ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents snapshots of the author’s ongoing living, embodied inquiry, which seeks to blur boundaries between her identities as a clown and as a scholar. Rather than documenting finalized “data,” this dissertation accompanied the author as she spiralled through the possibilities of bringing clowning and scholarship together. The dissertation was written in, through, and as an element of the process of engaging the practices of clowning and scholarship in ways that deepen, extend, challenge, and inform one another.

By bringing clowning and scholarship together, the author has identified four foundational principles that make up a particular “clown epistemology,” which may be used as an approach to education and scholarship: 1. Vulnerability, 2. Engagement in the “magic space of co-creation,” 3. Multiplicity, and 4. Transgression toward transformation. The dissertation explores ways that these foundational principles might enrich the practices of clowning and scholarship and might contribute to the creation of “clown scholarship.”

At the heart of both clowning and scholarship lays the possibility of transformation. The author suggests that the foundational principles of clowning support us to put “impossibility aside” and to delve into “the moment of immanence,” thereby revealing and engaging with a widened range of possibilities. While she began by considering how clowning practice could be applied to scholarship, the author concludes by seeing the ways that clowning and scholarship can become mutually informing and reinforcing practices that facilitate unique approaches to teaching, learning, growing, and transforming ourselves, our communities, our societies, and our cultures.