

“Storytelling, Agency & Emancipatory Education: The Promise of Teacher Educators Making Space for African Nova Scotian Learners”

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Theme: “Commitment in Action:
Mobilizing Equitable Research”

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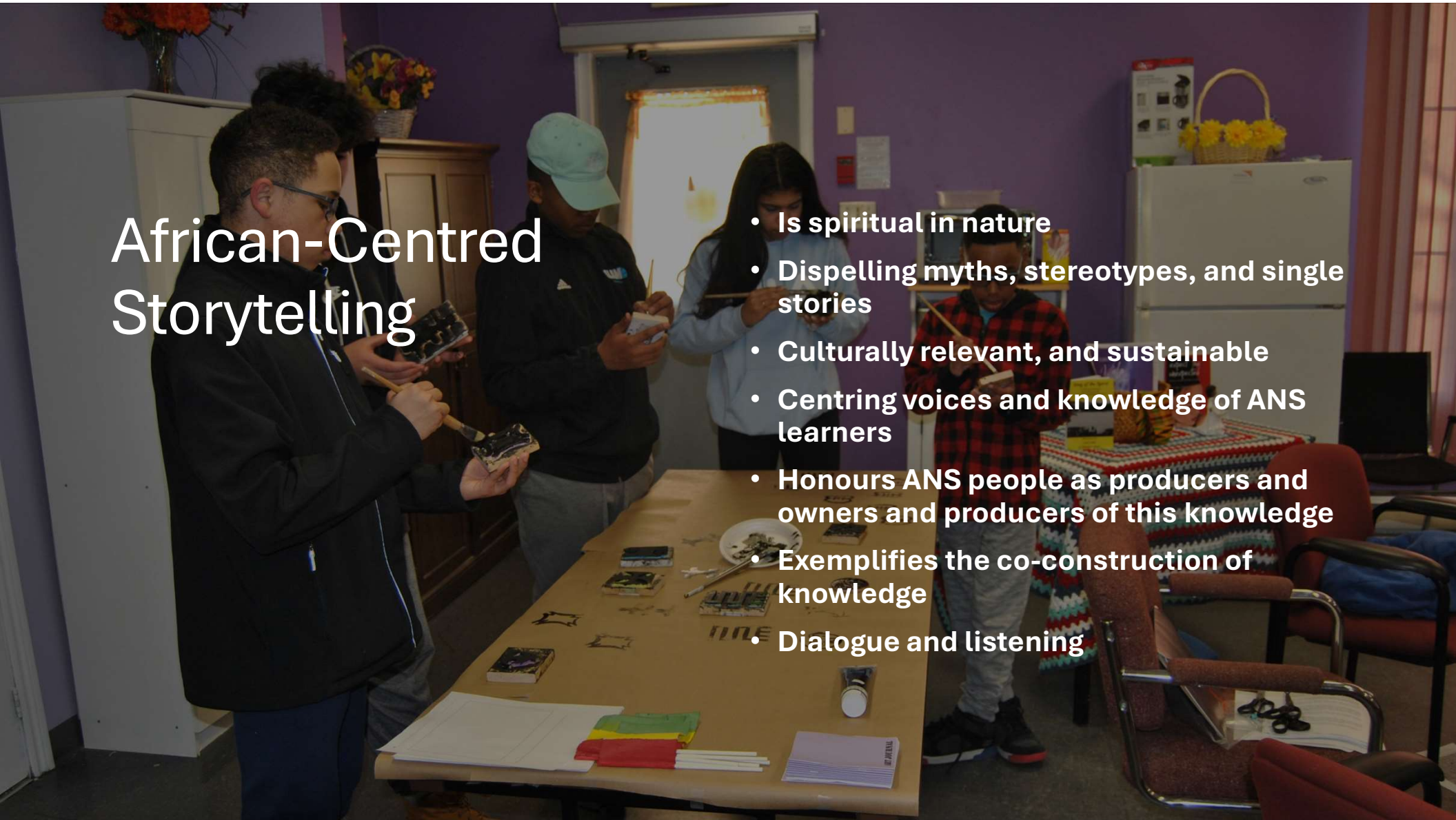
Bridging the Gap: Connecting spirituality and academic achievement for African Nova Scotian students

Connecting spirituality and academic achievement for African Nova Scotian students

- Currently 6 ANS students (9 started the project)
- Junior high, high school
- 6 sessions: 1- hr. Arts-based workshop and 1-hr. Story Circle
- Venue: ANS community spaces
- Storytelling is methodology & method

African-Centred Storytelling

- Is spiritual in nature
- Dispelling myths, stereotypes, and single stories
- Culturally relevant, and sustainable
- Centring voices and knowledge of ANS learners
- Honours ANS people as producers and owners and producers of this knowledge
- Exemplifies the co-construction of knowledge
- Dialogue and listening



Wisdom from Africa: The Motherland



“A stream never rises higher than its source”

African Proverb



Spirited Pedagogy

- Acknowledges teaching and research as spiritual processes
- Is centred on the learners and their communities and always mindful of their best interest
- Privileges and is dependent on the voices of racialized learners and their community members
- Is grounded in community relationships, acknowledging community members engaged in teaching and learning, rather than seen as only receptacles of knowledge
- Values the idea of knowing /knowledge as socially constructed by people connected to/in relationship with each other in a spiritual way – past, present and future
- Celebrates connectedness as a way of knowing
- Is culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally sustainable



BIPOC Engagement and Advocacy

Spirited
Pedagogy
acknowledges:

- ANS youth voices as expert voices
- ANS youth as knowledge contributors
- ANS community voices as experts, creators, and owners of their knowledge
- Schools as pedagogically violent spaces
- Anti-racist, Africentric, anti-colonialist, African/Black Feminist theoretical perspectives
- ANS knowledge as valid knowledge

Spirited Pedagogy

- Ensures the environment/conditions are right for learning to take place
- Invests time and energy to responsively and responsibly engage
- Requires a caring spirit
- Positions the teacher as learner
- Is not static
- Is about being flexible and making room for new and emerging knowledge offered or available in the community



Spirited Pedagogy as Emancipatory Education

- Is anti-oppressive
- Is liberatory/emancipatory
- Provides opportunity for transformative education
- Fosters the development of transformative leaders & social justice champions
- Facilitates space for the development of positive identity formation and development of racial consciousness





Arts- Informed Research

“[A] mode and form of qualitative research that is
influenced by, but not based in,
the arts broadly
conceived”

(Cole & Knowles, 2007, p. 59).

“A way of redefining research form and representation and creating new understandings of process, spirit, purpose, subjectivities, emotion, responsiveness, and the ethical dimensions of inquiry”

(Cole & Knowles, 2007, p. 59).

Arts-Informed Research – Moral Obligation & Social Responsibility

- Arts-Informed Research has a moral purpose to make a difference in the lives of everyday people as well as decision makers (policy makers, politicians, legislators, and others) .
- All individuals in a society – not only those considered intellectuals – researchers and theorists – are welcome to engage in advancing knowledge through research
- Impact beyond academia



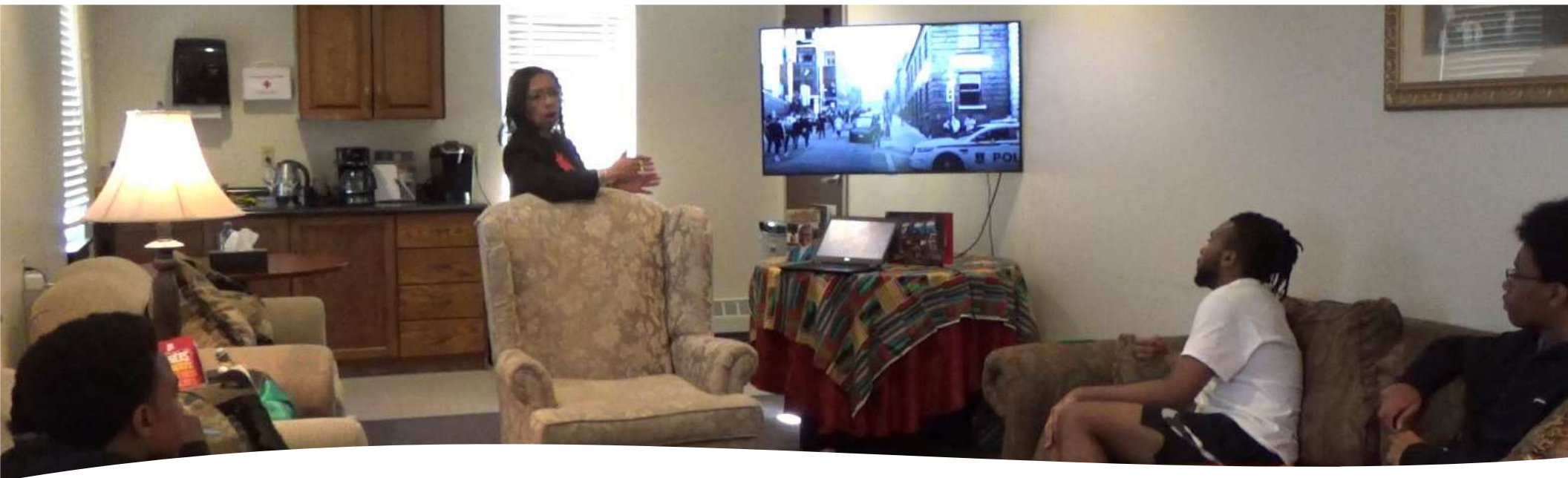
Purpose of Arts-Informed Research

- Provides research opportunities to understand a diverse representation of the human condition through non-traditional processes and representational forms of inquiry.
- Makes scholarship more accessible by offering the ability for it to reach multiple audiences (Cole & Knowles, 2007, p. 59).
- Provides access to the meaning-making of everyday people and allowing for research that positions their lives as significant.
- Challenges what society accepts as knowledge
- Connects community and the academy (not exclusively about the researcher but also the participants as co-researchers)



Spoken Word Poetry – Guyleigh Johnson

- The power of words, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and mental health
- Encourages dialogue/conversation
- Is action-oriented



Teachers & Community Artists as Griots:

- Griots play a role of “keeping alive the culture” of a people
- Speaking well and speaking truth
- Passing on information and values critical for the survival and thriving of the entire community



The Power of Stories & Agency as Storytellers

Photo credit: Sabrina Allison

A black and white photograph of a large crowd of people, likely at a protest or rally. Many individuals are wearing face masks and raising their fists in a gesture of solidarity or protest. The crowd is dense and fills the frame, with people of various ages and ethnicities visible. The text "Storytelling: Photography & Perspective" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Storytelling: Photography & Perspective

What story does this tell?

Photo credit: Sabrina Allison

Allie Photography

Perspective:

Conclusion - Two people standing in the exact same spot at the exact same moment will come away with two entirely different images or stories.

- Take your camera everywhere you go
- Constantly treat your eye as a viewfinder
- Document events in family gatherings, community
- Beginning, Middle and End
- Print your photos/back up your photos

Spirited Teaching

- Knowledge for liberation
- Resistance against oppression
- Transformative Education
- Position and Perspective

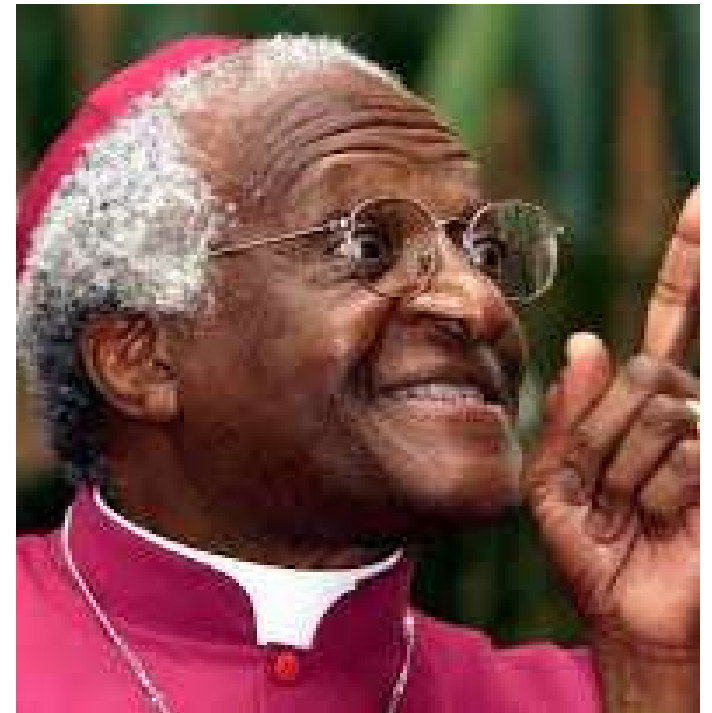
(Photo credit: Sabrina Allison)



Role of Educational Leaders:

- To be change agents (Transformative leadership)
- Practice leadership that is not neutral but to enact leadership as activism (Black feminist epistemology)

“If you are neutral in times of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor” – Desmond Tutu



Spirited Pedagogy as Transformative Leadership

- A mandate to effect deep and equitable change.
- A need to deconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice and to reconstruct them in more equitable ways.
- A need to address the inequitable distribution of power.
- An emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good.

(Foster (1986), Quantz et al. (1991), Weiner (2003), Shields, 2016)



Spirited Pedagogy as Transformative Leadership

- A focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice.
- An emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness.
- The necessity of balancing critique with promise.
- A call to exhibit moral courage. (Shields, 2016, pp. 20-1, Shields, 2022, p. 28, 29)

(Foster (1986), Quantz et al. (1991), Weiner (2003), Shields, 2016)





Thank you!
