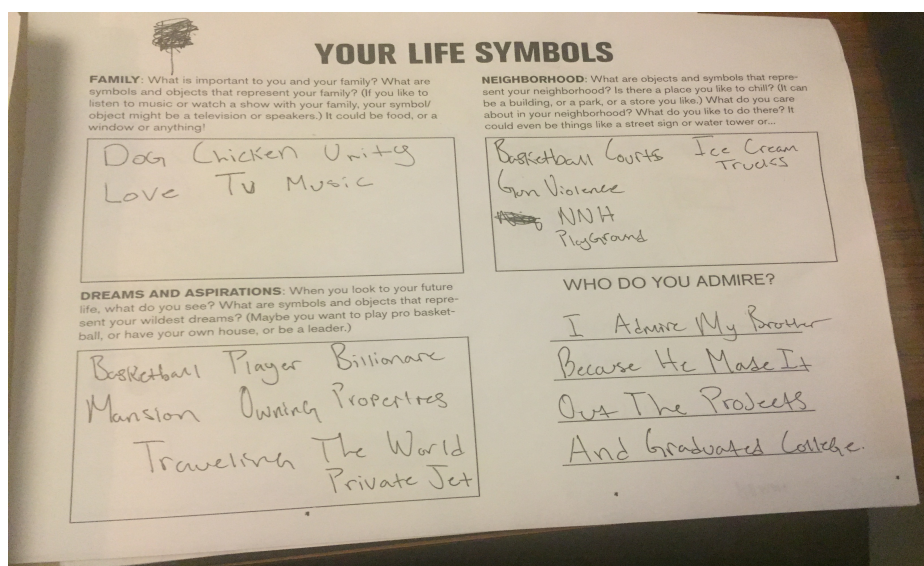
I'm always interested to see how they use the same pictures and have totally different meanings. Like someone may use a lion and say it represents their strength, and the next person will say patience in reference to their hunting style. It really gives everyone a chance to be creative and creates this collective power within the group.”

This activity concludes workshop four and the participants are granted permissions to get their pizza.

Workshop Five. Workshop Five continues to have participants identify important objects in their life to promote the idea of social connections through worksheets and art lectures. Similar to Workshop Four, Workshop Five’s first activity continues to look at participant’s

aspirations and how to achieve them through the support of the people around them. First, the participants are handed a worksheet entitled "Your Life Symbols."

Figure 10. Life Symbols Worksheet Example



This worksheet assists participants in identifying important individuals or features within their family, neighborhood. Further it asks participants to share their dreams, and whom they most admire. As with the Transforming Futures worksheet, participants quietly work at their tables, a bit hesitant to write down anything. To help participants, Ally leads a short visual meditation. She asks the participants to close their eyes and think about their family and their home. Some participants attempt to yell at what they see, but Ally and Rae remind them this is a quiet activity. After 30 seconds, Ally asks everyone to open their eyes and write down all the objects they imagined while imagining their family. The same procedure occurs for the neighborhood section of the worksheet, asking "Is there a place you like to hang out?" and "What do you care about in your neighborhood."

Of course, not all participants like the experience of closing their eyes to meditate. A few speak about how the experience makes them feel uneasy, but when asked why they cannot give a

substantive answer. One participant reflects, "I just felt off balance I guess, I can't explain it." The rest of the worksheet appears easier to complete, and participants respond with "Didn't we talk about our dreams last week? Why are we doing it again." Rae responds, "It's always important to keep saying our dreams aloud, it helps reaffirm them for us and others." Participants continue working on the final section, which asks whom they admire. All in all, the worksheet takes about 20 minutes to complete, more time than YNY usually wants, but they are flexible, and Workshop Five is light in activities.

During their share out of this worksheet, participants reflect on how positive the objects were that everyone recognized, which adds a sort of positive energy to the room. Although the majority of participants reside in Brooklyn, they mostly come from different neighborhoods and don't always leave their neighborhood. This discussion at times jokingly starts a "turf war," insinuating that the Puerto Rican food in their neighborhood was better than anywhere else, or how one's neighborhood had the best basketball courts. Rae loves this energy as it leads into her lecture about neighborhood public art and graffiti.

Rae's 15-minute lecture focuses on a few areas in New York, known for their public art or graffiti, namely Bushwick, the South Bronx, and the Lower East Side. As she goes through the various photos on her PowerPoint slides, she asks: "Who is represented? How are they represented? How do our own stories touch larger social issues? For the most part, participants can connect how most of the public art they see are symbols of their community. They also reflect on the fact that in many of the spaces they live, there is less graffiti as art and more "ugly tags." Rae suggests that maybe they should become community leaders who help get artists to create new more beautiful work in their neighborhoods. Participants often think this is a joke, stating "no one wants to listen to what we have to think." Rae is quick to point out how YNY

takes them seriously, and when they complete the program their families, neighborhoods, and others will also see them at leaders. Again, this message is responded to with snickering and statements from participants like "You're sus" (suspect), or "You wildin."

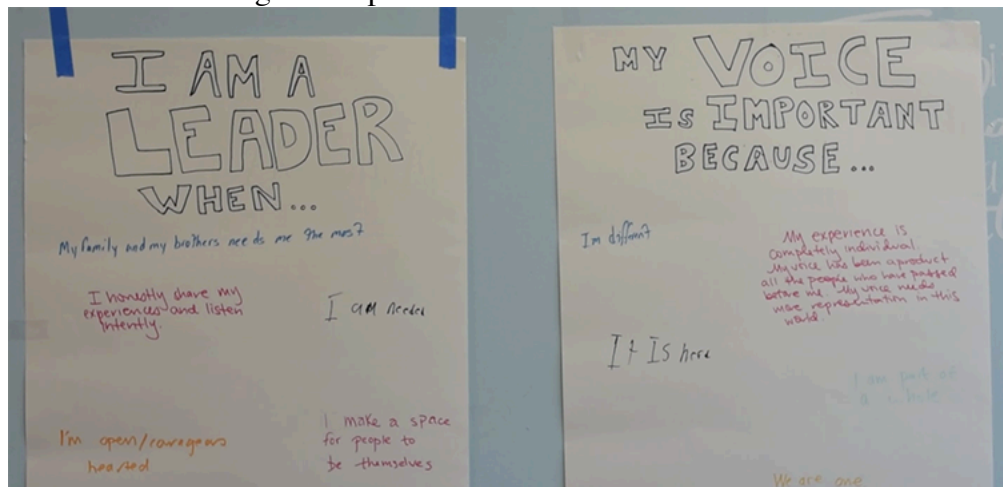
The next hour is spent either continuing the previous week's collage or creating a new collage, which explores the symbols in one neighborhood or family life. All the participants seem to be content with completing the same activity as the previous week. Their only request is to put on music since the room is eerily quiet. Rae responds, "as long as it doesn't have cuss words," which gets a loud groan from participants who shout, "That's impossible." Rae contends with the fact that not all rap music has curses, and their classical music has no curses and is linked to making people smarter. The participants give up and continue to work until dinner. During the circle check-out, Rae reminds everyone it is their last workshop, and the participants all collectively cheer.

Workshop Six. Workshop six is the last day of the curriculum for the YNY program. Weeks 7 and 8 of the program involve preparation and execution of the participant's final exhibition. This workshop focuses on helping participants recognize the structural and cultural violence that occurs in participant's everyday lives. Rae believes this workshop helps tie together all the issues related to participants' arrests and their newfound empowerment. "It addresses forms of injustice which may have contributed to their arrest, but at this point in the program, we hope participants have greater self-confidence and positive identities, which inspire them to understand they can help change their communities' conditions just as much as anyone else."

There are many activities scheduled for workshop six, like the jam-packed nature of workshop one. The first activity begins just as participants arrive and is similar to the Word

exercise. The room is filled with large white sheets of paper on the walls that each have their own titles, which say have things like “I am powerful because _____,” “I am learning _____ about myself,” etc. As participants arrive, they are given a marker and asked to fill in the posters with aspiration statements.

Figure 11. Final Word Collage Example



Participants are somewhat taken aback by the activity, as they are used to their routine of a circle-check in before beginning any activities. Rae explains:

The participants have spent six weeks learning to create our new selves. We want them to take what they have learned and be the change. Uplift others. Make choices and then make new ones. We want them to stay connected to their new community, so we want this workshop to reinforce all the good repeatedly.

Participants shuffle around the room slowly trying to figure out what to write, and eventually, Rae and the other staff members tell them to "Just write whatever comes into their head, don't take it too seriously." Altogether, participants take about 15 minutes to complete this activity. They eagerly wait to talk about what they wrote, but the words are not immediately addressed. Instead, they move into the circle check-in.

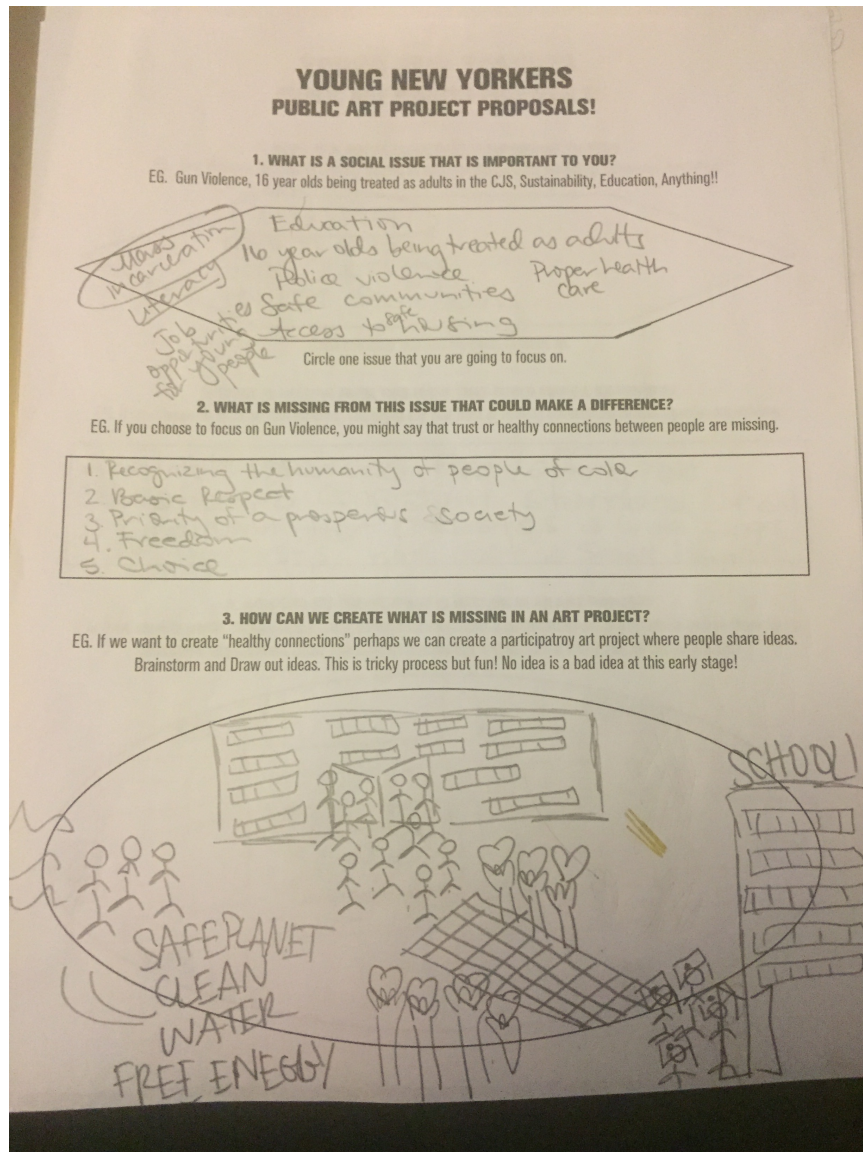
This circle check-in is framed a bit differently than the previous check-ins, as this one is

framed around the completing of the class, leadership, and community. YNY knows the ending of the program may bring up different feelings and behaviors, and they think it is important to address all these feelings. In a seated circle, participants are asked, "How do you usually handle transitions? How are you feeling today about this completion class? Is there anything you want to share with the group on this last meeting?" Each participant gets 2 minutes to speak. The most vocal participants provided a full 2-minute explanation about how they will miss the program but learned a lot, and they hope to volunteer in the future. The shy and more shielded participants quickly say they will miss coming in, but nothing more.

Following this discussion, Rae leads the group into the next activity. First, she presents what seems to be a continuation of the previous public art exercise. This presentation is slightly different, as it relates to public art ideas that are created to shed light on issues concerning a group of people or place. After listening for 10 minutes, everyone is instructed to brainstorm at least three public art ideas in less than 20 minutes, using their sketch pads. They are asked to work quickly and not to worry if their ideas are unique or feasible. The directions set the room abuzz with noise, as participants casually talk between each other and staff, discussing all the things they have talked about involving their crimes, the criminal justice system, their neighborhoods, or even personal issues such as teen pregnancy, or deaths in the family.

Next, participants are instructed to consolidate their ideas to 1 proposal. They are given a worksheet to help them outline and visualize their thoughts. The worksheet asks three questions: 1) What is a social issue that is important to you? 2) What is missing from this issue that could make a difference? 3) How can we create what is missing in an art project? As participants complete this worksheet, the room becomes quieter as they work.

Figure 12. Public Art Project Proposal Worksheet



After 15 minutes of work, they are ready to share their ideas with the rest of the group.

Participants share their ideas, while their peers provide suggestions on how to expand their ideas.

Rae explains,

We let them draw anything and everything, even if some of the ideas are a little eccentric.

One participant wanted to create an event like in the movie the Purge, where once a year people got to run around their neighborhoods attacking cops. We asked him to explain how this would be a productive project as opposed to just a situation where people

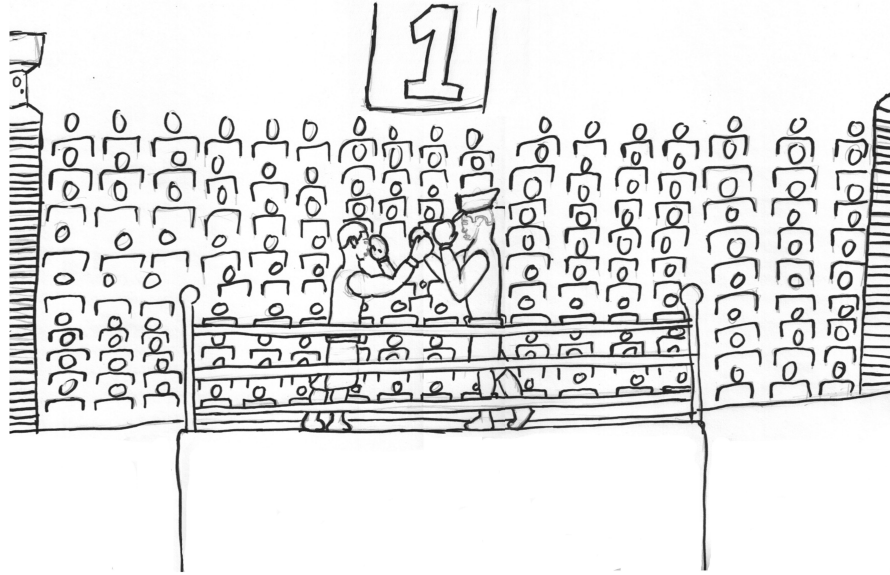
were acting crazy and trying to get revenge. He didn't love this push back but in the end between the staff and his peers we got him to alter his idea a bit to where it resembled the PAL (Police Athletic League) but just included boxing. We know there is a lot of hurt between our kids and the police, and we want to help to fix those relationships, but it should be constructive, or else we feel like we haven't taught them anything.

After the share outs, participants are handed out a large sheet of white paper and a set of markers. They are asked to create a larger version of their public art idea from what they wrote on the worksheet. Another 15 minutes will go by as participants draw out their thoughts.

Participants share out again, noting any changes they made from the original design. Participants are again eager to display their work.

Figure 13. Public Art Proposal Design Example





During this share out, Rae plays particularly close attention to all the ideas, because one of them will be turned into the framework for the public art idea. "I know we tell them to do anything, but for the exhibition, we need to be strategic about how we set up everything, so I have tended to stay away from the ideas that only specifically deal with addressing police issues, we try to create a community that sees them and their POV." These statements all point to Rae's determination to choose an idea that is transformative for all parties involved.

After the second share out, participants are then rewarded with a final celebration feast and even music! Participants and staff are all excited to be finished. As the participants cram the pizza, cake, cookies, and soda down their throats, the YNY staff reflects on the experiences they had working with each participant. Staff's speeches are filled with love and appreciation for the work that everyone has done, and many times as they speak they begin to tear up. Participants smile as they listen to the memories of the past six weeks, laughing at how they may have acted during situations.

Figure 14. Final Workshop Celebration Picture



After 20 minutes Rae then stands up and suggests they do a circle check-out only using the large posters around the room. Participants are asked to stand in a circle while looking at the posters and talk about what words resonate with them the most. Without getting too emotional, one by one participant offer their gratitude toward the staff and acknowledge one another as being helpful. Some participants even talk about how they think they will feel lost without YNY. Rae reminds them that the program is always here, and hands out a contact list with all the YNY staff numbers.

Figure 15. Final Circle Check-in Picture



With only a few minutes left in the last workshop, Rae discusses the exhibition

expectations. Participants seem confused at what they will be exhibiting, but they are then reminded of all the artworks they created throughout the six weeks, and how each person has created their narrative about their past crime, themselves, and their future. Some participants feel embarrassed by their work, and ask if they cannot hang up certain items, but Rae says this is not an option, and they should be proud of the work they created. The only options the participants have is which four to five people they want to invite.

Finally, Rae explains that the YNY staff will be working on the creation of the exhibition over the next couple of weeks at the YNY headquarters, and all participants are welcome to stop by and help if they want. Most participants agree to stop by if they have time, but nevertheless, they will all see each other at the final exhibition. This ends the formal curriculum of the YNY program, and participants and staff continue to eat their treats before everyone is dismissed.

Summary. The YNY staff, which includes the facilitators and graduate mentors, first and foremost provided a support system for participants to rely on and connect with inside and outside the program. The staff set a precedent for each class as a place where participants were valued, respected and encouraged to share. The staff also assisted participants in understanding the various ways art can be used to explore difficult personal emotions or situations, and even issues within their broader community.

The in-depth analysis of the eight-week program elucidated how the implementation of the YNY program and the expectations of the program for participants, which are crucial factors in shaping participants digital stories. Through various media arts activities the curriculum provided a valuable space for participants to reflect on their crimes and examine their strengths and future goals. Through understanding the specific social conditions in which YNY takes place, as well as how the digital story process is developed a deeper analysis of participants'

digital stories is made possible, which will be discussed in the next section of the findings chapter.

The Process of Design: The Stories

The second research question, “What are the personal narratives that YNY participants create about their crime.” Through the conceptualization of the second research question, the participant stories were examined with the following questions in mind: 1) How do the participants critically reflect about their crime 2) How do participants’ stories demonstrate the concept of social responsibility (ex. contribution and reconnection with the community)? 3) How did participants’ relationships with one another influence the stories they create?

It is important to note that unlike many other media arts programs, YNY does not allow participants to choose the stories they tell, per se. As described in detail in the previous section of this dissertation, YNY participants are required, through a series of restorative justice and media arts practices, to examine the circumstances that led to becoming court-involved. YNY’s scaffolded curriculum intends to promote participants to use their voices to create a discourse about their crimes, their impact, and ways to improve their lives in the future. Although YNY provides the framework for the story, ultimately the YNY participants choose what information about their crime to share.

From the close examination of the content of eighteen participant digital stories allowed the researcher to identify two prominent overlapping themes, namely 1) Our Stories are Bigger Than Our Cases, 2) Empowerment and Agency. These themes will be highlighted by reviewing several artifacts from various participants who participated in the program from September 2014-September 2016.

Our Stories are Bigger Than Our Cases. During interviews with YNY participants often expressed how important the YNY program was in helping them reinterpret their arrests and being court-involved. Shawn believed,

My arrest happened because it had to happen. I needed to see I had more choices. I need to think before I act. Now I know these things, so my way of seeing things is more different. I'm more aware, which is a positive thing"

Correspondingly, consider the digital story of Jupiter, who participated in YNY as a 17-year-old. Jupiter talked about the importance of the workshops and video exercises:

At first, I thought the program was going to be whack because the court made me come but I liked it. I thought the court would just put me in any b.s. program that doesn't teach you anything or with people who don't care and would make me feel bad about what who I am and why I was here. But then Rae has us do so many things that really wake us up... and like I really enjoyed the word cloud because the questions were surprising. Like what's your biggest dream? What are you capable of? Like writing that down made me want to go harder. Reminded myself of what I am living for and to remember my parts that shine.

Figure 16. Jupiter Self-Portrait + Characteristics



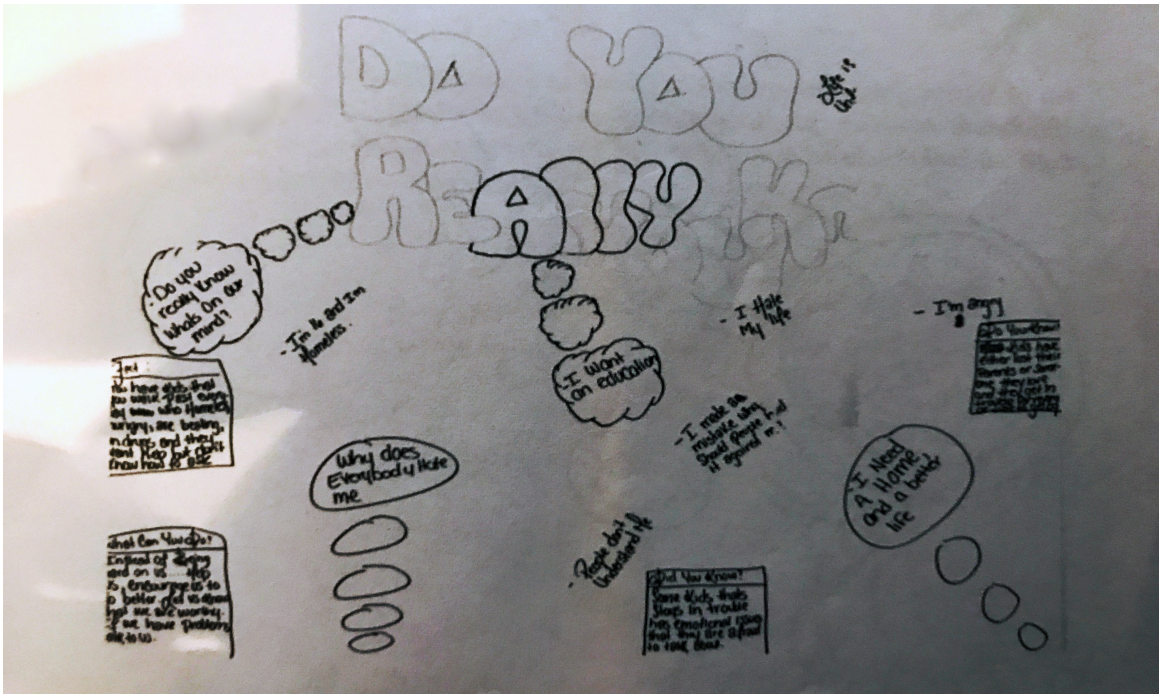
*Courageous
& Self Expressed*

Jupiter's digital story emphasized how his anger and confidence issues related to his sexual orientation persistently got him into fights with other classmates. One day he finally got caught fighting with another student at the school, which led to his arrest. Throughout the production of his digital story, Jupiter reflected on how he needed to turn that dark part of him into something more positive to show how "courageous" and "self-expressed" he really was.

Before I was in this program I would talk back and show anger to anyone who I thought was trying to disrespect me, which is what got me in trouble in the first place. And now I look at it in a different light. If things bother me I'm not going to retaliate, I will take everything I have to ignore or kill with kindness. I actually just got this doll at home and so now every time I get irritated or annoyed I start doing the face or the hair, and I love to see the outcome and how beautiful it is. It makes me see that all these emotions can make something better than a fist.

The final artifact from Jupiter's digital story demonstrated his "good self" had regained control of his life. His public art idea was entitled "*Do you Really Know*" aimed to expand people's understanding of the problems that can lie behind a young person's attitude. Jupiter believed that most kids end up trying to mask their real problems through negative behaviors and emotions, and there should be a space created in every neighborhood where kids could go and talk about their issues, and they can be translated so others can understand what's really going on, so they can get help before it's too late.

Figure 17. Jupiter's Public Art Project Design



Jupiter’s public art idea underscored how his participation in the YNY program helped him recognize his mistakes and how to use his issue not only to help him become stronger and wiser but to help others do so as well.

Holt, a 17-year-old, also stressed throughout his digital story the importance of growing past the stigma of being a criminal and how difficult but important the process was. His story included a recap of the programs field trip to the Brooklyn Museums exhibition on masks. Holt created a mask during the program, using symbols that represent his everyday life, and symbols that represent him beyond his rap sheet and beyond the choices that made him court involved. Holt explained:

A mask is meant to show who you really are, but hide it at the same time. It shows your characteristics your personality. At the same time, it doesn’t show the person behind it, so, you don’t give yourself fully away. Today, society tried to trap you and it is your job to let yourself out.

Figure 18. Holt Personality and Values Mask



In his final public art idea, Holt addressed the language used within the criminal justice system.

Holt explained:

In our first class one of our first exercises is to play with words. We are asked what are the words that are used to describe us in different areas of our life? What words are used to describe us in the context of our justice involvement? What words do we want to describe us in the context of Young New Yorkers? Our teachers promised to believe in us over the next 8-weeks of our program and know us as the words we choose: listened to, powerful, funny, family, cared about, can stand for something. But I thought how the legal terms is a bit dramatic and even exaggerates what really happened. So, I proposed the Double Talk idea. I want there to be two translations screens high on the wall behind the judge's bench. When the legal talk is happening in the court, you could see the translation into everyday language on the screen. The screens could also tell the larger story of a person, and show how friends and family acknowledge and relied on the person – how that person and their future was important for their neighborhood.

Figure 19. Holt Public Art Project Design



In “Double Talk,” Holt addresses two issues he saw when he was arrested. The first is how people in his neighborhood who saw him get arrested started to see him only as a “criminal” or a “screw-up” when really, he wanted to be understood as a “good kid” who made a mistake and was learning. The second is how people in the future would see him if his criminal record wasn't sealed, and the vast gap between the legal languages. Holt was arrested for “theft of services” even though he just “I jumped the turnstile”. Holt believed if someone were to see his record, they could think he attempted to steal something such as a phone, condemning him more than he thinks he deserved.

In both the examples of Jupiter and Holt, we see participants expressing their beliefs that their experiences surrounding their arrest made them better individuals. The YNY curriculum helped foreground evidence of participants’ innate goodness and attempt to dissociate participants’ innately good self from their past offenses. Next, the YNY program puts the youth

participants as the driver of their own redemption. Ultimately, their stories affirm that it is through their mistakes that they become stronger and wiser.

Empowerment and Agency. Within all eighteen YNY participant stories, the theme of empowerment and agency were prominent and intertwined with each other. Agency and empowerment in YNY are defined as the power to use their creative voices to advocates for themselves and address social issues within their communities. This aligned with the redemptive story, as empowerment is the acknowledgment of "helpful others" that believed in the individual.

The themes of empowerment and agency were most prominent during the Fall of 2015, when the YNY program held its first All-Women eight-week program. All eight girls within this cohort were arrested for assault in the 3rd degree (e.g. intentionally or recklessly causing injury to another person, or criminally negligent with a weapon). Because this cohort was entirely female, the YNY facilitators during these circle shares emphasized the “power” women can have in our society and how women should act as a “tribe” rather than “crabs in a bucket.” Further, the importance of respecting themselves in terms of their sexual relationships was an important conversation, as some participants were dealing with gun and physical violence at home.

Princess, a 17-year-old at the time, came into the program very frustrated and angry because she felt her arrest was unjustified. According to Princess, she was not participating in the fight she was arrested for, she just happened to be there. Thus, when she got arrested, she became “very aggressive,” and started cursing and trying to push back, which she realizes now “only made things worse.” Princess explains her journey through YNY and the pictures she used in her digital story to explain her feelings throughout the program;

Figure 20. Princess photograph in digital story



As the weeks went on our circle time went from like 15 minutes to more than an hour as our stories became increasingly sad or challenging. We laughed together and we cried together. We shared, we connected, and we created our community in that circle. I have always felt being a woman was important, but when I sat in this group I got power from these other women. It was honest and fun and a positive atmosphere. It really means a lot to me to have this feeling, so I want them to know how much I appreciate it.

Through participating in the program, Princess began to see that other women her age, although they came from different places, were going through the same thing. Princess said, “Many of us had experienced loss or were directly affected by gun violence,” but the program and being around these other beautiful women helped me be at peace with what I was going through.”

The idea of “beauty” was another central notion in this all-female cohort. At first, Princess hid her face in most photographs, until the portrait collage activity.

Figure 21. Princess eCollage I



My collage was really obvious and basic the first time. I used the feathers because they were pretty and funny. The sky for my grandparents because they are heaven. The desert for my dad because he is never around. Then I just threw a fox or something on there, like whatever. They made me use pictures of myself, but I had my face so I cut it out and use a pic of the back of my head.

In the all-women's cohort, the participants were asked to do a second portrait exercise, as Rae felt "So many of them grew in different ways, I wanted to capture that growth, and this is the only way I could think of it". When asked to repeat the portrait collage, Princess said,

I had a different mindset, I felt I had a greater understanding of what I did, and who I am now, and I think it came out in the second collage. I actually used my face, to show I am thinking and have accepted my power.

Figure 22. Princess eCollage II



Princess's final public art idea explored:

What it takes for each of us to lead a life founded on personal power and leadership. How does one confidently walk one's own walk? Find one's own journey? Not be too guided by peers, or those who think we have limited potential? How does each of us tap into our own greatness?

In her proposal, Princess envisioned an enormous canvas on the ground. The public would think about their personal values and their vision for themselves and their community. They would then dip their feet into a paint color of their choice, and walk their own path across the canvas. The result would be a beautiful canvas full of paint representing the idea that we can be connected as a community while also walking our own paths. This idea was later translated into the framework for the final exhibition of the YNY fall 2015 cohort.

During the final exhibition, visitors had the opportunity write down their stories on a small piece of paper. Next, visitors were invited to place their stories on the shared landscape of Brooklyn created on the floor (See Figure 24). As people began to set their stories, they would

notice the other stories that were also present in that neighborhood. This allowed exhibition visitors to connect as a “single great community” with more in common and more to offer each other than we may have, at first, known.

Figure 23. Princess Public Art Project Design “My own path”



Since participating in the Fall 2015 cohort, Princess has become a YNY ambassador, who speaks at YNY events about her experiences and issues with the criminal justice system and her experiences in the YNY program. Every time she speaks she wants people to know how important YNY was to her and the women she met and still talks today, “If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be working, I wouldn't have graduated high school, this is the only way I know how to say thank you for now.”

Princess's story, like other YNY digital stories, provides an example of how empowerment and agency fuse together to support participants ability to move toward a positive pathway. Many YNY participants enter the YNY program feeling their arrests were

unwarranted. The YNY program recognizes that some participants “get caught in the web of the over-policing,” and their arrests may be unjust. However, the YNY attempts to have participants use the program as a platform to recognize and utilize their voice and personal strengths to become leaders and advocates for people in their same position.

Summary. The analysis of participants stories revealed that participants were able to recontextualize concepts associated with both the goals of restorative justice and the creation of a redemptive narrative. First, YNY participants separated themselves from being identified only as criminals. Participants were able to examine their core self, determining their strengths and weaknesses, thus highlighting their inherent goodness while attributing past deviance to unfortunate circumstances or a corrupting force. This narrative identity work helped participants repurpose their arrest and involvement in the criminal justice system in such a way as to see the good to emerge from or be caused by "the wrong," and this was evidence that they were fated for greater things. This process also helped participants recognize the helpful others in their lives who believed and supported them as individuals, whether it be the YNY staff, peers or family members. Finally, participants saw their stories reflected the struggles of others in their communities, and thus, challenged themselves to design public art projects to address social issues within their communities.

Production: The Role of Digital Media in YNY Digital Stories

The final section of the findings chapter will examine the third research question, “What role, if any, does the production of digital stories plays in the processing restorative conferencing values?” This question sought to examine how the production of YNY participants digital stories shaped participant narratives. “Production’ refers to the organization of the expression, to the actual material articulation of the semiotic event or the actual material articulation of the

semiotic artifact” (Kress, 2001, p. 6). The investigation of the production process sought to highlight any affordances of using digital media to create the YNY digital stories. By examining the production process, the researcher hoped to gain an understanding of both how the artistic process happens and what the products represent (Halverson, 2012). Specifically, the researcher was interested in how the construction of multimodal artifacts assisted participants in connecting with the restorative justice values within the YNY curriculum in a meaningful way. Further, it sought to examine if working on these narratives in a counterspace supported the exploration and representation of complex issues of identity (Halverson, 2012).

Multimodal discourse analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001) supplied the framework used to analyze participants’ process and products. Because analysis of the multimedia products is complicated to accomplish in text form, a multimedia protocol developed by Nelson and Hull (2008) to reveal multimodal practices was employed. The protocol used here required the overlay of media parts used by the participants with interview data collected with the think-aloud method. The interview data revealed the participants’ thinking and the rationale behind their artifacts included in their digital stories.

Building a new self-narrative through visuals. The YNY curriculum is structured with the intention that upon completing all six-workshop activities, YNY participants present all their multimodal artifacts into one combined narrative at the final exhibition. Each of the stories created in YNY contained several types of digital media, including visual images, audio, and text. However, most participant digital stories focused on the use of photography and video, with the use of narration and music to enhance the visual imagery. Although each participant has similar artifacts from the workshop sessions, each participant chooses how to tell their story. To examine how participants created their digital stories, the remainder of this chapter will

dissect the YNY story by Danilo, who was 17 years old at the time of his arrest, to explore the main affordances of the multimodal process.

During his interview, Danilo explained how he tried to build his narrative the same way the YNY curriculum went, in that he first wanted everyone to know he came from strong values, so he began his story with his world tour video, where he shows the audience his room, emphasizing his Puerto Rican Flags, Yankees memorabilia, and various clothes and sneakers. Next, he walked out to his street. Where he pointed out to viewers that he lives in a neighborhood with houses, trees, and cars, as he walked to pick up his papers for his morning delivery route. The video cuts, and the viewer now sees we are at Danilo’s second job, where he works as a counselor for a vacation Bible school—a job he has had throughout his high school career.

Table 3. Danilo World Tour Video Stacking

<p>Images from video</p>			
<p>Narration</p>	<p>There’s my Puerto Rican Flags, and my Yankees stuff. For life!</p>	<p>This is my block. Houses, houses, streets, cars. I wake up every morning basically and I walk to the end of my block to get my papers, because I’m a paperboy. So right now, you guys are on a journey with me to get my papers</p>	<p>This is my daily life. I’m work. I work at New Hope Vacation Bible School. It’s exactly what I do during the summer every year.</p>

I thought using some of the videos was key, because it allowed us to document our own lives, and I was able to show that I came from a good community and had a stable job.

I've been a paperboy for years, which is important to show because I was making money.

I also wanted to show I had more than one job, and I was grounded.

Next, he moved onto videos diaries and photographs related to his crime.

Figure 24. Image from Danilo Diary Video



He also used a video diary from a homework assignment, where he interviewed himself about his crime.

Putting in the video diary where I talked about my arrest was important. I didn't want to use the one we did in class, because I wanted to show I understood what happened to me on my own, and that I was taking responsibility for what I did, with no one else forcing me to do so. I wanted to show I was committed to clearing my record. I want to show I am a kid with a lot of values, school being one, family being another one.

The use of photography was also seen as an important medium for YNY participants. Danilo explained

I wanted to make sure I used at least some of the photographs, because I really felt like throughout the program the photographs help build community. It was a creative aspect that I feel most programs don't have. Plus, in photographs allowed us to express our

feelings in that moment. Not just taking selfies for our own self-interest, it was about community and expression.

Table 4. Danilo “Arrest” Photograph Stacked



<p>Image</p>		
<p>Narration</p>	<p>When they handcuffed me it was so tight, it really hurt my wrists. I was put into the cop car and taken to the station. I was worried but I knew things would pass.</p>	

I wanted to use the images of what it was like being arrested. How upsetting it could be, and how serious I took it. Since I knew I was in a lot of trouble.

Danilo continued,

I added these public art photographs because we learned a lot about public art and how important the messages contained within them are. So, you can't see it but it says beware of your impact. And the other one says “all ways junction”. I thought they expressed how I felt about me getting in trouble and how I had moved on better than I could. And I added some music at the last minute wanted some more positive tone.

Table 5. Danilo Public Art Photographs Stacked

<p>Image</p>		
<p>Music</p>	<p>I fly with the stars in the skies . I am no longer trying to survive. I believe that life is a prize (Moment 4 Life – Nicki Minaj + Drake)</p>	

Finally, Danilo shared his public art project design. While completing a walking exercise during workshop session 4, Danilo noticed there were a lot of vacant billboards in Brooklyn. He decided to create a public art project to address this called “Community Art Boards”.

The project would give all the vacant billboards back to the community instead of the corporate sponsors. So, the community can use canvases for their art. Some of the billboards could also be used for musical performances as well. The project aims to bring the community together when painting the billboard. This project also aims to celebrate local talent in a responsible way.

Figure 25. Danilo Public Art Project Design “Community Art Board”



My public art project and all my work was I was really trying to focus a lot on the values I learned in the program, especially community. How important your physical and spiritual community is and how it brings everyone together. We grew a sense of belonging throughout the process, but I don't know if others felt that way.

Danilo's story, like those of many other YNY participants, focuses on visual images of himself and his surrounding to explain to the audience about who he is as a person, how his arrest affected his life, and how he was ready to take responsibility and move on to finishing high school and going to college. Danilo explained,

To see everyone's life perspective and see what they go through and being exposed to those situations made me more mindful of how certain things could affect their lives. It allowed for community ya know. And in class the videos helped us discuss certain

aspects of situations that we went through. Because honestly when you talk about stories it's hard to mentally get a picture without video. Ya know so it was a lot better.

Danilo continues,

I think that the projects had a significant impact on helping me play with my identity. For the first time, it forced me to think critically about my personal characteristics & traits, something I never really paid any mind too. I don't think anyone had asked me how I thought of myself until that point; so, it definitely helped me cultivate a better understand of who I am.

In the end, the curated artifacts and Danilo's story present the audience with a coherent narrative: "The way I structured my materials was to show that my arrest was just a hiccup in his life. And, I was ready to move on. This has only made me a stronger person and is helping me grow up to be a responsible young man."

Summary. At YNY, growth is about the development of a participant's ability to shed their criminal label, while promoting a pathway to a pro-social identity. The creation of the multimodal artifacts and the curation of these artifacts into one cohesive story assisted participants to change how they see themselves, how others see them, and how they fit into the communities to which they belong. Through the use of mostly photography and video, participants demonstrated the ability to process restorative values and apply them toward themselves and their social worlds through recontextualization and rearticulation in the production of their digital story. However, participants varied considerably in their ability to complete both the tasks above.

During the individual interviews, and after reviewing the archival footage, it is clear that the all-female cohort had an easier time recognizing, whether right or wrong, why they got

arrested, and the impacts of their actions. The female cohort also vocally participated and worked more collaboratively throughout the six workshops, than the male-cohorts. These efforts translated into a more seamless and coherent digital story. In contrast, about half of the male participants struggled through the first two workshops in completing activities and developing cohesion as a group. Male participants were less likely to share their experiences in a group, and there appeared to be more literacy issues when completing worksheets. These individuals frequently struggled to flesh out a coherent narrative, and thus their end product did not show definite signs of meaning-making or personal growth.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to explore how the Young New Yorkers program uses digital storytelling to engage participants in a restorative conferencing intervention. At present, there is a dearth of research concerning participants' perspectives of the restorative conferencing process. YNY's hybrid-model lends itself to the need for restorative conferencing interventions to focus on participant's accounts of the process by documenting participants journey through the program and examining the artifacts created.

Data collection consisted of 1) the review of the YNY curriculum to gain comprehensive understanding of program goals, missions and vision 2) review of YNY workshops via digital archival video to observe the ways the participants engage in the collaborative process of digital story production 3) semi-structured interviews with two YNY staff to understand the implementation of the curriculum 4) semi-structured interviews with nine YNY program participants to explore participant experiences during project activities, and the decision-making processes they used to present their artifacts and final digital stories., and 5) multimodal analysis of eighteen YNY participants digital stories. The data were coded, analyzed, and organized by research question and then by categories guided by the theory of narrative identity development and redemptive stories discussed in Chapter 4. The software Dedoose was used for the transcription and qualitative analysis of audio, video, and artifact data. The three questions that framed this research were as follows:

1. What are the conditions under which YNY participants' digital stories are being told?
2. Within the practice of digital storytelling, what are the personal narratives that YNY participants create about their crime?

3. What role, if any, does the production of digital stories play in the processing of restorative conferencing values?

These questions will be further discussed in this chapter to provide the researchers interpretive insights into the findings. This discussion takes into consideration the literature on both restorative justice programs, digital storytelling practices, and narrative identity theory. The implications of these findings are intended to expand the understanding of how the YNY curriculum assists participants in developing a redemptive narrative through the use of digital storytelling practices.

Summary of Findings

YNY as a counterspace. Through the investigation of the contextual factors and conditions under which the YNY participants digital stories were developed the researcher found that YNY staff's first and most imperative task was to create a community, in which participants would feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported. Interviewees deemed the circle check ins and check outs routines as imperative to establishing this setting. Table 6 summarizes how the YNY program created this environment and culture.

Table 6. Summary of YNY Setting Findings

Structure of YNY	Findings
YNY Teaching Staff + Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated the various ways art can be used to explore difficult emotions or situations • Helped participants recognize they have members throughout different communities supporting them • Provided support system for participants to rely on and connect with
Graduate Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted participants in staying motivated in the program by explaining their own experiences
Peer-to-Peer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged participants to work in teams or groups to support each other's process and growth and listen to each other's perspectives • Created community amongst participants where they felt comfortable sharing emotions and their stories

Circle Check-In/Check-Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets a precedent for the class as a place where they can be valued, respected and encouraged to share
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YNY created an environment which allowed participants to think constructively about their offenses, while also telling their life stories, in a safe counterspace where participants felt their voices were important. YNY provided participants with the opportunity to challenge the ideas of policing and harassment, poverty, and survival in their neighborhoods. Additionally, participants were encouraged to challenge each other through constructive dialogue. This narrative identity work is in line with the cultural democrats, who see digital storytelling programs as a powerful discursive tool, which can be used to support the construction of counter-narratives by individuals from oppressed communities (Nixon, 2008; L. Vasudevan, 2006; L. Vasudevan, DeJaynes, & Schmier, 2010). This literature further deems counterspaces as necessary for affecting identity formation as youth are united by shared experience and have spent an extended time authoring stories in a supportive and trusting community (Davis & Weinshenker, 2012).

Similar to other restorative conferencing programs, YNY uses a broad range of individuals including teaching artists, graduate mentors, public defenders, community members, judges, and police officers, which allows participants to see how the community-at-large has come together to support their journey (Umbreit, 2000). This wider circle of individuals related to a participant's crime helped participants recognize the importance (re)-establishing these valuable connections is to develop a healthy and sustainable self-narrative (Ward & Marshall, 2007). YNY hopes in light of their clarified restorative values, participants take accountability for their crime, develop a sense of agency, and rebuild collective identities (race, gendered,

youth) in the wake of adversity. Moreover, by listening to other participant’s narratives, YNY hopes participants will learn to exercise empathy and build relationships.

The YNY curriculum. The YNY program implements a restorative conferencing intervention via the creation of multimodal artifacts that become digital stories. The content analysis of the curriculum and digital archival video documented how the YNY program engaged its participants in a space where they were encouraged to reflect on their crimes and develop a critical awareness of themselves and the world. The framework of YNY, is similar to other restorative justice interventions, which affirms that by maintaining a focus on the harm done, emphasizing the future, and striving for personal accountability, and inclusivity, offenders are more likely to become productive members of society because the behavior is stigmatized and not the individual (Umbreit & Amour, 2010). Table 7 presents a summary of the YNY curriculum findings.

Table 7. Summary of YNY Curricula Overview Findings

Structure of YNY	Findings
Curricula for 6 Workshop Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a space for participants to reflect on their crimes • Assists participants in creating a redemptive story through various forms of digital media • Provoked participants to examine their communities • Helped participants examine their strengths and goals • Engage participants to understand who is in their support circle

YNY advances the restorative conferencing process by relying heavily on the agentic framework of digital storytelling, where the artifacts created serve as a mechanism through which participants explore the systems of oppression they live within, clarify or develop their values, and increase their ability to recognize and utilize resources they require to overcome obstacles in the pursuit of good. This aspect of the curriculum assists participants to “heal,”

which in turn opens up the participants' ability to have a dialogue about their crime, leading participants to create redemptive self-narrative (Davis & Weinschenker, 2012).

The YNY curriculum guides participants through the process of creating a digital story that aims to reconstruct the narrative about the participants' crime. Restorative justice values are explored, as they relate to each participant, in conversation with the group and through media art exercises utilizing photography, video, illustration, and design, and culminate in a digital story about the participants' crime, which the program hopes will reorient participant motives and behaviors toward a pro-social identity.

YNY Digital Storytelling Practices. Research questions two and three examine the content and the production of participants digital stories. Specifically, how do participants stories reflect the programs restorative curriculum, and ultimately a redemptive narrative, and highlight any affordances of using digital media to create the YNY digital stories.

This investigation revealed the YNY program scaffolds the digital storytelling process through a combination of restorative conferencing dialogue and digital storytelling practices, leading to produce a redemptive narrative. Specially, the YNY programs use of think-aloud activities, self-portraits and the project based learning connected participants with restorative justice values, and assisted the participant's in recontextualizing those values into a digital story that helped them to shed their criminal identity, and seek promising futures. Table 8 provides a summary of YNY practices.

Table 8. YNY practices.

YNY Practices	Findings
Think-aloud activities (ex. video diaries/worksheets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported identity exploration by placing participants in the role of observer and actor • Encouraged participants to examine choices • Assisted participants in identifying emotions
Creating Representations of Self or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged participants in the process of

Self Portraits (ex.- collage activities/ photography)	detyfication of criminal identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged participants to produce ideas of self • Encouraged participants to examine personal values
Project-Based Learning (ex. Design of public art project/curation of a final story)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants actively construct meaning based on their experiences and interactions in the world • Participants developed understandings of principles and ideas through sharing, using, and debating ideas with others

Think-aloud activities. YNY spends the majority of the program assisting participants to identify and be held accountable for the personal choices that led to their arrest and take responsibility for their actions. The use of think-aloud activities via worksheets and video diaries placed participants in the role of observer and actor. YNY believes these think-aloud practices promote restorative justice dialogue creating pathways to well-being. For example, during the restorative justice video exercise, participants' retelling of the stories of their crime enhanced participant's ability to recognize that all situations present more than one choice. Further, the use of video diaries engaged participants cognitively and emotionally, as YNY participants were required to retrieve sensory memories, envisioning past events and drawing connections between the choices that led to those events. These activities allowed participants to connect their negative past experiences with more positive future, or the theme of "redemptive suffering," within a redemptive narrative (Maruna, 2001). Moreover, they helped participants acknowledge helpful others in their lives, who continued to believe in their value and worth even after they were arrested (Maruna, 2001).

Self Portraits. Interviews with the nine participants indicated the collage and portrait exercises allowed participants to create "real" representations of themselves and demonstrate the values they deem most important in their lives. By creating these artifacts using various pictures of themselves, animals, and drawings, participants were able to establish different values, along

with their strengths and weaknesses and focused on how they could create a better future for themselves. These activities helped participants recognize both establish their core beliefs, and identify the negative forces which may have led to their crime, essential components of a redemptive narrative (Maruna, 2001).

Ultimately, this process allowed participants to shed their negative criminal identity and develop the capacity to clarify and explain their values and goals, as well as link both their values and goals with their actions (McAdams, 2006). This process also empowered participants to counter dominant narratives about themselves and their communities furthering their ability to step into a leadership role and contribute meaningfully to their community. According to Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2003), within restorative justice interventions, it is essential for the identity of the lawbreaker as an individual and a valued member of the community to be separated from the disapproval of his actions.

Project-based Learning. The final practice recognized by this research is the importance of project-based learning. Media arts-based programs often contain a design project as the culmination of the program, which encourages participants to actively explore real-world challenges and problems (Halverson, 2013). According to learning science research, project-based learning allows participants to learn by doing, to apply ideas, and to solve problems (Krajcik & Shin, 2005). Within YNY, the public art project and the curation of their final digital story for their exhibition directly align with the notion of project-based learning, and the last phase of a redemptive narrative; namely, developing potential solutions to prevent the criminal behavior from happening again in the future.

The public art projects took many different forms, from digital mixed media to a performance piece. Through this project, participants were able to actively construct meaning

based on their experiences in the criminal justice system and interactions in the world. These public art designs supported the creation of a pathway to critical awareness of the causes of a variety of quality of life problems, such as poverty, which infects their neighborhoods daily. In turn, these projects showed various ways in which one-time offenders were willing to take the actions required to repair the some of the harm caused by their crime (Choi, Green, & Gilbert, 2011). The researcher believes this practice help to promote the rehabilitative and reintegrative process by connecting with the community, encouraging participants to acknowledge and address community issues they wish to change and improve. Participants also demonstrated their understanding of the importance of forming strong community partnerships through sharing, using, and debating ideas with others. Overall, the participants' final public art projects empowered participants to acknowledge their abilities to make valuable contributions to their communities.

Participants final project for the YNY program is weaving together all of their artifacts from the program into one cohesive digital story. The researcher believes this aspect of the program is vital concerning the recontextualization of restorative values and the creation of a redemptive narrative. Through the use of various multimodal artifacts, participants thoughtfully curated stories which demonstrated how they critically analyzed their actions and demonstrated to others they have clarified their values and grown as individuals. Thus, the production of the digital story allowed YNY participants to make visible their understandings, discoveries, and misconception about their crimes and their rehabilitative process through the YNY program.

Integrating one's experiences of being court-involved can be transformative in that new insight were gained about the self (Bauer & McAdams, 2004). This type of cognitive transformation realizes that an adverse experience can result in new opportunities, and re-

interpreting that experience from one that is primarily traumatic to one that promotes emotional resolution (Maruna, 2001). Researchers deem the ability to conclude a low point in life narratives with a positive tone, and with evidence of coherence and emotional resolution may influence further identity development and psychological functioning (Maruna, 2001; Stone 2016).

Conclusions

The subjective experiences of youth offenders in restorative justice programs are understudied (Abrams, Umbreit, & Gordon, 2006). The current research employed an in-depth, qualitative case study of the YNY program, to explore how the program engages participants in understanding restorative justice values through a digital story about their crime. The analysis of the YNY eight-week program and the digital stories YNY participants produced demonstrated that the creation of their digital stories was a highly productive process which involved complex relationships between technical tools, narrative, imagery, and setting (Davis & Weinschenker, 2012).

Findings from this study suggest that the YNY program's curriculum scaffolds restorative justice values through a narrative identity work to assist participants in the deconstruction of their crimes. Analysis of participant digital stories demonstrated participants, for the most part, participants were able to identify the cause of their criminal behavior and recognize why they attempted to attain these goods through the problematic means. The range of narratives represented in these stories directly aligns with the foundational principles of the restorative justice framework, wherein participants were able to critically reflect on their offense and enhance their capacity to contribute to and work in collaboration with others in their community.

Findings also confirm the presence of redemptive stories within participants digital

stories, as participants followed a pattern where they faced a challenging life event but are capable of moving from this initially negative state to a more positive state. For example, throughout each story examined, the YNY participants demonstrated the ability to recognize their "good self" or seemingly find their human agency, establishing that one's life hasn't been wasted despite one's past mistakes. Second, YNY participant stories demonstrated a more productive civically engaged member of their community. Consequently, through creating multimodal artifacts and curating a final digital story, YNY participants were able to explore different roles and engage in counternarratives, which built relationships with knowledge and themselves, that was represented in the discrete artifacts they created within their stories (Halverson, 2009). Moreover, many participants were able to reframe their problems by shifting the gaze from their criminal identity to political, economic, and structural inequalities that exist in their life. These findings support the study of redemptive narratives by affirming findings of the previous literature of how redemptive narratives can restore agency, which in turn empowers narrators to pursue better futures (Stone, 2016).

The role of other participants in the program further developed participants redemptive stories, as both YNY participants and staff supported the re-storying of participant identities. This process deepened the relationships and interactions between participants, as participants were able to share their lives and recognize commonalities and challenges (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Nelson 2006). According to McAdams (2006), the self-narrative is best able to promote wellbeing, when it not only clarifies a person's values and coherently integrates their experiences but also resonates with their cultural context. In this way, the YNY program may serve as the foundation for participants to develop a prosocial identity.

Recommendations

The researcher offers recommendations based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study for both the restorative justice programs within the criminal justice system, and media arts programs.

Recommendations for the restorative justice programs. In this research study, the construction of a redemptive narrative through the processing of restorative justice values is seen as a fertile platform to promote well-being in youth offenders, as it not only helped clarify their values and experiences but also resonated within their cultural context of being a marginalized individual. In keeping with this idea, restorative justice interventions should be reframed as efforts to secure and maintain adaptive redemptive narratives for offenders.

Table 9. Recommendations for RJ Programs

Structure of YNY	Implications for RJ programs
YNY Teaching Staff + Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs should make a concerted effort to have representatives of the community work with participants
Graduate Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating programs which have a graduate peer mentor component
Peer-to-Peer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage participants to work together
Curricula for Workshop Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting procedures to open and close every workshop which emphasize the importance of every participants contribution • Design highly specified goals which encourage the development constructs like personal responsibility, social capital, and self-efficacy • Provide opportunities for role taking • Use available technology • Create artifacts participants can take with them

Concerning the structure of restorative justice programs for court-involved youth; programs should take a restorative conferencing approach by incorporating a mix of individuals, like peers, community members, social work practitioners, and law enforcement to support the participants during the program and to assist in building relationships within their communities and cities. Social workers, specifically, can take the lead in implementing the necessary

narrative approaches needed to assemble and disassemble offender identities. This feature can help participants in sustaining any progress they have made through the programming by providing ongoing guidance, mentoring and resources to support their future endeavors.

Regarding the content of the programs, programs should have highly-structured activities to assist in the development of cognitive skills, positive relationships, and learning environments necessary to construct adaptive redemptive narratives. During these activities, participants should work together, as well as, be able to take a leadership role. These facets are essential to developing in restorative programs as they promote connectedness and authentic participation within programs and can assist participants in a successful transition out of the criminal justice system. Programs should also consider using available technologies, such as cell phones. For instance, have participants record and take pictures using cell phones to engage them in the various activities that take place during sessions. Further, let participants create artifacts from session activities to help them translate the material they are being taught. These artifacts can also be used when participants return to court to demonstrate what they learned from their program.

Restorative justice research and evaluation should take into account how identities develop. This provides an excellent opportunity for the field of social work to embrace empirical narrative research, just like they have embraced narrative concepts for reflective practice and teaching. Specifically, social work should look toward research on offender desistance as a framework for understanding these developmental stages, as scholars in this area acknowledge the process as primary, secondary and tertiary desistance which varies between individuals (Horan, 2015). Thus, outcome measurement of restorative approaches should evaluate offenders by their levels of personal responsibility, social capital, and self-efficacy. Further, qualitative

methods, specifically narrational approaches should be used to continue to develop an understanding of the process of how different restorative programs work. Finally, evaluation of restorative justice programming should include at least a six-month and twelve-month follow-up to gather better evidence of sustainability, especially during adolescence, as individuals are still in a highly fertile development stage.

Recommendations for the media arts programs and practitioners. Media arts programs are a relatively new and thus there is a world of opportunity for them to grow and develop. Media arts practices allow participants to move from consumers of media, software, and technologies to creators as they produce work. To support this work, programs should create environments where teaching staff includes individuals from the participant's communities. Further, having some older peer mentors, who have been in the program for a while, or who have graduated can act as peer mentors to support newer and younger participants. These structures can help to create a warm and safe environment where participants may be more willing to share and work together constructively. See Table 10 for Recommendations for Media Arts Programs.

Table 10. Recommendations for Media Arts Programs

Structure of YNY	Implications for Media Arts Programs
YNY Teaching Staff + Guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs should make a concerted effort to have artists and other community members work with participants
Graduate Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create programs which have a “graduate” peer mentor
Peer-to-Peer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage participants to work together • Allow participants to constructively critique one another
Curriculum for Workshop Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop workshops which promote participants observational and expression skills • Provide participants with empowerment/leadership opportunities • Allow participants to construct representations of self/community to be shared with larger audience • Provide opportunities for role taking

Within this dissertation, the research recognized two essential aspects of the YNY program, which other programs and K-12 education should take note of; the importance of producing one's work, and the focus on the use of visual images. These practices, in turn, provides marginalized youth with an opportunity to rebuild and explore their identities, think critically about social conditions, and built activism. The most important part of a media arts curriculum for marginalized youth is allowing them to construct representations of themselves and their community to be shared with a broader audience. These activities can empower participants and help participants take a leadership role. These project-based initiatives also help to create a culture which can strengthen and rebuild community bonds leading and generate a sense of shared culture and community belonging.

Within the examination of the YNY program, participants heavily communicated thoughts and feelings through employing various images. From the researchers' perspective, media arts programs and practitioners should continue to instruct participants about the affordances of using visuals mediums like video and photography to express themselves. Both informal and formal learning institutions can focus on how learning and constructing with the visual mode can help to develop and enhance participants ways of thinking, knowing, representing, and communicating (Pepler, 2010). There is a need for continued research and evaluation to understand the effects on participants positive identity (e.g., self-worth or self-efficacy), academic self-efficacy, and civic identity. Research studies can use pre-and-post measures to collect this information from participants, facilitators, and family members' perceptions of how these youths develop their identities.

Furthermore, preliminary research shows media arts practices can improve participants multimodal literacy practices which are increasingly seen as necessary 21st-century skills

(Peppler, 2010). These ideas place media arts practices at a crucial place within our society as education institutions, and our economy jobs put more emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The addition of media arts practices allows individuals to connect their learning using a unique set of competencies and tools that can help prepare them to participate in this new economy more productively.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation that exists within this study is that the study was designed within the bounds of an existing organization's program; therefore, there were limitations concerning the data that could be collected and the work being situated within the specific context. For example, often, parts of the curriculum extended longer than expected, therefore disrupting other workshop activities, affected the completion of artifacts. Thus, there was not always consistency across digital stories content, as not all artifacts were completed at the time of the final presentation. While the researcher believes that the research design was flexible enough to account for these omissions, it is essential to acknowledge that these situations occurred.

Similarly, the data was collected by the researcher from the up to two years after the completion of some YNY cohorts. At present, the YNY program does not have an archival data program for any of the artifacts produced during the various programs. Therefore, at times during data collection of artifacts, the researcher had to rely on archival videos to make sure all the data from each participant was collected and applied to their story. Further, finding participants to interview was challenging, as YNY only keeps cell phone information on participants. Many of these participants can only afford disposable phones, and thus many numbers were disconnected when the researcher attempted to contact them. The majority of the participants interviewed are currently paid YNY mentors, who most likely have had more

positive experiences in the program, which is why they decided to stay.

Another limitation may be the unstructured discussions and interviews for gathering information from participants. Understandably, all the YNY participants wanted to sound knowledgeable when answering any staff member's questions, because the outcome of their sentence was riding on the products they produced. In doing so, they may have contrived some of their answers, telling YNY staff what they thought they wanted to hear. Similarly, the YNY participants may have neglected to tell staff members about some of the strategies or ideas they actually employed during learning because they could not recall any specific examples (and didn't want to admit it for fear of looking like they weren't taking the work seriously) or they didn't realize that what they were doing is regarded as metacognitive work. Inevitably, some processes take place during learning that cannot be expressed clearly through verbalization.

Finally, given the small sample size and the fact that YNY participants are individual cases in a particular learning context, these results cannot be generalized to a broader population or extended beyond the specific context. Nevertheless, since the focus of this case study was on the quality of information (interviews, observations, and artifacts) gathered and triangulated, rather than the number of cases in the sample. The researcher was able to ameliorate the issue of sample size somewhat by spending extended periods of time with individual case and providing detailed descriptions of participants working on their digital stories. Although dependability and trustworthiness of the data are more important than generalizability in case studies, the opportunity to generalize results to other learning contexts is the ultimate goal of research. Replicating this study in a more typical, traditional learning setting with a larger, randomized sample of students would enable greater generalizability.

Future Research of the YNY program

Since YNY is a very new program, which at present does not collect any data on its programming, there is ample opportunity for future evaluation and research of this program. First and foremost, YNY as an organization needs to create a participant database. This database should include, at the very least, demographic and intake information about participants cases. For example, at the beginning of each cohort, participants should at minimum fill out a survey, where participants self-report their race/ethnicity, age, the neighborhood they live, the structure of the home, name, grade in school, other court mandates, such as counseling, or community service. This information should also be verified at the end of the program, in order to follow-up with participants more easily. The collection of this data should also make the process of tracking participants after the program easier, as the program will now have enough information to track case outcomes in the court databases.

From a research perspective, YNY should measure how the 8-week program may affect identity and behavior change of participants, related to the two major content themes found within this dissertation. The use or creation of a valid and reliable pre-and post-positive youth development survey, similar to those mentioned in the recommendations for the media arts programs (e.g. self-worth, self-efficacy and civic identity), should provide a manageable way of capturing this information. During the implementation of the program, YNY staff should implement debriefs about participant progress to understand the level of engagement with the YNY program. This data can add to the depth of understanding of participant changes on a more incremental level. Participants should also be asked to participate in a post-program think-aloud interview, in order to provide their thoughts about various aspects of the program immediately following the program. Long-term effects can also be examined through this survey at six and

twelve months after completion of the program. This data will be vitally important to as the criminal justice system shifts 16-and-17 years olds into the juvenile justice system and YNY shifts to working with 18-25-year-olds and is assigned offenders with more severe infractions. Examining these variables for both age groups may help YNY identify the efficacy of the program for various types of offenses and ages.

Future research on YNY should also more intensely examine the paths participants take from initial conception of their stories to their final piece, through the close examination of the various artifacts. This will require the YNY program to create an archival process for participants artwork, similar to the process used to answer the production question in this dissertation. This data can be linked with the aforementioned survey data, to gain a complete picture of how through the generation of successive representations demonstrates their growing critical consciousness related to their crime.

Appendix A: Staff and Youth Participant Consent Forms

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

An Investigation of the use of Digital Storytelling in a Restorative Conferencing Program

Jordan Morris, Ed.M., from the Department of Social Welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you worked with the Young New Yorkers program during September 2014 - September 2016. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how the YNY program helps its youth participants reflect about their crime and empowers participants to give back to their communities. The secondary purpose is to explore the use of digital media used in the program and how this medium may or may not have helped the participants achieve the primary goal.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to be in this study, the researcher will ask you to participate in a face-to-face interview at the YNY headquarters in Brooklyn, NY. With your permission, this interview will be audio recorded. The interview will consist of the following activities:

- Review curriculum implemented during the YNY program
- Answer questions related to the following topics:
 - How and why you chose to get involved in the YNY program
 - What leadership role do you play at the Young New Yorkers?
 - What works and doesn't work in the YNY program
 - The digital storytelling process for youth involved in YNY

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of one hour.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There may be slight discomfort, as talking about certain participants, may bring up uncomfortable associations. These issues are perceived to be minimal, but if anytime you feel too uncomfortable with the line of questioning the interview will stop.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

The results of this research may contribute to greater understanding of how youth are impacted by participating in diversion and digital media programs. You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by providing each participant a codename for their interview. The researcher will keep separate records of the codename from any names of participants in the data collection in an encrypted electronic database. You have the right to review, edit, or erase the audio recording of your participation in the interview whole or in part.

Only Jordan Morris and Todd Franke will have access to your data.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- You have the right to review, edit, or erase the audio recording of your participation in the interview whole or in part.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Jordan Morris at 646.504.1519 or jgmorris@ucla.edu
Todd M. Franke (faculty sponsor) tfranke@g.ucla.edu

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
10889 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 830
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

- I permit the audio taping of this interview
- I do not permit the audio taping of this interview

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

An Investigation of the use of Digital Storytelling in a Restorative Conferencing Program

Jordan Morris, Ed.M., from the Department of Social Welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you completed the Young NY program between September 2014 - September 2016. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how the YNY program helps its youth participants reflect about their crime and empowers participants to give back to their communities. The secondary purpose is to explore the use of digital media used in the program and how this medium may or may not have helped the participants achieve the primary goal.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to be in this study, the researcher will ask you to participate in a face-to-face interview at the YNY headquarters in Brooklyn, NY. With your permission, this interview will be audio recorded. The interview will consist of the following activities:

- Review photographs of artifacts you created while participating in the YNY program
- Answer questions related to the following topics:
 - How and why you chose to create each artifact
 - How much did you collaborate with others in the program when making their artifacts
 - Creating the final exhibition
 - What aspects of the YNY program did you enjoy and not enjoy
 - How has the YNY program impacted your life since graduation

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about thirty to forty-five minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There may be slight discomfort, as talking about your previous offense, may bring up uncomfortable associations. These issues are perceived to be minimal, but if anytime you feel too uncomfortable with the line of questioning the interview will stop.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

The results of this research may contribute to greater understanding of how youth are impacted by participating in diversion and digital media programs. You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained by only using a code name and not your full name on any information collected from YNY. The researcher will keep separate records of the codename from participant real names in the data collection in an encrypted electronic database. Only Jordan Morris and Todd Franke will have access to your data.

Finally, no specific information (e.g. location of crime, victim names or affiliations, precinct arrested in, etc.) about a participant's crime will be made asked. This will help to ensure participants cannot be personally identified when data are presented.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- You have the right to review, edit, or erase the audio recording of your participation in the interview whole or in part.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Jordan Morris at 646.504.1519 or jgmorris@ucla.edu
Todd M Franke (faculty sponsor) tfranke@g.ucla.edu

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
10889 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 830
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

- I permit the audio taping of this interview
- I do not permit the audio taping of this interview

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Participant Interview Questions

Interview Intro:

I would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences in YNY? It will take only about 30 minutes of your time. Feel free to be brutally honest about any feedback you can give the program so that YNY can make the program better. Neither the program director nor any instructors will know what you personally said about the program. I will be recording this interview mainly so that I can type it all up later since I won't be able to write as fast as you can give me the answers to my questions. Before we begin, could you sign this consent form that say you give me permission to interview you about YNY and also to audio record you? Do you have any question before we begin?

- What is your name?
- When did you participate in the YNY? How old were you?
- Why did you choose to participate in YNY?
- How much “art” experience did you have before joining YNY? How about video/music production?

- Tell me about some projects that you created during your time in YNY.
(Provide handouts of copies of artifacts created)
 - (As participant talks about each artifact ask)- Was the process of creating the artifact helpful for them in anyway? Please explain?
 - During the workshops, did you mainly work by yourself or did you collaborate with others? How about your public art project idea?

- One of the missions of YNY is to have participants revisit the choices that led to their arrest. How were you able to tell that story through the media arts projects you created?
- Has being involved in the YNY program changed the way you think about your family? Your community?
- What did you think of the final exhibition? Did your parents, family members, friends attend? What did they think?
 - What did you think of the other participants in the program? Did everyone participate in the workshop activities?
 - Did your relationship with other YNY participants change in anyway during your participation in the YNY program?
 - Did you notice any changes in other participants as a result of the YNY program?

- What did you enjoy the most about the YNY program?
- Is there anything you didn't like or wish was different?

- Have you noticed any changes in yourself as a result of creating a digital story in YNY **OR** did creating a digital story help you tap into areas of yourself that you wouldn't otherwise?

- Do you have anything else you think I should know about the program?

End Interview:

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your thought on the YNY program

YNY Staff Interview Questions

Interview Intro:

I would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences in YNY? It will take only about an hour of your time. Feel free to be brutally honest about any feedback you can give the program so that YNY can make the program better. Neither the program director nor any other instructors or students will know what you personally said about the program. I will be recording this interview mainly so that I can type it all up later since I won't be able to write as fast as you can give me the answers to my questions. Before we begin, could you sign this consent form that say you give me permission to interview you about YNY and also to audio record you? Do you have any question before we begin?

-
- What is your current occupation?
 - How did you get involved in the Young New Yorkers?
 - Why did you get involved in the Young New Yorkers?

 - What leadership role do you play at the Young New Yorkers?
 - How would you describe the leadership style of the program?

 - From your perspective, what works? And what doesn't work in the YNY program?
 - How well and how much did the youth collaborate in the program?

 - Were there any youth participants who you became particularly close with? Can you describe the relationship, and how it evolved over the course of the program, and even beyond the program?
 - *Ask about the digital storytelling process for each youth mentioned above*
 - What was XX like when they first arrived to the program?
 - What projects do you believe XX were very excited about?
 - What kind of competencies do you think the artifacts made by XX convey? (Provide photocopies of artifacts)
 - Did you notice any changes in the behavior of XX throughout the program?

 - Do you have any recommendations or thoughts regarding future YNY programs?
 - Do you have any other comments or questions?
 - Do you have anything else you think I should know about the program?

End Interview:

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your thought on the YNY program

Appendix C: Coding Scheme Chart Development

Developmental Phases of Analytic Framework	Explanation and Description of Resulting Changes to Coding Scheme
(1) Coding scheme version May 2016. After conducting the relevant literature reviews, the researcher developed an initial literature-based coding framework for the dissertation proposal	1: The coding scheme, developed as part of the researcher's initial ideas about conceptual framework, was based on McAdams (2006) - <i>The redemptive self: Stories American live by</i> . Redemption imagery - <i>subcategories :</i> <i>Enhanced agency</i> <i>Enhanced social capital</i>
(2) Coding scheme version August 2016. Based on revisions to dissertation proposal as suggested by committee	2: Added categories related to YNY programming goals: <i>Choice, Community, accountability, responsibility, contribution, leadership</i> Added codes related to restorative justice: reintegrative shaming, human dignity, added codes related to DST: participatory learning, meaning making,
(3) Coding scheme January 2017. After reviewing curriculum and publishable paper additional codes were added to encompass new constructs that appear throughout curriculum	3. Added <i>empowerment, self-care, future, relationships, welcoming and safe environment,</i>
(4) Coding scheme version February 18, 2017. Based on a further data analysis of participant artifacts from Fall 2015/Spring 2016 Cohorts. Code count: 26 <i>Need to look at what codes can be collapsed into others</i>	4. Added <i>self-preservation, justification,</i> (These codes are generally seen in tandem, when participants are completing their choice exercise... a lot of participants feel they were wrongly targeted, or believe their behaviors were reasonable responses to their situation)
(5) Coding scheme version Feb 21 st , 2017 Final Code Count: 19	5. Conversated with Dr. Javdani and Dr. Nwigwe about redundancy of codes and created subcodes for major codes

Appendix D: Final Major Code Applications

Empowerment	136
human dignity	46
counternarrative	34
Reflection	87
accountability	19
choices	20
meaning making	10
Remorse	12
Future	48
leadership	8
self-care	9
story resolution	5
Relationships	33
Personal Growth	32
Community	26

In all, a set of six parent codes was created after all redundant codes were removed and/or collapsed. Each of these main categories covered a major topic within the YNY curriculum and redemptive narratives within narrative identity theory.

Appendix E: Dedoose Interface

Coded Video Segment

The screenshot shows a video player interface. At the top, it says "Video Excerpt: [redacted]_W2.mp4 (0:00-0:14)" and "Created By jgmorris Created On 01/15/2017". The video player shows a young man in a blue hoodie looking thoughtful. Below the video are controls: "Delete Excerpt", "Excerpt 74 of 88", "Previous", "Next", "Memos: 0", and "View In Context". On the right, there are two panels: "Attached Codes" and "Codes".

Attached Codes:

- empowerm...
- accountabil...
- Remorse

Codes:

- human dignity
- Community
- Future
- Justification
- Reintegrative Shaming
- Remorse
- accountability
- affect transformation
- counternarrative
- self-defense
- racial profiling
- Sexism

At the bottom, it says "Added 01/15/2017 Username jgmorris # Codes 5".

Coded eCollage Exercise

The screenshot shows an eCollage exercise interface. At the top, it says "PDF Excerpt: ynyGIRLS_20151103125227.PDF (133185-2838460)" and "Created By jgmorris Created On 02/25/2017". The eCollage features a central image of a man in a police uniform with a wolf's face, set against a cityscape background. The word "Wise" is written in a stylized font. There are also floral patterns and other elements. Below the eCollage are controls: "Delete Excerpt", "Excerpt 3 of 88", "Previous", "Next", "Memos: 0", and "View In Context". On the right, there are two panels: "Attached Codes" and "Codes".

Attached Codes:

- Choice
- Community
- empowerment
- enviornmental factors
- reflection

Codes:

- human dignity
- Community
- Future
- Justification
- Reintegrative Shaming
- Remorse
- accountability
- affect transformation
- counternarrative
- self-defense
- racial profiling
- Sexism
- sociopolitical processes
- empowerment
- enviornmental factors

Appendix F: YNY 8-week Curriculum Outline

Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the program • Participants are having fun and are connected and making friends. They want to come back next week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on importance of Public Art • Choice: Icebreaker and Video Exercise • Word: Re-creating Our Future • Portrait Exercise 	Find an example of art that tells a story and is “public”
Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a group reaffirm and reset the container • Identify personal choices in connection to our case/s, and their impact • Begin exploring self-belief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice/Impact worksheet • Guest Teaching Artist Presentation 	Selfie Assignment
Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand work on choice and impact • Look at personal responsibility, as a source of personal power • Explore self-belief and self-awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Teaching Artist Presentation • Restorative Justice Video Interview Exercise 	Sketchbook Symbol Assignment
Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice aspirational self-concepts • Examine personal responsibility • Gain empowering skills in order to create the strongest possible outcome of this court-involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know Your Rights presentation • Guest Teaching Artist • Collage Exercise 	Photo/Video Assignment

Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 5</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice aspirational self-concepts • Examine personal responsibility • begin to look at social issues and how they connect to our stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collage Exercise 	
Session	Goals	Activities	Homework
<i>Week 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step into a leadership role • Develop a public art exhibition • Celebrate 	Public Art Lecture Public Art Project Proposals	Prep for grand finale

Appendix G: YNY Workshop Timeframes for Workshops 2-6

Time	Action	Team Member
4.00 to 4.15	Arrival and Check-in	<i>Checking in: Ally</i> <i>Call missing participants at 4pm: Carol</i>
4.15 to 4.35	Circle Check-In	<i>Leading circle check-in: Ally</i> <i>Aid timekeeper:</i>
4:35 to 4:45	Set the container and build boundaries in the class.	<i>Lead discussion: Rae</i>
4:45 to 5.00	Guest Lecture	<i>Lecture: Guest Artist</i> <i>Transition: Rae</i>
5.00 to 5.45	RJ Lecture	<i>Lead discussion: Rae</i>
5.45 to 6.15	Media Arts Activity	<i>Lead: Guest Artist + Rae</i>
6.15 to 6.30	Class Reflection	<i>Lead discussion: Carol or Walter</i>
6.30 to 6.40	Assign homework and hand out pizza	<i>Serve pizza: Ally</i> <i>Assign homework: Rachel</i>
6.40 to 6.50	Circle Check-Out and Departure	<i>Leading circle check-out: Carol or Walter</i> <i>Wrapping up the workshop: Rae</i>

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