



Collage

A MAGAZINE FOR COLORADO'S ART EDUCATORS

WINTER 2020-2021

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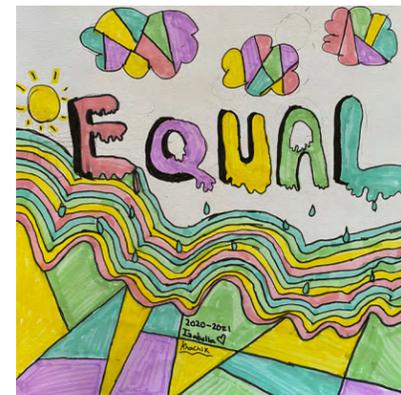
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Cover Photo: Student artwork by Heather Wilson, Seeds of Practice Project, *Introduction to Art Education*, RMCAD, 2019 from Page 10. Balancing Act: Mindful Pedagogy: The 6 Keys by Sara Webb Hiris

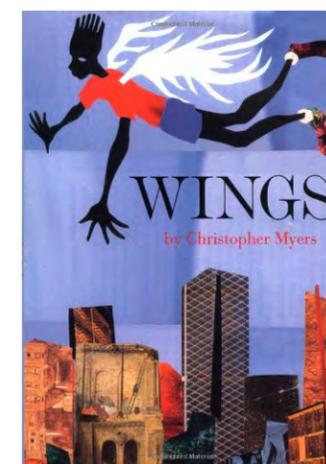
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President's Message

Finding Self-Care in the Chaos of 2020
by D.J. Osmack
Art Educator, North High School, DPS



Season Greetings! I hope the 2020 holiday season filled your hearts with comfort and joy! As we welcome 2021, I hope that you all have a renewed sense of who you are.

For those who have flown on a plane with small children, I hope you will connect to this story and view it as an analogy to our year of teaching in 2020.

I always have everything organized before I get to the airport, but the sequence of events always seems to unhinge me. No matter how early I arrive for my flight, once I make it to the airport, the round of worrying continues. Do I have my ID? Did I pack my phone cord? Did I leave the coffee pot on? Did I lock my car? At this point, I start questioning why I even got out of bed.

Overall, my thought is, "Just get me on the plane and into my seat." I am so focused on the next step that I forget to stop and "smell the roses."

On this trip, we had packed our bags, checked-in online, made it through security with moments to spare, and rushed to the gate. Abruptly, having arrived at the gate with all our personal belongings, we were scrambling, looking for that elusive boarding pass. Which pocket did I stick it in? Did I leave it in the gray bin? Why is it always so hard to find?

Having found the boarding pass, we made it to the entrance of the plane where we needed to leave my daughter's car seat. "No, Bug" (the nickname I call my daughter), "We leave your car seat here and they will put it under the plane....No, in the

plane, but under our seats....Never mind, we will see it when we get there, just trust me."

We make the difficult journey down the tight aisle. Awkwardly we try to navigate the narrow space without creaming someone in the head or shoulder. No easy task when your belongings include three carry-on/personal items, six stuffies, five dolls, four snacks, three art activities, two changes of clothes, and a water bottle that needs to be refilled with apple juice because security made us empty it.

As people watch us make our way down the aisle, they smile the fake smiles that clearly say, "Please do not sit that thing next to me." I want to say, "Don't worry, people. She is not an infectious disease. Although we are flying during a pandemic, she is just energetic like her ADHD dad."

And then we see our goal, "Ahh our seats!" We have a full row to ourselves! "Hey, Bug! Don't touch that. It's not clean yet. If we get Covid and it does not kill us, your mom will...." I mentally congratulate myself for remembering to bring the hand sanitizer.

By now the flight attendants, with their charming smiles, have asked us several times to put on our seat belts. As I put in my ear buds and try to relax, my child asks, "Daddy, where is Teddy?" I think to myself, "Man, it's going to be a long flight if I do not find that bear...."

Finally, Teddy has been found, our seatbelts are fastened, and the tray tables are sanitized and back up in their upright positions. (In fact, I have sanitized the entire row with my homemade wipes.)

At this point in the preflight procedure, I hear, "The oxygen mask will drop...." Where will it drop? Oh good, they did not change its position from the last time I was on a plane. "Sir," the helpful flight attendant tells me, "Make sure in an emergency, you put on your mask before helping your daughter."

As the engine revs and we begin to speed down the runway, I know my anxiety will go away as soon as we hit 10,000 feet and are at full speed. I know the plane is most vulnerable when it is fully loaded

with fuel, climbing, and flying slowly. Knowledge is not always power. I mentally encourage the engines: "Come on, engines. Do not fail us now." I smile at my daughter and say, "Yes, we are going to be perfectly fine. That's the air (not smoke) flowing over the wings and it causes lift and keeps us up in the sky."

The flight attendant comes on and says, "It is now safe to use your electronics." And it finally hits me: In the last 10 months of teaching, I forgot to put on my oxygen mask and to breathe.

I have been so consumed with helping all of my students and everyone else in my circles that I forgot to take care of myself. How can that be? I talk about self-care and mindfulness every Thursday with my students. We are doing different exercises about mental health, anxiety, and self-advocacy. Have I really become that much of a robot? Am I that numb to teaching online that I am not even processing the words that are coming out of my mouth?

We are now at our cruising altitude and my little Bug is watching *Frozen 2* on her tablet. I am feeling more at ease with this pandemic and, out the window, just beyond the horizon, there is a glimpse of hope for a brighter tomorrow.

We have put so much emphasis on creating learning environments that support the whole student by creating physically and emotionally safe spaces that emphasize building relationships. But do we, as teachers, create a safe place for us to work in?

It is okay to take our own brain breaks. It is okay to say "No." This year has been hard. Most of us probably have not taken a day off or a day to ourselves in over 10 months of teaching, and in that we can find resentment.

The one major event that we normally look forward to, our well-deserved break in November, our Fall Conference, was canceled. While it was nice not having to tarp rooms and not to worry about how much glitter may have snuck into Copper Top 2, all that fun was absent this year. I did not get to be

with 500+ amazing and way more creative people than me.

You all fill my creative bank account and, if you are like me and feel depleted, like you're running on empty or at a deficit, there is no need to feel shame. You are not broken. YOU ARE AN AMAZING ART EDUCATOR!

I am not one who makes checklists, but maybe it would help with my anxiety about traveling and life in general? When your car does not start one day because it has not been driven anywhere in two weeks, that might be the first warning sign that you need to do something special for yourself.

I started to wonder if scheduling things for me personally would be a bad thing? Would that make me selfish? No. It may sound silly, but scheduling time for me is the best thing I have started to do. It's about doing something special for myself once a week.

If you do not know where to begin, try this [Self-Care Plan](#) (also linked below). In my last message, I talked about how showing random acts of kindness can reduce depression. The boost in happiness occurs not only in the giver and receiver of kindness but also in anyone who witnesses it.

I often feel that most of the time we are just scratching the surface and could go much further when we are talking about mental health, social emotional learning, and kindness. Putting these skills into action in my classes and in my life has been rewarding for me and maybe it will be rewarding for you too!

You are the best one to measure your need for self-care. Put yourself first if that's what you need to do for your own self-care. My New Year's wish for you is kindness and self-care. And for you to be able to share kindness with your students, colleagues, and families. I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season and that we all have an amazing new year. Please check out the resources below.

Artfully Yours,

D.J. Osmack
CAEA President

Resources

Here are some great resources on Adult Social Emotional Learning. Just as a reminder, "Approach these tools with an open mind, because what may not work for you, may work for others."

Self-Care Plan: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MWJBX0K8vcz-wYwPfv7DNBwuZpg0fOKe_8nBe2kirQc/copy

<https://www.secondstep-sel-for-adults-resilience.org>

Designed to guide school communities in responding to events that cause extreme stress, this module will help teachers and school leaders strengthen their own resilience and recognize signs that students are in need of mental health supports. Three units cover understanding stress reactions, identifying your place in the recovery process, self-care strategies, connecting with and supporting others, and student care, all in service of supporting resilience in your school community.

<https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/comprehensive-guide-adult-sel>

This guide will equip schools with the strategies and tools you need to strengthen adult SEL. By the end, you'll understand different approaches to adult SEL as well as how to measure and implement it in your district.

<https://createforeducation.org/>

The goal of this program is to teach educators how to identify emotions like stress that occur during the school day and how to self-regulate. Teachers learn mindfulness practices like breath awareness, stretching, and compassion. The training included 30 hours of in-person sessions spread out over four months and several phone calls from coaches.

<http://passageworks.org/>

PassageWorks programs employ "Engaged Teaching" practices, principles, and tools that integrate academic learning with social and emotional learning, mindfulness, cultural responsiveness, and whole systems thinking. PassageWorks collaborates with teachers and school leaders to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that create safe, meaningful

and engaged learning communities that respect and honor the diverse views and experiences of students, families, and educators.

<https://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/school-employees/>

Thriving Schools believes that school employee well-being is an essential component of helping schools to be the healthiest they can be. School employee well-being means support for the physical, social, emotional, and professional well-being of all school employees, teachers, administrators, and classified staff.

Here are some resources that I have found that you may want to look into if you are looking for ways to incorporate more kindness:

[Kindness Beyond the Classroom](#)

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/high-school-curriculum>

<https://healthyworkforceinstitute.com/spread-kindness/?sfw=pass1584642159>

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-at-work>

<https://www.kindnessevolution.org/kindness-curricula> ●

Letter from the Editor

by Anne Thulson
Associate Professor of Art Education,
MSU of Denver



Dear Artist-Teachers,

Let me introduce Amy Felder to you. Amy will be taking over as the content editor of *Collage*. We did this winter issue together and hope you enjoy it. Below are questions that I asked Amy and her responses so that you can learn a bit about her.

I'm so grateful for the engagement I've had with you as readers and authors.

Take care,
Anne

What do you remember about being a creative maker as a child?

I devoted a lot of time to making birthday and Christmas gifts for my family. I loved to make art to give to others.

Can you describe a teacher that inspired you (doesn't have to be art)?

While I have been blessed with many inspiring teachers throughout my education, the teacher who inspired me to become an art teacher is my oldest sister Melanie. She is a highly accomplished art teacher who has always been there for me. In fact, she helped me survive my first year of teaching by literally giving me her lesson plan book. Even though she has never officially been my teacher, she has definitely taught me how to teach and continues to do so.

How do you explore the ideas in your art?

I explore ideas by keeping a research workbook where I write reflections, sketch, and record findings. Right now, I have an ongoing studio-based inquiry into human relationships to the

wilderness. I ask the following questions: How do we enjoy our national parks and preserve them for future generations? What is the balance? How are humans negatively impacting the wilderness? What role does art play in re-envisioning the contemporary way we experience nature? In response, I create a body of art in different mediums and forms.

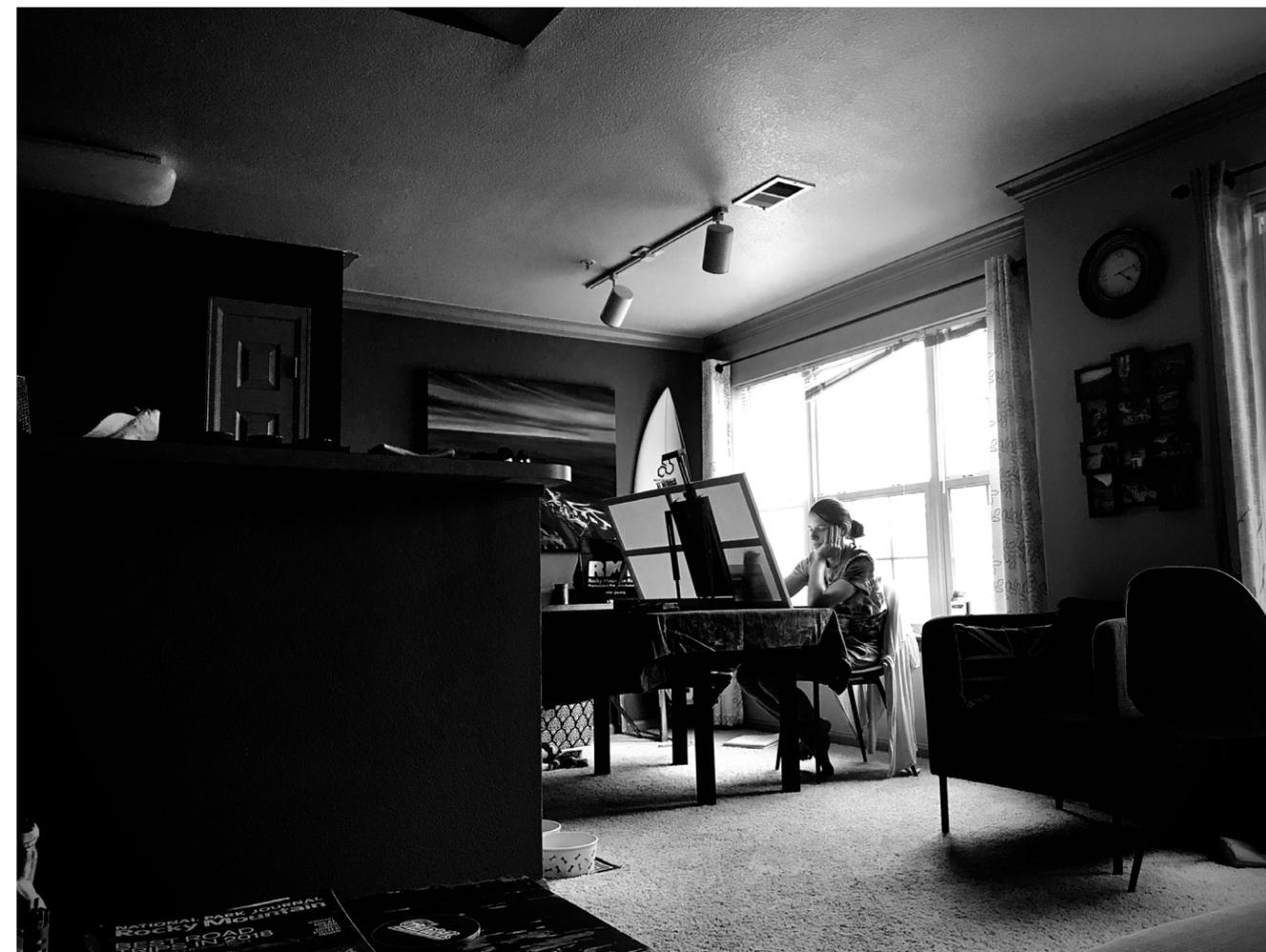
How does joy fit into your creative process?

Occasionally, in the midst of creating, I go to my happy place, where I lose all track of time. But I

would say that most of the joy comes from seeing an artwork come to life and sharing it with others.

Why do you want to be the content editor for *Collage*?

I have a unique background. I have a BA in English and Studio Art. By being the content editor for *Collage*, I am able to combine my two passions – writing and art. I am excited to join the conversation about the latest and current trends of art education in our state and beyond!



BALANCING ACT

Mindful Pedagogy: The 6 Keys

by Sara Webb Hiris, M.Ed.
Educator/Consultant/Speaker
MindfulandCreativeLiving.com



Kristen Miranda, Reflective Teacher Project
Methods of Art Education, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design (RMCAD), 2019

It is imperative that we maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest otherwise.
– Paulo Freire

*Dear Art Teacher,
I invite you to pause.
Relax your jaw and shoulders. Take three deep breaths.
Send yourself some Gratitude, Love, and Kindness. You deserve it.*

Teaching in the arts has always required improvisation and an ability to meet students where they are in terms of skills, motivations, and emotions. The enduring stress of 2020 has magnified these requirements and challenged our stamina for doing more with less. So how do we and our students remain energized, motivated, and productive?

For starters, we must pause. Pausing becomes more urgent when we feel we have no time. As teachers and artists, we have seen the positive effects that stepping back and reflecting have on creativity and learning. We need to prioritize the pause, for the well-being of ourselves and our students.

Caught up in the pressures of our daily lives it can often feel as if we do not have any time to practice mindfulness. Breathing in and out mindfully, letting go of our thoughts and becoming grounded in our own body, however, takes only one or two minutes. We can practice all day long and benefit right away, whether sitting on the bus, driving a car, taking a shower, or cooking breakfast. We cannot say, "I have no time to practice." We have plenty of time if we know where to look. This is very important. When we practice and we get relaxation and joy, our students profit. To practice mindful breathing is an act of love. We have peace, relaxation, joy, and we become an instrument of peace and joy for others (p.5).

– Thich Nhat Hanh & Katherine Weare,
Happy Teachers Change the World, 2017

Mindful Pedagogy is a continuing education series designed to support *both* teachers and students and is applicable to on-line and in-person learning environments.

Mindfulness changes our brains for the better and is especially useful during this intense time. Mindfulness practices thicken areas of the brain that deal with emotional regulation,

flexibility, resiliency, rational thought, learning, memory, focus, productivity, and creativity, while decreasing areas of the brain that connect to stress, depression, anxiety, and highly emotional responses (Congleton, Hölzel, and Lazar, 2017).

Mindfulness should no longer be considered a "nice to have" ...it's a "must have": a way to keep our brains healthy, to support self-regulation and effective decision-making capabilities, and to protect ourselves from toxic stress (Congleton, Hölzel, and Lazar, 2017, p.32).

The 6 Keys of Mindful Pedagogy:

Mindful Presence is consciously connecting with the people and purpose of the moment, with wakefulness, positivity, curiosity, empathy, and non-judgment.

Mindful Meditation is the quiet, singular direction of the mind, such as focusing on the breath, an intention, a sound, or an activity.

Mindful Self is observing and reflecting upon one's thoughts, words, and behaviors, noticing how they affect oneself and others; it is the practicing of social-emotional competencies, such as self-awareness and self-management.

Mindful Community is welcoming and honoring the whole student, including emotions, with an open heart and clear boundaries. Mindful Community invites learning that is inclusive, respectful, personal, and meaningful.

Mindful Communication is choosing words and phrases that are enlivening, constructive, and welcoming of multiple perspectives and ways of being, knowing, and creating.

Mindful Modification is teaching with flexibility and awareness, receiving, and responding to the pulses and pulls of the moment.

Mindful Presence



Heather Wilson, Seeds of Practice Project, *Introduction to Art Education*, RMCAD, 2019

Pause and Ponder: What helps you to calm, ground, and focus? What could you easily integrate into your teaching day, whether in-person or on-line, to support you in staying present and connected? One simple pathway that requires only a minute, sometimes even less, is grounding yourself through your breath. Once you are able to calm and focus your mind-body through following your breath, you could add an intention that helps you to remain present and engaged with the moment and your students. Other options include sounds, such as a pleasant chime or bell; simple stretching and movement; and visual cues to remind you to pause, breathe, connect, and focus.

Mindful Meditation for Mindful Presence

Once you are comfortable leading yourself through mindful breathing, you could integrate this activity into your teaching. For example, I begin every class with chimes followed by moments of quiet, guiding students through simple breathing

meditations and intention settings. As the teacher, I am extremely grateful for these moments of self-connection, and they help me stay alert and flexible during class.

Offering space and time for this simple check-in at the beginning of class has the same positive effect for students. A few moments of mindfulness shift the tone and energy of the entire class. Through the quiet, students become more comfortable with themselves and each other. Class discussions become more personal, constructive, and layered, and each personality has more space and confidence to shine.

For younger students, it is often helpful to make these moments of mindful breathing physical or tangible. For example, students could trace their fingers as they breathe in and out (on paper or in the air); they could move their arms up and down with each in- and out-breath; they could feel their bellies rise and fall.

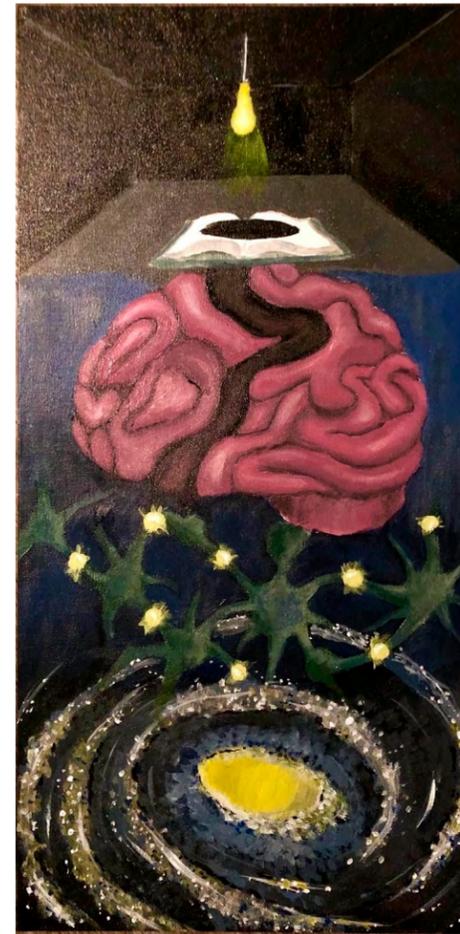


Another option is to integrate quiet, mindful breathing with brushstrokes, pencil strokes, paper cutting, walking around the room, etc.

If students are working remotely, you could record or upload a guided meditation. Another option is to integrate written steps into project instructions, inviting students to pause, breathe,

and set intentions before beginning their work. There are limitless pathways to self-connection. Free guided meditations for teaching may be found at mindfulandcreativeliving.com.

Mindful Self



Brianna Gouge, *Introduction to Art Education*, RMCAD, 2019

To grow as teachers and artists, we need to grow as individuals. Personal and professional growth are intertwined. In order to grow, we need to be self-aware, and to be self-aware, we need time and space for reflection, connecting to the keys of Mindful Presence and Mindful Meditation.

As art teachers, we may structure our “project plans” (Marshall, 2019) around a big idea, such as resilience. It could also be useful to structure our self-reflection around a big idea. For example, thoughts could be a theme or big idea of self-

reflection. You could observe your thoughts for a day or week. When are they negative? When are they positive? When are they jumbled? Our thoughts are the roots of our daily lives; they generate everything else, including emotions, interactions, productivity, attitudes, and biases. Let’s pause, pay attention to our thoughts, and choose positivity and progress.

Mindful Community



Abby Sears “Open” Reflective Teacher Project, *Methods of Art Education*, RMCAD, 2019

In *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (2003), bell hooks writes beautifully about “conscious teaching—teaching with love” and the necessity of making a place for students’ emotions.

...when we teach with love we are better able to respond to the unique concerns of individual students while simultaneously integrating those of the classroom community... Refusing to make a place for emotional feelings in the classroom does not change the reality that their presence overdetermines the conditions where learning can occur. Teachers are not therapists. However, there are times when conscious teaching—teaching with love—brings us the insight that we will not be able to have a meaningful experience in the classroom without reading the emotional climate of our students and attending to it...

When as teachers we teach with love, combining care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, we are often able to enter the classroom and go straight to the heart of the matter. That means having the clarity to know what to do on any given day to create the best climate for learning (p.133-34).

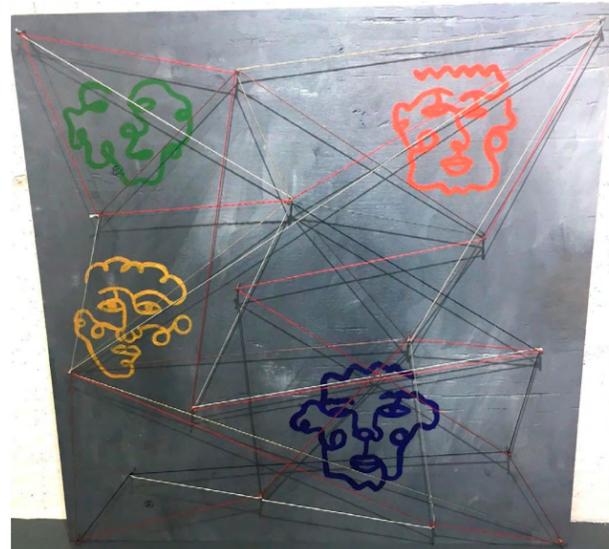
Emotions are the elephants in the room. We cannot teach or learn effectively when blocked by our emotions, especially during the persistence of a pandemic. Often, simply acknowledging our emotions and giving them space and respect is enough. For example, when connecting with our breath, we could also connect with our emotions and where we hold them in our bodies. Through honoring the feelings under the surface, we lessen the chance of them surprising us in unproductive ways. When we convey to students that emotions are a part of the learning process, students relax; they no longer need to use so much mental and physical energy “holding it all together.”

As hooks notes, teachers are not therapists, and we need to consciously create boundaries. In *The 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching: A Practical Guide for Educators* (2013), Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding prompt us to reflect upon which emotions we are comfortable experiencing in ourselves and witnessing in others, and why that is. They also prompt us to reflect on boundaries and how to create and hold them. We need to be honest in terms of our strengths and limitations when navigating emotions, and communicate and hold clear boundaries. Making space for emotions does not mean that class becomes an emotional dumping ground, or that we, as teachers, need to navigate situations that are better handled by the school counselor or social worker.

Responsibly and respectfully welcoming emotions and personal experiences creates opportunities for students to approach projects in divergent, relevant, and meaningful ways. During a pandemic, this approach is even more beneficial, as we are all experiencing and navigating the challenges differently.

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.
– Maya Angelou

Mindful Communication



Hannah Johnson,
Introduction to Art Education, RMCAD, 2019

The words we use while introducing a topic, conducting a demonstration, giving feedback, or conversing with students have the power to either open hearts and minds or close them. Mindful language is at the core of creating an encouraging and inclusive learning environment.

The following two research-based approaches are useful guides for constructive communication with and among students. These approaches easily integrate into any remote or in-person curriculum.

The first is [Artful Thinking, a program from Harvard's research center, Project Zero](#). Artful Thinking offers routines for cultivating mindful thinking habits, such as deep observation and listening, avoiding assumptions, taking multiple perspectives, critical thinking, and more (Tishman & Palmer, 2006). These routines could be used to structure discussions, projects, critiques, papers, assessments and more. All routines may be found at <http://pzartfulthinking.org/>. Here are a few favorites:

SEE / THINK / WONDER

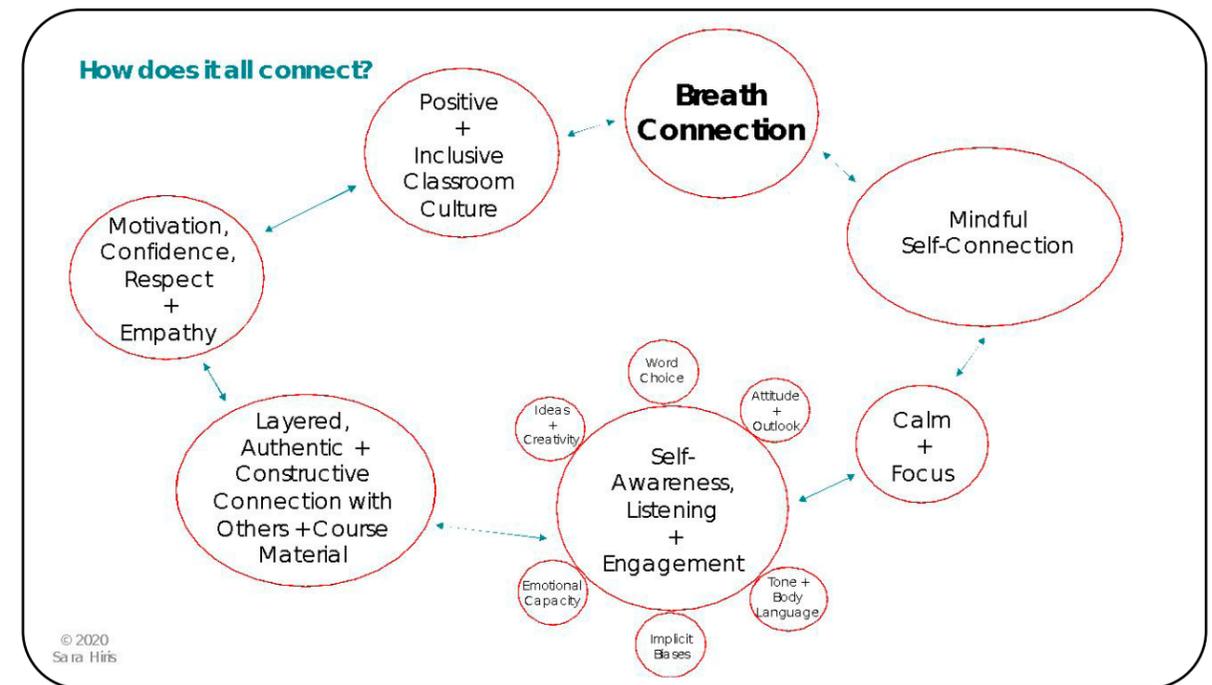
What do you SEE? What do you THINK about what you SEE? What do you WONDER or want to know more about? This routine is useful for introducing a new artist or artwork, facilitating a critique, discussing student work, and more.

THINK / PUZZLE / EXPLORE

What do you THINK you know about an artwork or topic? What questions or PUZZLES do you have? What does the artwork or topic make you want to EXPLORE? This routine invites in students' knowledge, experiences, perspectives, and personal thoughts.

Langer's research shows that the language we use has a significant impact on creativity and learning (1997).

Absolute Language	Conditional Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is how.... • This is what... • The only way to... • The right way to... • Follow these steps... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play/Experiment with... • One way you could... • This could be... • What/How else... • What other perspectives... • What if... • Explore how one could...



PERCEIVE / KNOW / CARE ABOUT
Step inside a character, figure or object. What might this person/object perceive? Know? Care about? This routine is a wonderful starting point for exploring, sharing, and discussing different perspectives and experiences.

I USED TO THINK...NOW I THINK
Useful for assessing students' learning around a topic/technique.

The second approach is from [Ellen Langer, Harvard social psychologist and researcher](#), often referred to as the “Mother of Mindfulness.”

Langer advocates focusing on finding potential over problem solving; potential has no limits, whereas problems operate within existing parameters. She also advocates prioritizing play, especially when introducing new topics and techniques. An example would be encouraging students to play with a medium or tool *before* showing them how to use it. Langer's research has shown that play heightens and lengthens engagement and invites in creativity and diverse ways of learning.

Another focus of Langer's is the use of conditional language versus absolute language. Using conditional language invites multiple perspectives

and approaches. Absolute language can narrow and stop thinking (1997). For example, when introducing a tool/medium/technique, instead of saying, *This is how you...*, you could try saying, *Play/experiment/explore... and then we'll discuss some ways you could...*

Mindful Modification



Jenny Karp, Reflective Teacher Project, *Methods of Art Education*, RMCAD, 2019

As artists and teachers, we know that everything is a process, especially teaching and learning in a worldwide crisis! When we pause, breathe, and settle into the “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), we are more flexible and awake to the pulses and pulls of the moment. We practice what Langer calls “soft vigilance” (1997), calmly alert to what is happening in the periphery. Complementing this vigilance is Brené Brown’s (2018) “grounded confidence,” leading and taking risks while grounded in self-awareness, vulnerability, and personal growth. Mindfulness supports us in these practices. Through the pause, we find perspective, calm, and inspiration.

To close, I offer this quote, which seems especially relevant during this time of uncertainty and potential.

Mindfulness is the simple act of actively noticing things... You come to see that you didn't know what you thought you did as well as you did. And, because everything is always changing, everything looks different from different perspectives. We tend to hold it still and think we know, and then life becomes uninteresting. By actively attending [and] noticing new things...the familiar becomes interesting again and we become more aware of the inherent uncertainty, and that promotes even more mindfulness (Wbur, 2014).
– Ellen Langer



The 10 P's of Mindful Pedagogy © 2020 Sara Webb Hiris

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ARTIST ON MY MIND

The Make-Up Artists

by Matt Jenkins

Associate Professor of Integrated Media, MSU of Denver



Matthew Jenkins, *Fracking Field Trips* (2014)

Some say that we artists *make it up* as we go. People believe in us – that we can make things from nothing, out of nowhere. Nothing exists here, so we must make a Thing.

Making a Thing is our amazing gift and we can teach it to you, and you can teach it to others. It's like a pyramid scheme.

In fact, the first Thing we need to discuss in critical detail are the Great Pyramids. Who made them?

Every place has a deep past. There are some places where there used to be a Thing so grueling that we built a silence around it....

But now we are told that we must revitalize the plantation and build a new Thing. A visitor's

center can go here, and an art gallery can go there. There will be pathways to other pathways, and everyone (almost everyone) will feel *alive*. There will be “spaces for gathering and reflection.”

Emptiness is a sanctuary unless it is a Superfund site.

But we cannot stop the Thing. It's too late and it's already here, immovable. When you look at the Thing from the other side, it has already left, and we cannot stop that either. It's a cruel arrangement of simultaneous arrival and departure.

The Thing boasts “unlimited growth potential” even as our children, who face extinction, tell us, “business as usual equals death.”

Wedged between these two imperatives, enter the *make-up artists*, who march in post-modern formations of shared anxiety, hope, and generosity.

Don't worry about what we've done, we will try to *make it up* to you.

Artists have always kept the balance for a world bent on the endless false promise of material progress. [Suzanne Lacy](#) and the high schoolers on the [roof top](#) in cars. [Jenny Holzer](#) dropping 8.5x11 [photocopies](#) in the streets of New York. [Coco Fusco and Gomez-Pena](#) in a cage. [Derek Jarman's garden](#). [Ai Wei Wei](#) and the [backpacks](#). Everything Pepon Osorio. Hakim Bey and the Temporary Autonomous Zone.

There's a reason Burning Man was in the desert, but that didn't stop The Thing. Welcome to the new Burning Man [Luxury Apartment](#) project! Every apartment features an under-the-counter wine refrigerator.

The vineyards are burning when we should be burning The Man instead, and none of this is written in stone.

ARTISTS ON MY MIND

[THE ROOF IS ON FIRE](#) Suzanne Lacy
<https://www.suzannelacy.com/>

[TRUISMS](#) Jenny Holzer
<https://projects.jennyholzer.com/>

[THE YEAR OF THE WHITE BEAR](#) Gomez-Pena & Fusco
<https://www.guillermogomezpena.com/works/>

[GARDEN PROSPECT COTTAGE](#)

[REMEMBERING](#) Ai Wei Wei
<https://art21.org/artist/ai-weiwei/>

[THE SELLING OUT OF BURNING MAN](#)



A Project Slice

Equity and Positivity Through Art

by Steven Schaffner
Art Educator, Radiant Elementary, Iowa



This year is so ripe with writing material, it was hard to focus on the art for this article. I'll do my best. Back in January, I listened to the [Finding Fred](#) podcast while driving home from an ice fishing trip in northern Minnesota. It was dark outside, I was drifting, I cried (three times), and it kept me going. It's a show that "digs into the deep and simple language of Mister Rogers." It kept me going on that drive, and it elevated my spirit and kept me going strong as a teacher in the following months. I listened to the entire podcast again late this summer before school started, and I've been gliding ever since. It helped reaffirm my belief that kindness goes in front of everything I do, and kindness goes a very long way with students of all ages.

Mister Rogers has pretty much been my alter-ego throughout 2020, and he's even managed to work his way into some of my art lessons. Seems like a pretty good year for him to make a comeback. I developed a unit to kick off the school year for my third to fifth graders that would be a collaborative effort to lift the spirits of everyone in our community by expressing equity and/or positivity through art. It started with my students watching the "Life Advice of Mister Rogers" video on YouTube, and we wrote down positive words or phrases from the video in our sketchbooks. Many students ended up using those words or phrases in their art, but some of them invented their own.

We also watched a clip of the legendary episode where Mr. Rogers invited Officer Clemmons to share his pool (and towel), which was a statement about racial inequality during the 1960s and broke a well-known color barrier; in many communities across the country at that time, black people weren't allowed to swim in the same pool as white people. That led to some great discussions. The fact that the video is 51 years old and that 2020 showed us how racial inequalities are still a prevalent issue was not lost on us. We did turn and talks, and some whole group share-outs as well. However you do



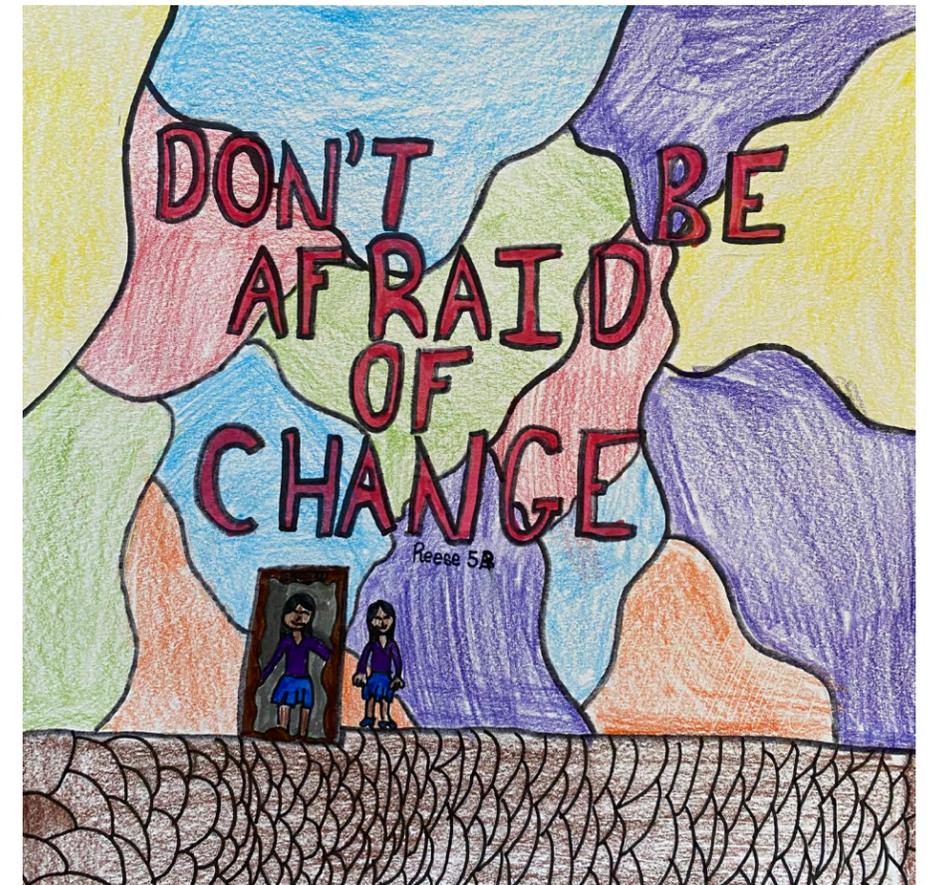
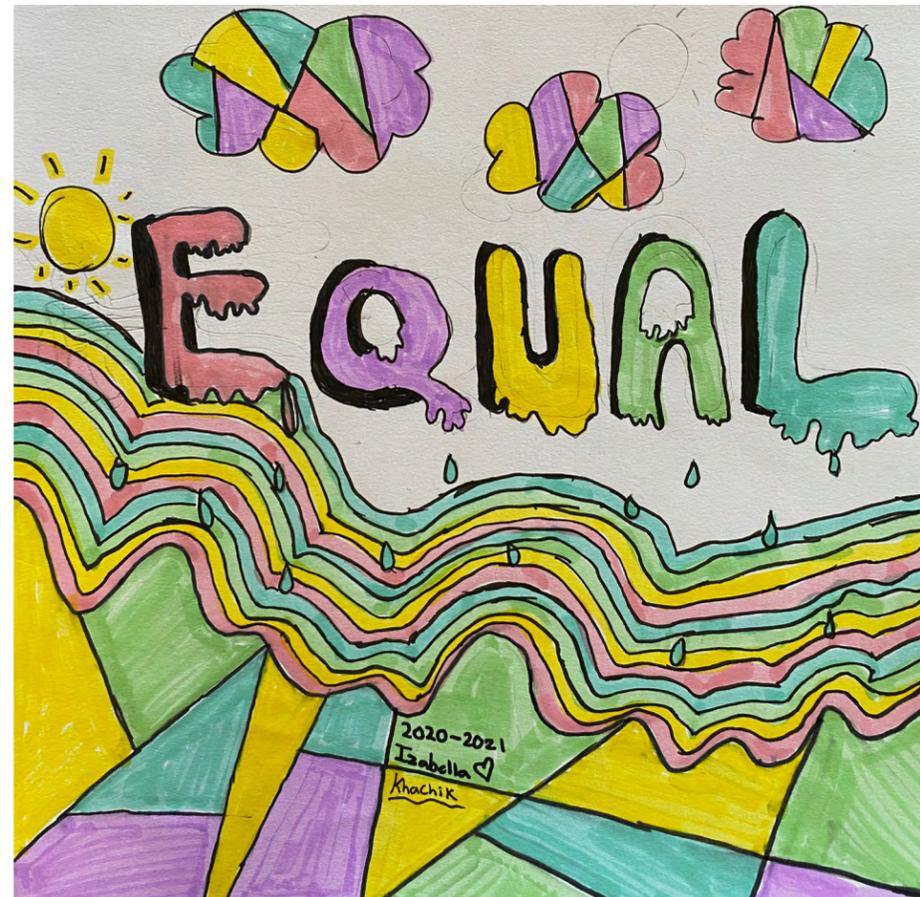
The Power of Girl mural by Lakwena Maciver (Girl Effect commission, London, 2014)

them, don't skip these conversations, and make sure your students' voices are being heard.

Next, we spent at least one class developing our skills with letter styles in our sketchbooks using some of those words and phrases. We observed and analyzed a variety of examples of letter styles, practiced basic block and bubble letters, and finally took some time to invent our own. Then, before we actually began sketches for a more complete design with an included background, we examined the work of Lakwena Maciver. She's a black female artist who's using her art as a powerful tool to communicate meaningful messages, which are all things we need more of in the art classroom. In one of her works, *The Power of Girl*, she seems to be making a statement about equity for women. Not only was it great to hear the students picking up on her message, but her work also helped us gain a better understanding of color choices and use of contrast.

In the end, circling back around to the community piece of our goal, I had my students help choose the location for a unified art display in the school. They selected a space front and center of the building, so their messages are the first thing you see when you get through the main entrance. There's a lot that can be said about how difficult this year has been for so many people, so I think it goes without saying that it felt appropriate and worthwhile to spend some time focusing on equity and nourishing our positive mindsets. Plus, I had this outside hope that the work would also lead to a better understanding of our identities, more acceptance of each other, and perhaps the practice of a little solidarity. If that's not enough of a conclusion, here's one last thing from Mr. Rogers – his three keys to success: be kind, be kind, and be kind.

Three Images of Student Artwork



RITUALS

by Anne Thulson
Associate Professor
of Art Education, MSU of Denver

When a swimmer is splashing in water, trying out a new stroke, the best learning happens. I love talking with my students while they splash around in their artmaking. I'm sure you can relate. We discuss ideas, look at criteria, challenge, negotiate, etc. The work is forming. Brain synapses are searching for new pathways and all parts are in motion.

I also love it when my students talk to one another about their work during this time. Sometimes it happens naturally and sometimes it needs facilitation. Recently, in my 2D Design class, I used this method to get students to talk about one another's work.

Students met in small groups in different parts of the room and in the hall and hung up their work.

Each student took a turn pulling a question out of a bag and then asking the question to address one of the artworks.

- If the artwork got in an argument with the artwork on its left, what would it be about and why?
- Turn this work upside down. What did the artist do to balance the right side of the picture with the left side? Turn it right side up and see if your answer changes.

- If this work did not have recognizable imagery, what would its colors and shapes communicate to you?
- What does this work have in common visually with the work on its right?
- If the artwork spent Saturday morning with the art on its left, what would they do? Why?
- What would this artwork have you believe about the world? Why?
- What attracts your eye first and foremost in this piece? What did the artist do to make this happen?
- If the artwork had a life of its own, apart from the artist, what hidden narrative might there be in this work? What makes you say so?
- What does the artwork assume about you, the viewer?
- If you took the color palette from this work and applied it to a meal, describe the food.
- This piece reminds me of _____ because _____.

- If this work was a human being, it would do _____ on its day off because _____.
- If this work worked for a political party, it would be _____ because _____.
- This work's favorite TV show, movie, or music is _____ because _____.
- How does the artist's manipulation of scale influence the meaning of the artwork?
- If the color palette was _____, it would change the meaning to be _____.
- If this work were stolen, who would steal it and why?

This kind of playful "critique" has been practiced in various forms over the years by many educators. Once you try out the prompts, you start to create new ones. Students can even create some of their own. Although the prompts seem silly, I have found that using them makes the conversations around the artwork a lot more interesting and a lot deeper.



Both Sides Now

Retirement and Beyond

by Jane Riggs

Student Teacher Supervisor and Retired Educator

During the last year of teaching in Jefferson County, I wondered how, after thirty-two years of carrying valuable materials into my classroom, I would carry the same “stuff” out the door. Most importantly, how was I to dispose of those old, tattered, overstuffed chairs where students congregated? The final decision was to leave it all at Wheat Ridge High School.

It was difficult on the last day to turn in my building keys to the principal’s secretary. She nearly had to pry them from my fingers. The first day of the following school year was hard. I sensed my identity was lost after three decades of teaching. These feelings are no doubt shared by others who love teaching and retire.

Before retiring, build a plan by considering your passions. Then take steps in that direction. Fortunately, I have retired art teacher friends whose paths have taken many routes. One returned to the Kansas City Art Institute for an intensive year of ceramics. Another became more involved with the Denver Art Museum’s education program. Others volunteered with organizations supporting the arts in the metropolitan area, resumed making art full time, tutored in their studios, and pursued other interests. No one slept in for months, cleaned every closet and cupboard, or exercised excessively.

My path led me to supervising MSU Denver Art Education students, a career I enjoy. Supervising enables me to continue to learn, work closely with a small number of students, meet excellent mentor teachers, and experience a wide range

of art programs while being supported by the tremendously talented people in MSU Denver Art Education program.

One primary responsibility is to guide and advise student teachers. The student teachers are observed numerous times during the semester, although now it is virtual. I engage with their mentor teachers by providing information and support. Together we ensure the student teacher has met the Colorado requirements for licensure.

When students enroll in the student teaching semester, they are well prepared, full of energy, and excited to put their learning into practice in an actual classroom. The most rewarding part of my job is to witness students’ growth over sixteen weeks. They learn classroom management and successful instructional practices; make student connections; and create professional relationships. One comment I frequently hear is “I’m exhausted.” To me, this means students are involved and learning.

Mentor teachers generously share the many aspects of their programs. Their ability to communicate their experiences and expertise provides the means for the student teachers to enter our field with confidence. Here is a plug: Be willing to accept a student teacher; you will benefit also.

Back to my last day of teaching and the beginning of retirement. The one item that accompanied me out the door was a large plant I had in my classroom for nearly all of my teaching career. My



father-in-law had given me a small plant named “Baby” which resided upon a heater that ran the entire length of the classroom. The plant now resides in my home.

My daughter states that the now very big plant will have to accompany me if I move to another house. My point being: Do not hesitate to value

your teaching joys and successes, the acquired friendships, the strong ties you made with your students, and the sense of accomplishment as a strong art educator. *Leave your keys and carry out your plant. You will continue to thrive.* ●

The Plot Thickens

The Impact of Research Workbooks on Assessment

by Amy Felder,
Artist-Teacher



Happy Trails, an Exhibition by Amy Felder at the Mariani Gallery

As a teacher, I know that it is important to assess my students to identify and address their diverse learning needs. Moreover, I need to be able to communicate with all stakeholders about what my students are learning. This is why I recently conducted an action research project in which I explored the effectiveness of research workbooks as an assessment tool of artistic growth in an elementary art classroom. My teacher evaluation is partially determined by student data from standardized tests in content areas I do not directly teach. So, I strive to advocate for my teacher

evaluations to be based entirely on data of student artistic growth. I also strive to provide my evaluator with a means to evaluate my teaching performance on data pertaining directly to my certificate-specific content area. To do so, I set out to discover how to systematically collect and analyze evidence of student learning in art.

Using a hybrid approach of action research and a/r/tography, I implemented research workbooks within my teaching and studio practices. I aimed to determine if research workbooks provided an

authentic assessment of not only students' artistic growth but also of my own artistic practice. I reviewed the evidence the research workbooks provided of my students' proficiency as well as my own artistic skill as described by the Colorado Academic Standards for the Visual Arts (VA CAS). In my opinion, the process of making art is as important as the product. I see assessment of students' creative processes as an evaluation of my own teacher effectiveness. Determining what students have or have not learned is the first step to improving my instruction and, as a result, increasing student achievement. Similarly, using self-assessment to identify strengths and areas where I need to improve is also the first step to improving my artistic practice and, as a result, growing as an artist.

In addition to my desire to improve, compliance with expectations for art educators in Colorado requires me to assess my students' proficiency as described by the VA CAS and to use data to drive instruction. I have found few examples on how to effectively identify and evaluate the data that will underlie instruction on artistic process. According to Goodwin (2015), "there is a need to identify ways that can help all art teachers use assessment to become an ally of instruction and learning" (p. 9). By implementing research workbooks as an assessment tool, I am not only deepening my own pedagogical skills but also providing other art teachers with an effective model of assessment. I chose to implement research workbooks because "the model promotes metacognition; it incorporates 'investigations' or activities that call attention to the kinds of thinking and learning that emerge through making art" (Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011, p. 12).

My expectation was for students to produce both written and visual entries in their research workbooks. I structured learning to help students develop their ideas and record them in their research workbooks. My goal was to collect data from the students' research workbooks, informal interviews, artwork, and self-assessments.

To support systematic data collection, I developed two one-point rubrics. One of the rubrics has VA CAS listed as the performance levels. I used this

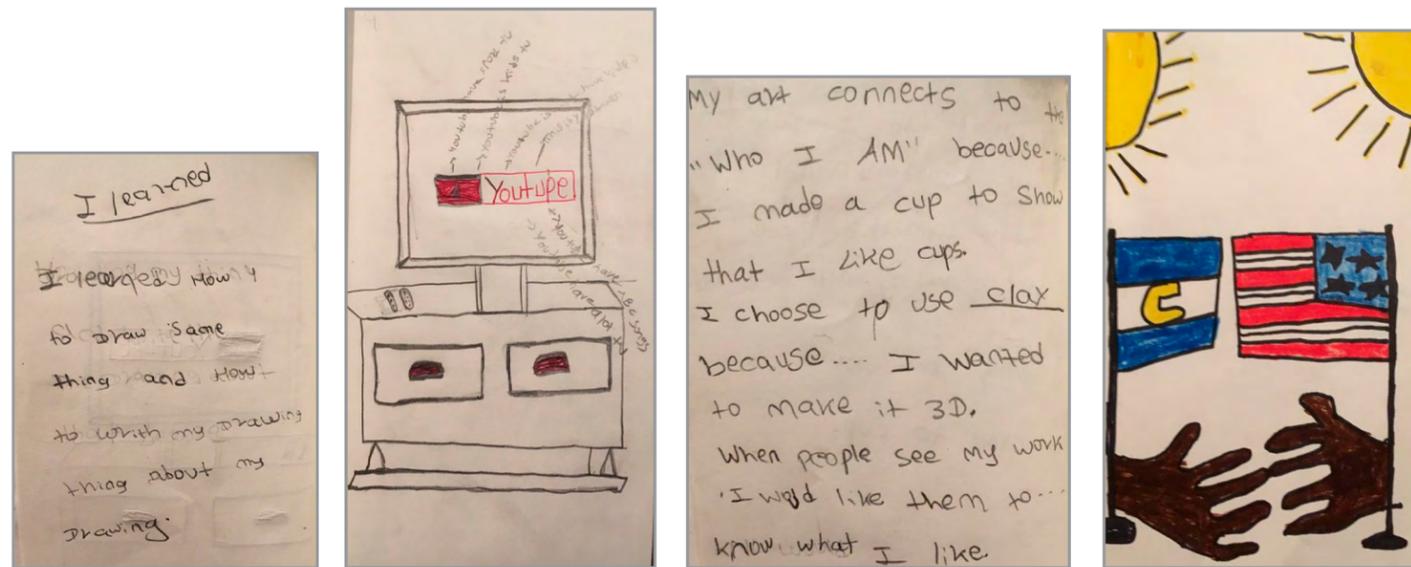
performance-level rubric to assess the students' research workbooks for evidence of their proficiency with the standards. The second rubric has the VA CAS performance levels written in student-friendly language. The students used this student-friendly rubric to self-assess their research workbook.

Another goal was to involve students in the assessment process. Students need to be taught how to assess their own work "because when they are out of school there will be no teacher around to do it for them" (Eisner, 2002, p. 195). Thus, being able to assess one's own work is a life skill. Teaching students how to self-assess and talk about their art gives students a voice in the assessment process and empowers them to take ownership of their learning.

I also chose to complete a research workbook myself as a model for my students, as a vehicle for understanding a student's process, and as a method of self-assessment. I am a firm believer that I should practice what I teach. If I want my students to become lifelong learners, then I need to exemplify what a life dedicated to learning looks like. My teaching philosophy agrees wholeheartedly with a quote attributed to William Butler Yeats: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire" (Moore, 2010, para. 1). I want to ignite within my students a passion for art and learning by sharing my own love of art and learning.

I recruited participants for this study from a single class consisting of 26 students in fourth grade. This class met every three school days for 50 minutes. Prior to this study, as part of my normal classroom practice, I instructed students on using their research workbooks for answering questions, brainstorming ideas, drawing concept maps, creating art, conducting research, making observations, and writing reflections. Over the course of 19 weeks, seven of the nine students demonstrated artistic growth as measured by the one-point rubrics.

After collecting data from the first unit, I made changes to the second unit to target the standards I was yet to see evidenced in student work. These changes positively impacted learning as evidenced by the increase in the number of standards I found



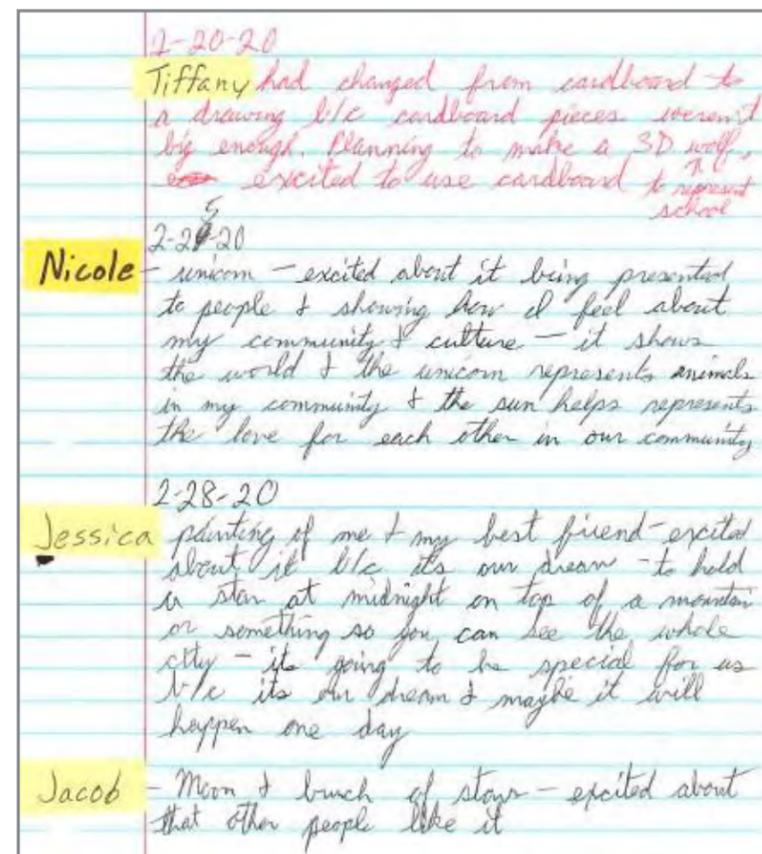
Sample 6: Pages from Felicia's Research Workbook Continued



More Sample Pages from Student Workbooks

order to create a comprehensive picture of the student's growth over time. That is why I chose to

engage students in the assessment process through interviews (Sample #7) and self-assessments.



Sample 7: Teacher Notes from Informal Interviews with Students

I believe that research workbooks used in conjunction with other assessment methods could be an effective tool to assess students' proficiency. My next step is to develop a checklist, which I can use to check off any time a student demonstrates proficiency. This way assessment is not limited just to interviews, research workbooks, and self-assessments but also includes other class activities such as art critiques and studio times.

While research workbooks may not be an adequate way to measure student learning on their own, they led to some unexpected findings. As an artist-teacher modeling the research workbook, I engaged in personal artmaking, showed work in multiple exhibitions including a solo show, and renewed my passion for art and teaching. I improved my teaching practice by developing inquiry-based units, systematically collecting and analyzing data, and creating a community of artists in my school.



Amy Felder's Research Workbook

I will continue to ask: What are students learning? Are they making progress? What is the evidence? Who is not learning and why? To remain current, I am always acquiring new teaching strategies and assessment practices. By engaging in lifelong learning, I am modeling to students the very passion for learning that I seek to inspire in them. My strong commitment to learning inspires my students to become lifelong learners themselves.

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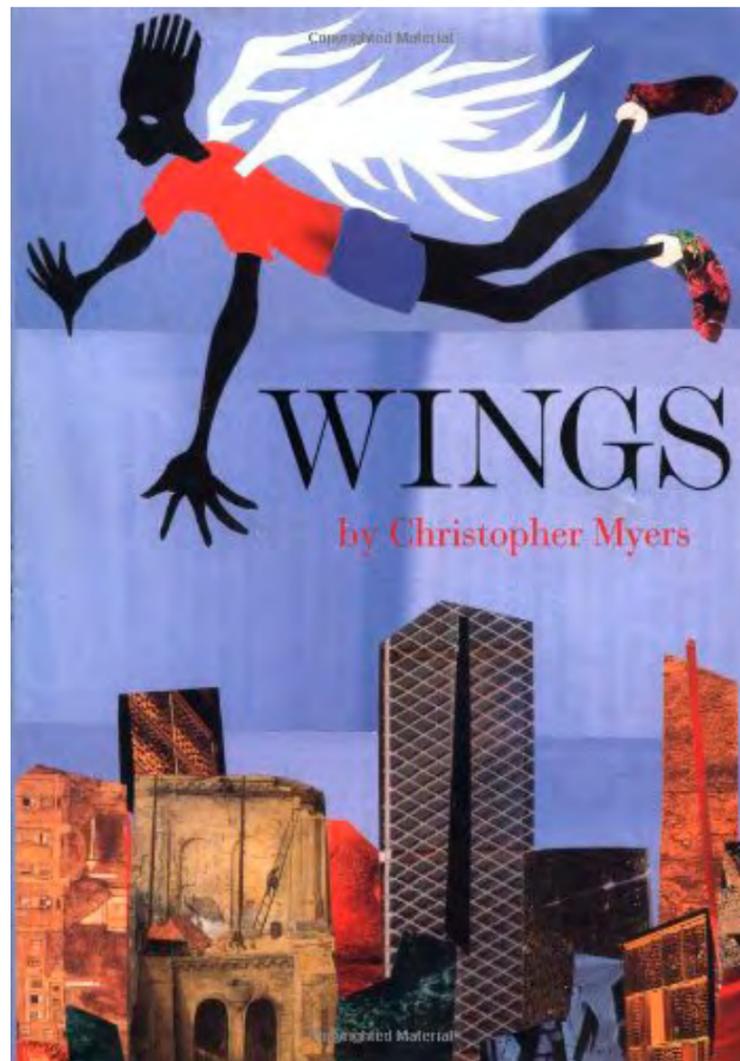
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Book Review

Review of Picture Book *Wings* by Christopher Myers

by Dr. Amy Sonheim
Professor of English, Language, and Literature
Ouachita Baptist University



Through cut-paper collage, color, and design, Christopher Myers's picture book *Wings* (Scholastic, 2000) recasts the Icarus myth with a twist. Resetting the action in Harlem and renaming his hero Ikarus Jackson, Myers tells a new-kid-on-the-block story by giving Ikarus a pair of you-don't-look-like-you're-from-around-here wings. The lightning-white wings being on his black shoulders, the onus to belong seems to be on Ikarus.

Myers's pictures tell another story.

From page one, readers observe that whether or not Ikarus can belong to the neighborhood is controlled by his classmates' perception. Myers references this perception by detailing the eyes in twenty-four out of the twenty-five pictures of human silhouettes. Myers aligns his readers' perception with that of the story's narrator. In the opening collage, the narrator, a nameless girl in a bun, is the *only character—other than Ikarus—given eyes*. The other characters judge Ikarus as a freak, blindly pointing straight up and saying, "Look at that strange boy!" Because the narrator's eyes are opened from the start, she counters her peers' initial judgment with her concluding one on page thirty-seven, "Look at that amazing boy!"

By design, Myers places Ikarus on a higher plane than his neighbors and classmates. Ikarus glides in the top third of the frame. He, however, is not unflappable. When the criticism of others brings him down, Myers, too, lowers him on the page. While the student body looks him over, eye-to-eye with the new kid, Myers mythologizes the monstrosity of their gaze with a five-headed Hydra,

bordered by a notebook spiral, suggestive of penal razor wire. After the teacher expels Ikarus from geography class because, when he sits at the level of his peers, his wings block their view, we watch Ikarus rise back up as soon as he is freed to recess. Near the basketball court, as his classmates deride his wings, Myers inverts the classmates over Ikarus so that he sinks beneath them, falling into hot red and burning gold.

The likable narrator is cut from this same fiery gold. Unlike the heat in the Greek myth, it is the narrator's warmth that enables Ikarus to soar. If your students pay attention, they will see that Myers slowly cuts her stance, drawing through color like Matisse, to more and more resemble the figure cut by Ikarus. In early portraits, the narrator's arms rest solidly against her frame. In final portraits, when she shouts up to Ikarus, "Your flying is beautiful," her fingers fan out as the hands and wings of Ikarus. Then, Ikarus smiles. At that point, though she is grounded and he airborne, the narrator most resembles Ikarus: her arms and hands flame out, mirroring the spikes and arches of his wings.

Myers's art repositions the responsibility of Ikarus's belonging from "the fly boy" to that of his neighbors: Ikarus's freely being himself depends on his neighbors' being able to *see*—an apt story for young artists to discover. ●

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO COLLAGE MAGAZINE



Hi Artist-Teachers,

I am the new editor of Collage magazine and I am seeking submissions for short columns and one longer column on the themes listed below.

Submissions are due:

March 1, 2021 for the Spring issue
August 1, 2021 for the Fall issue
November 1, 2021 for the Winter issue

Please email me at afelder@unioncolonyschools.org.

Thanks!

Amy Felder, Editor of Collage Magazine

SHORT COLUMNS (500 words or less and a photo or two)

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER What are you investigating?

BALANCING ACT What are you doing to balance yourself as a person/artist/teacher?

ARTIST ON MY MIND What artist/artwork has inspired you this year? (We'll need the artist's permission to show an image.)

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS What podcast/YouTube/techy-tool has inspired you this year?

A PROJECT SLICE Share a lesson plan from your practice that generated creative thinking in your students.

IDEATION WORKOUT Describe an idea-building exercise you have used with your students.

THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE Share something physical from your classroom that improved students' access, autonomy, collaboration, engagement, or craft. For example, a new way you organized tools, a table configuration, a gathering place, or a technology set-up.

RITUALS Share a ritual or protocol from your classroom that humanizes classroom culture. For example, table names, buddy critiques, conversation protocols, clean-up songs, etc.

DO-OVER What aspects of your practice are you going to revise next time?

SHOW AND TELL How do you share your students' thinking with the broader community? (Analog and/or digital?)

BOTH SIDES NOW A column from the point of view of a new teacher or a retired teacher.

Pre-service/first-year teachers: What are you thinking about your first experience of teaching/your future career?
Retiring educators, veteran teachers: What are you up to? How does your previous life as an art teacher affect what you are doing now?

COMMUNITY PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT A column from the point of view of art institutions outside of traditional schools: What's happening in your space that connects to K-12 art classrooms?

ACCESS FOR ALL What are you doing to help all people access opportunities for thinking, making, and sharing creative work? This is Kelley DeCleene's column. Contact Kelley via afelder@unioncolonyschools.org if you would like to write for this column.

LONGER COLUMN (500 - 2,000 words with many images)

THE PLOT THICKENS Share and explain documentation of student process through a long project.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions of text should be emailed as Word documents. Submitted items may be edited for clarity, length, and format. For articles and references, please follow the APA Style guidelines set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*.

If possible, please accompany your article with photographs of student work or students at work. Images should be in .jpg format and sent as separate attachments. If you include images within a Word document, please also attach the images in .jpg format. Refer to the attachment and the file name in the body of the email. Whenever possible, include captions and, in the case of photos of original student or teacher artwork, include names of artists.

Please secure permissions from artists and/or students before submitting photographs of them and their work. Ideal images are at least 4 x 6" at 300 ppi (pixels per inch). For an image to be considered for our cover, submit an image that is at least 9 x 12" at 300 ppi.

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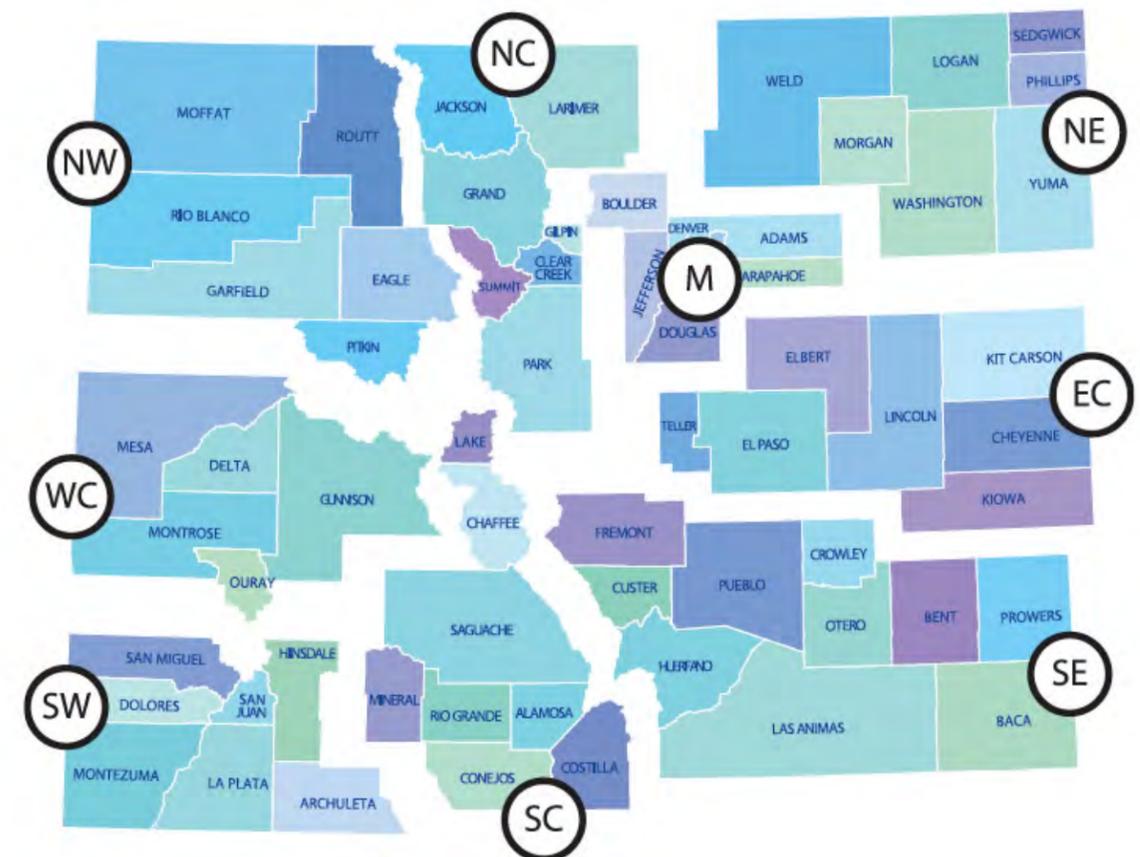
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