

EXTRAORDINARY EXPRESSIONS OF TRUST AND VULNERABILITY: AN ARTS-
INFORMED TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNEY THROUGH BLENDED LANDSCAPES OF
ART EDUCATION AND ART THERAPY

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Acknowledgments

Research is not a solitary pursuit and I am thankful to so many people whom I like to call my tribe. This tribe is an encouraging and understanding community who have supported me in all aspects of my life, but particularly during this journey. These are people I am grateful to share the Earth with. I am a woman. Specifically, a queer woman and these two parts of my identity cannot be separated. My tribe and I stand together on behalf of fierce, fearless, and faithful ancestors who have set the standard for us as [her]story makers, trailblazers, game changers, and so much more. We share a history of resilience and tenacity, bound by a language that sometimes only we understand, an unspoken dialect among sisters and friends. For years, I thought I could go through life without the help of others, but that is untrue. I am not afraid now to admit I need help sometimes. My tribe is everything, and I only hope to give that love and compassion back to them and spread it to others.

I want to first thank my friends and peers who bravely supported me, believed in me, trusted me, and volunteered to collaborate with me and be part of this study. Never have I found such a diverse and accepting group of people. I came here from a place where I had to hide who I was. They have helped me recover and integrate my identities as queer, woman, artist, researcher, and teacher. This tribe is my piece of the universe working in excellence together to contribute to the greater whole. Rebecca, Jean, Alexis, and so many others, thank you.

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Preface



FIGURE 1. COLLAGE BY RESEARCHER

Memories of my childhood moved me toward work with the underserved, the misrepresented, and the disenfranchised. As a youth growing up in a mercurial household in the woods of a midwestern countryside, I began using art to express myself. Many times, I ran from an unpredictable environment to embrace the predictability of nature. I would make my way through the woods to sit on my favorite rock to draw and paint, communicating my feelings in creative silence to the Earth while the ground, trees, and water listened to me. For me, nature was the door to my creative voice. I could not speak or survive without it. I continued to express myself through art because it felt calm and healing, and my only safe outlet. It was the form of expression through which I felt heard. Memories of the restorative properties of art making, the trees and water often my only friends, followed me and guided my artistic, research, and teaching journey.

Growing up this way helped me become a teacher who sees my students as people with feelings who may also have experienced trauma. It mattered to me that students recognized connections between the outside world, self, and classroom lessons. I came to believe expressive creative activity could address the needs of those who have experienced trauma; and we must assume everyone, in and out of our classrooms, have experienced trauma in one form or another (Brown, 2015). I began to develop a particular philosophy of empathy and care as a high school art teacher and now as an instructor in a university art education program. I have worked and made art with children in homeless shelters, high school students in connection with adults who experience abuse, alcoholism, and homelessness, and adolescents who are waiting to be tried as adults in a county jail. I volunteer in an art therapy classroom at a small midwestern psychiatric hospital that serves children, adolescents, and adults who have experienced trauma of some kind. I began to wonder where their path to psychiatric wards, county jails and prison, homeless shelters and community centers began. All, and others like them, at one time or another, spent much of their day in K-12 classrooms, perhaps even our own. I wondered further if art could help these young people in the way I believe it helped me.

As a natural progression of these questions, I first explored the practice of an art therapist. What do art therapists do? How was this therapist's practice like or different from the work of an art educator? Ultimately, this therapist and a graduate student knowledgeable about both art education and art therapy collaborated with me to re-imagine a curriculum that interlaced art education and art therapy. I was then able to explore the experiences of seventeen graduate students and educators as they participated in that curriculum, organized as six studio art workshops that blended tenets of these art disciplines. In essence, this research draws from intersections of art education and art therapy with the intent to blur existing borders, challenging

the traditional art education curriculum to open space for something new.

Although art therapy, utilizes art to address issues of mental health and trauma faced by today's youth, tenets of art therapy are not evident in art education standards or classroom practice. This is problematic because, while educators are not therapists, the field of art therapy holds potential for understanding ways art educators might address rising mental health issues among students and may foster an environment of care for the whole student. As such, this qualitative arts-informed transdisciplinary study focused on the lived experience of these participants and is inspired by existential phenomenological, ethnographic, and arts-informed methodological work, through art making, that integrally connects the notion of artist/researcher/teacher in ways that cannot be untangled.

I want, as I always have in my professional and personal life, to claim space as a visual artist/researcher/teacher. Therefore, art, in its most holistic form, is at the heart of this investigation and may provide new understandings and innovative implications for practice in art education. Findings addressed themes grounded in a reconceptualization of the art teacher's role to establish a safe haven of trust for vulnerability and risk taking, valuing process over product to foster a space of contribution and sharing, and ways that reflective art making may provide self-care and restoration.

More broadly this work aims to contribute to the current body of knowledge and understanding of a complicated topic that resides in art therapy and art education. This perspective is not meant to inspire educators to inappropriately act as art therapists but will simply emphasize that the art educator may purposefully facilitate learners, through a therapeutic art education model, to better access affect and open a safe creative place to be vulnerable through which students might discover their own internal creative agency.

Linda J. Helmick

Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability:

An arts-informed journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

The purpose of this qualitative transdisciplinary arts-based inquiry was to first, explore, through participant/observation, the practice of a contemporary art therapist, with the intention to construct six studio art workshops that blended purposes and values of the field of art education with tenets of art therapy. Second, I wanted to understand ways that a group of university graduate-level education students and educators experience and respond to this blended curriculum. I sought to understand if and why such a curriculum might be perceived by the participants as restorative or therapeutic as well as holding implications for education.

Although, art therapy, utilizes art to address issues of mental health and trauma faced by today's youth, tenets of art therapy are not evident in art education standards or classroom practice. This is problematic because, while educators are not therapists, the field of art therapy holds potential for understanding ways art educators might address rising mental health issues among students and may foster an environment of care for the whole student in the classroom. As such, this qualitative transdisciplinary study focuses on the interpretation of human experience by employing existential phenomenological, ethnographic, and specifically arts-informed methodological work.

Findings addressed the value of the teacher's role to establish trust for vulnerability and risk taking, utilizing process over product to foster a space of collaboration and sharing rather than competition, and ways reflective self-expressive art making may provide self-care and restoration. This perspective is not meant to inspire educators to inappropriately act as art therapists but will simply emphasize that the art educator may purposefully facilitate learners,

through a therapeutic art education model, to better access affect and may open a safe creative place to be vulnerable through which they might discover their own internal creative agency toward restoration and self-care.

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Chapter One: Introduction

My role as teacher

My background acted as an incentive for this study pushing me to deliberately seek ways to overcome institutional constraints and implement multiple opportunities for my students and me to make meaning for ourselves through a more therapeutic reconceptualization of art education and the role of the art teacher. I view my role as a teacher as one to provide support, leadership, and guidance while also encouraging invention, exploratory activity, and personal expression through meaningful learning experiences. I do not want my students to feel abandoned as I did, and I do not want a tightly controlled curriculum to extinguish the fire of students' ideas or dishonor them as people with feelings. Making and sharing art in a classroom setting can be an experience that promotes vulnerability (Wilcox, 2017), and Brown (2006) suggested that creating a safe space in the art classroom for risk taking through acts of vulnerability could enable students to develop a stronger sense of self. Wilcox (2017) wrote "that psychological safety encourages courageous vulnerability, enables creative risks, and minimizes shame" (p. 11) and Brown (2018) added, "What I know from the research is that we should never underestimate the benefit to a child of having a place to belong...It can and often does change the trajectory of their life" (p. 13).

During this investigation, I was moved by the vulnerability and trust of artists and non-artists alike who committed to acts of art making as participants and through their creative lens, engaged in reflective dialogue about themselves as well as in community with each other. Green (1995) argued that artwork and art making as representation for research and critical thinking can be perceived as ideas that are reflectively addressed and communicated through creative activity. In this study creative acts developed from introspection and critical thinking as an ability or

vehicle to say what could not be said any other way (Eisner, 1994).

My role as artist/researcher

As a queer, white artist/researcher/teacher I work toward being mindfully creative, resourceful, and inclusive. My visual practice and my awareness of the space I inhabit in the world deepens the path I walk and enriches my writing in meaningful and diverse ways. I view arts-informed methods as active processes of engaging in research that honors both art making and textual expression (Springgay, Irwin, Kind, 2005) in a manner that I can wear comfortably. They honor both process and product. These methods bridge the liminal space between the processes of research and of art making, facilitating my search for understanding. Viewing the analysis process as continuous, one that strives for understanding and empathy through the generation of questions in lieu of solutions, an a/r/tographer moves across the space amid being an artist, a researcher, and a teacher, and embraces the complexity of being all of those (Springgay, et al. 2008).

Naming myself an a/r/tographer, I purposefully blur the boundaries between writing and art making, moving between visual and written approaches, because I find that one compliments the other. I cannot untangle being an artist from the acts of teaching and research. The visual process is how I, and others, make sense of things. Offering research in this way, especially in art education, becomes an inclusive trustworthy process that mirrors multiple ways of knowing.

And finally, academia and academic writing are structured to privilege textual modes of communication. I hope to offer a more painterly path. I will try instead to provide an imaginary intersection where we can meet and experience the exceptional creativity this research offers through the visual products of these participants, in addition to the linear structure the written word provides. In utilizing multiple modes of communication, the sequential nature of writing

and the rhizomic connections images can make, I seek to offer the reader openings to a deeper understanding of this work.

Purpose

The overarching purpose of this study was to explore intersections of art therapy and art education in order to seek ways for art educators to build curriculum and support systems for students who are whole and feeling people. I went about this exploration by observing the practice of a contemporary art therapist, collaborating with him and a graduate student, to devise six studio art workshops that blended purposes and values of the field of art education with tenets of art therapy. I invited a set of higher educators, faculty, and students to engage with the curriculum. I sought to understand if and why such a curriculum might be perceived by the participants as restorative or therapeutic as well as holding implications for education. This study used arts-informed methods to analyze, reconstruct, and represent findings but also to generate questions around the affective realm of art in education.

Problem and rationale

Statistics show that many of our youth are in trouble. Adolescents in the United States face significant mental health issues, particularly those with identified and unidentified trauma, depression, homicidal ideation, and suicidal ideation. Further, suicide is a national mental health issue that takes a toll on our society, health systems, communities, schools, and families (Crosby, Ortega, & Melanson, 2011; Rubin, 2013). The following chart (Figure 2), published by the Center for Disease Control in 2015, demonstrates that suicide is the second leading cause of death in 10 to 34-year-olds.

10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States - 2015

| Rank | <1 | 1-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1 | Congenital Anomalies 4,825 | Unintentional Injury 1,235 | Unintentional Injury 755 | Unintentional Injury 763 | Unintentional Injury 12,514 | Unintentional Injury 19,795 | Unintentional Injury 17,818 | Malignant Neoplasms 43,054 | Malignant Neoplasms 116,122 | Heart Disease 507,138 | Heart Disease 633,842 |
| 2 | Short Gestation 4,084 | Congenital Anomalies 435 | Malignant Neoplasms 437 | Malignant Neoplasms 428 | Suicide 5,491 | Suicide 6,947 | Malignant Neoplasms 10,909 | Heart Disease 34,248 | Heart Disease 76,872 | Malignant Neoplasms 419,389 | Malignant Neoplasms 595,930 |
| 3 | SIDS 1,568 | Homicide 369 | Congenital Anomalies 181 | Suicide 409 | Homicide 4,733 | Homicide 4,863 | Heart Disease 10,387 | Unintentional Injury 21,499 | Unintentional Injury 19,488 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 131,804 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 155,041 |
| 4 | Maternal Pregnancy Comp. 1,522 | Malignant Neoplasms 354 | Homicide 140 | Homicide 158 | Malignant Neoplasms 1,469 | Malignant Neoplasms 3,704 | Suicide 6,936 | Liver Disease 8,874 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 17,457 | Cerebro-vascular 120,156 | Unintentional Injury 146,571 |
| 5 | Unintentional Injury 1,291 | Heart Disease 147 | Heart Disease 85 | Congenital Anomalies 156 | Heart Disease 997 | Heart Disease 3,522 | Homicide 2,895 | Suicide 8,751 | Diabetes Mellitus 14,166 | Alzheimer's Disease 109,495 | Cerebro-vascular 140,323 |
| 6 | Placenta Cord. Membranes 910 | Influenza & Pneumonia 88 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 80 | Heart Disease 125 | Congenital Anomalies 386 | Liver Disease 844 | Liver Disease 2,861 | Diabetes Mellitus 6,212 | Liver Disease 13,278 | Diabetes Mellitus 56,142 | Alzheimer's Disease 110,561 |
| 7 | Bacterial Sepsis 599 | Septicemia 54 | Influenza & Pneumonia 44 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 93 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 202 | Diabetes Mellitus 798 | Diabetes Mellitus 1,986 | Cerebro-vascular 5,307 | Cerebro-vascular 12,116 | Unintentional Injury 51,395 | Diabetes Mellitus 79,535 |
| 8 | Respiratory Distress 462 | Perinatal Period 50 | Cerebro-vascular 42 | Cerebro-vascular 42 | Diabetes Mellitus 196 | Cerebro-vascular 567 | Cerebro-vascular 1,788 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 4,345 | Suicide 7,739 | Influenza & Pneumonia 48,774 | Influenza & Pneumonia 57,062 |
| 9 | Circulatory System Disease 428 | Cerebro-vascular 42 | Benign Neoplasms 39 | Influenza & Pneumonia 39 | Influenza & Pneumonia 184 | HIV 529 | HIV 1,055 | Septicemia 2,542 | Septicemia 5,774 | Nephritis 41,258 | Nephritis 49,959 |
| 10 | Neonatal Hemorrhage 406 | Chronic Low Respiratory Disease 40 | Septicemia 31 | Two Tied: Benign Neo./Septicemia 33 | Cerebro-vascular 166 | Congenital Anomalies 443 | Septicemia 829 | Nephritis 2,124 | Nephritis 5,452 | Septicemia 30,817 | Suicide 44,193 |

Data Source: National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC.
Produced by: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC using WISQARS™.



FIGURE 2. CHART OF LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH BY AGE GROUP, 2015

Although art therapy is a respected field of study that utilizes expressive qualities of art to address, explore, and navigate a range of mental health issues, these values are not evident in art education standards or easily available in classrooms. Art therapy has a strong history in art education (Kramer, 1980) but as each field struggled to carve out a niche of their own, a divide occurred. Regrettably "Rarely in the literature of art education are new teachers aware of art therapy techniques, since few programs include art therapy in their curriculum" (Alter-Muri, 2017, p. 20). Instead, art educators are often pushed to advocate for creative activity by emphasizing cognitive skills, production of products, quantifiable concepts, and technical processes thus downplaying the emotional, individual, and heartfelt expressive nature of the arts.

This problem is compounded by recent budget cuts to reduce or completely cut arts

programs across the United States (Rolling, 2017). Implications of a decline in arts-based programs mean that too little can be understood about the value of creative interventions with our youth. I hope to contribute by engaging in research on the affective significance of arts-based programs and provide a linking bridge between art education and art therapy. Authors Barone (2008), Carroll (2006), Eisner (2002), and Greene (2001) have argued that creative activity has value and could make positive contributions toward the minds, spirits, and imaginations of all individuals both in and out of the classroom. Opportunities with the arts can offer the freedom to think creatively and imagine the world as if it could be different (Greene, 1995).

Thus, to investigate participants' experiences and perspectives about the use of artmaking to promote reflection and therapeutic resolution, I have situated this study at the juncture of two art disciplines: art education and art therapy. I responded to these discourses by bridging this divide and initiating questions of how or whether strategies from art therapy are perceived to target or enhance issues of self-care and restoration. The act of studying how these participants experience and perceive these pedagogies has the potential to shed light on their usefulness for art education practice and broaden current approaches to art education. This is needed today because we are faced with a growing number of youth who have experienced trauma of some kind and who have unique and diverse emotional needs (Albert, 2010; Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000) and our teachers may not be fully prepared.

In my former high school teaching experience, many students walked into my classroom exhibiting adversity/pain-based behaviors and trauma and sought out art class for much the same reason I did. Emotional survival. Thus, it was always my concern that, in keeping with contemporary compulsory education, I had to overlook possible restorative purposes of the arts. I felt I was failing to intentionally bring this aspect of the arts to the classroom, because, according

to current opinion, it fell outside the scope of the art educators' concerns in today's educational system. Our schools progressively endorse the importance of word-based modalities, requiring children to express themselves in writing as they progress through the grades. Art making to communicate is discouraged or marginalized (Gardner, 1989). In academia, text is valued overwhelmingly above imagery, insisting that we think and produce in linguistics. Defying these boundaries to stay true to my authentic voice and invite my audience in, I am inspired by Thomas Barone, Maxine Greene, and others who advocate for the multiple voices of the arts in research, to present my research in visual form. I feel that I must offer work in a form that is easy to enter and understandable in multiple ways as traditional research is often exclusionary, comprehensible to only those in a similar field. The message of exclusion negates the purpose of this dissertation, which is to build bridges through transdisciplinary concepts.

Research questions

My work at a small midwestern psychiatric hospital as participant/observer of an art therapist and his work with adolescents, six workshops with university graduate education students and educators that explore self-expressive art strategies that blend art education with art therapy, and my analysis of participants experiences through expressive portraiture are methods through which I gathered data around my purpose and to inform these research questions:

- How does an art therapist enact, perceive, and experience his art therapeutic practice with adolescents in the context of a small Midwestern psychiatric hospital?
- What is the nature of a collaborative process, between an art educator and an art therapist, to design a curriculum that blends the tenets and practices of both fields?

- What is the nature of blended art education/art therapeutic strategies in this context?
- How do these educators perceive their experience in these workshops with each other, and with expressive art making processes and materials that blend art therapeutic strategies with art education in this context?
- What were these participants perspectives on this curriculum as a means of promoting therapeutic or restorative, insights about personal issues?
- What conversations for education open because of this research?
- How do these educators view implications for future related fields of study?

I addressed some questions through data collected from my experience as a participant/observer with a specific contemporary art therapist in their practice with adolescents. I explored others through a series of studio art workshops, in collaboration with university graduate education students and educators, in which we explored art education with applications of therapeutic art strategies. Data gathering focused on the multiple affects the art therapist perceived in their work and the multiple expressions of emotion the educators and I experienced and described as we explored expressive art making processes that blended art education with art therapeutic strategies.

Contribution to education

In this research, I desired to foster the affective nature of artistic creativity through the exploration of intersections of art education and art therapy for the purpose of uncovering methods that may benefit art teachers in contemporary and relevant ways. This study was and continues to be an act of discovery to find out if a reimagining of therapeutic art methods in an art education setting could change these participants' view of the world or show increase in

restorative or self-care through art making.

Andrus (2006) described a philosophy of therapeutic art education that enables teachers to access and facilitate therapeutic ends in art making, with students at the center. This concept gave me a more holistic view of art education. Thus, I hope this research will contribute to the literature by providing a bridge between art education and art therapy, making art therapeutic strategies more accessible to students in need and more acceptable in the system of education. Greater opportunities with blended models of the arts could make a positive contribution in education because there is a greater need today for teachers who are trained to meet students where they are, cognitively and emotionally, and who can work with vulnerable and diverse populations of students.

Reading this work

Making art is how I make sense of the world. As such, I turned to the arts not only in experience and data collection but also in analysis and representation of findings. It is important to me that this work provides multiple points of access for those who might benefit from the reading and experiencing of it. To do this I positioned myself subjectively as artist/researcher/teacher to provide a flexible and integrated framework from which to explore. I hope the reader experiences this as a relational process, a dialogue that invites a participatory conversation from both sides.

Definition of terms

In this section, I describe terms used often in this dissertation but may have different meanings or be ambiguous according to context. I offer these definitions to help focus and orient the reader to terms that may have one meaning within the framework of art education and another in art therapy. Therefore, I seek to clarify the way I used these terms in this research for

the reader.

There will also be terms used in this document the reader may not be familiar with or terms that I might use in a unique way for purposes of this research. I will utilize footnotes to provide a deeper explanation of these terms when they are first encountered.

Trust. According to longitudinal research in 400 Chicago elementary schools by Bryk and Schneider (2003), schools that demonstrated or valued high levels of social trust were likely to show or make changes toward improving student achievement and success. These researchers assessed trust by looking at ways the school's staff and faculty lived these concepts. Which is to say, they viewed trust as an action verb: respect for others, demonstrating competence and believing that others are competent, having high levels of personal regard for others, and living with integrity. My research also defined trust as an action a teacher must take to establish a safe haven in the classroom. Trust was a reciprocal action that each member of the group/class had to take in order to move toward giving respect, having feelings of competence, and showing positive regard for each other and for themselves. Building a relationship of trust allowed participants to feel safe enough to be vulnerable and take risks they might otherwise be unable to take.

Vulnerability. When vulnerability emerged in the data, I utilized Brené Brown's (2012) definition from the literature review. She defined vulnerability as a sign of courage and a willingness to take emotional and creative risks when outcomes are unknown and it is "the core, the heart, the center of meaningful human experiences" (Brown, 2012, p. 12). Being vulnerable is not about eliminating all possible risks but opening a space for true engagement despite the possibility that you might fail. This was meaningful because I asked participants to express themselves in their creative work, which often came from an emotional place. That meant

leaving themselves open to being seen and possibly experiencing criticism or judgement.

Vulnerability in the art education classroom can mean that teachers must create a space of trust where all students can walk in and for that day or that hour, allow themselves to be seen and heard.

Risk taking. In this study, reviewing and observing art as therapy, inspired my concept of creating a safe therapeutic environment in the classroom, with a trusted facilitator, to make space for risk taking. For us, this meant valuing process over product to make room for failure. When students/participants could be focused on processes without worry of a final product, it was easier to let go of the notion of perfectionism which made room for creativity and growth. Risk taking in the classroom could mean making space for students to take responsible risks and providing opportunities to fail. Risk taking in a math class, for example, could mean being willing to attempt difficult problems, to reason about and try to solve them even though you don't know how before you start. And then sharing your ideas with others even if you are not sure they are right. If we protect students from possible failure, we also deny them the opportunity to take risks, be resilient, and persevere.

Self-expression. Art therapy researchers Malchiodi (2012) and King (2016) explained that expressive arts therapy is grounded in the notion that creative self-expression enables the reconnection of implicit and explicit trauma-based memories without privileging language. For example, during expressive art therapy, rather than using language to explain an image you created, a therapist might ask you to re-present it in another art form. The expressive therapist works under the premise that "an integrative approach may bring increased understanding and a deeper experience because you use a variety of sensory methods of self-expression for personal exploration" (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 232).

In this research, each project combined learning new techniques with self-expression allowing the art making space to be introspective and therapeutic. We began to think of self-expressive art making as a language through which we could express feelings and thoughts we could not find words for. A standardized art education curriculum could repress self-expression and self-discovery, and may lead to exclusion, disinterest, insecurity, repetition, imposed curriculums, dictatorial teaching practices, fear of failure, unimaginativeness, and insensitivity (Lowenfeld, 1957).

Reflection. In the current national visual art standards, reflection in the classroom means to participate in a critique, then reflect with purposes to revise and refine artworks in response to personal and peer feedback and critique (<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org>). In expressive arts therapy, reflection occurs in a setting of support and care to safely experience and express emotions. When the arts are used for healing it is beneficial to not be concerned about the aesthetics of the art. The art making is used to express, to release, and to gain insight by looking at the meaning behind what was made and why it was made. In this way, art speaks back to us and brings deeper understanding when we take time to listen. In this research, we used reflection to express thoughts and feelings about what we made and why we made it. We did not focus on the aesthetic qualities of the work.

Organization of the remaining document

So far, I have introduced the reader to the researcher and the research study. I have defined the purpose, proposed the problem, addressed my rationale, and disclosed multiple research questions. I discussed this study's possible contributions to education, specifically art education, and eluded to the findings. This chapter provides the impetus for the creative work I consider this document to be. Writing, for me, is similar in process to painting and I hope that is

reflected in these chapters. I finalized this chapter by providing a guide to reading the work and an outline of the rest of this dissertation.

In chapter two I provide a literature review to tell the story of the research journey for this study. The literature review begins with the conceptual framework and is separated into three sections. The first provides an overview of three author/teacher/philosophers who inspired and guided me: Friedl Dicker Brandeis, Viktor Lowenfeld, and Maxine Greene. Sections two and three explore the two major art disciplines that are germane to the transdisciplinary nature of this dissertation: art education and art therapy. My objectives were to illustrate the ways this research positioned itself across the boundaries of these disciplines and to exemplify how this research grew from the influence of others. I also hope this review of literature provides clarity to those readers who may not be familiar with methods of art education or art therapy.

Chapter three provides the methodological foundation for the study and is divided into three parts. First, methodological foundations and research methods illuminate my approach, design, and research orientation. Second, I outline the study's research focus and procedures by describing context, participant selection, and data collection. Here I will also explain the methods of data analysis I utilized and the arts informed practice of reflection to assure transparency and trustworthiness. Finally, methodological considerations include validity, ethical considerations, and generalizability.

Chapter four builds on the previous chapters to first illustrate the setting of the study and its environment. Next, I describe findings of my experience in an art therapy classroom situated in a small midwestern psychiatric hospital and the practice of an art therapist who performs in this setting with adolescents.

Chapter five illuminates the way these findings were folded into a collaboratively

developed curriculum utilized to construct the studio art workshops in site two. In this chapter, I discuss what I explored and what it might have to offer a curriculum that blends art education and art therapy. These planning sessions for the workshops were enacted in collaboration with the art therapist I observed, my research assistant (an art education/art therapy graduate student), and myself. I will conclude the chapter by describing the way we made decisions about the construction and organization of the studio art workshops, and the content we chose to facilitate in the workshops.

Chapter six is the heart of the study. Informed by the previous chapters, this is where the real work begins. In this chapter, I will introduce the six studio art workshops whose story began in chapter five. I will describe what we did in each workshop, the artwork we made, and what happened as a result of these experiences, using the voices of my participants as much as possible. Commencing the art making process through mindfulness was vital to these workshops.

Most of the workshops began with a guided imagery meditation utilized to unlock creativity, shut out distractions, set intentions for the day, and be present with each other. When we are relaxed and calm, focused on our breath, information is more accessible, and we can leave behind the stress we carried into the room. Murdock (1987) wrote that "One of the most valuable things we can teach our children is how to attend. How to be in attention, how to be aware of the conscious existence of ourselves as human beings. How to be fully present in mind and body at each moment" (p. 17). As an artist and an art educator, I found that these exercises compare to peeling away layers of an onion. The outer layers are tough like the armor we wear to survive the day. When we meditate or practice mindfulness techniques, we peel away stress, tension, and protection, revealing a soft vulnerable center of creativity and wise layers of intuition within.

Chapter seven opens with the final project of the workshops. This project was made in private and participants were asked to bring the final product to their individual interview. In this chapter, I will discuss these interviews through the voices of the participants and the art work they made. I will then provide a brief description of themes I perceived to emerge from the data of the workshops and the interviews.

Chapter eight gives depth to the dissertation by introducing the seventeen participants through expressive portraiture as a visual analysis of their experiences in the studio art workshops. I also provide the reader with a short text describing my thinking while I was painting these portraits. As a practicing artist/researcher/teacher, painting allowed me to represent my perception of research as an imaginative form of inquiry and creative processes that could open new epistemological positioning. Thus, respecting the notion that the artist/researcher/teacher are entangled in rhizomic ways that provide firm roots from which to grow. I believe that offering findings visually gave me an intuitive connection to the expressive experiences I was requesting of my participants. I wanted to honor those brave and vulnerable experiences by resting in uncertainty myself.

The final chapter, chapter nine, is a broader discussion of my research findings and the themes that emerged. This chapter completes the dissertation but as illustrated by the wise words of the art therapist I worked with, *my mother used to always tell me to stop just short of done. Never judge artwork or yourself because neither is ever truly finished.* Research, like a work of art, is also never truly finished. I will reintroduce the research questions and initiate a conversation about the way this research informed those questions. I will discuss the findings and offer ways they might contribute to art education, arts-informed research, and education in general. I will conclude with implications for future research and a visual re-imagining of this

research.

My position

Artworks can sometimes be ambiguous and difficult for the novice and expert alike to read. It is inevitable that there will be misreadings and unintended interpretations. I will strive to be transparent about my analytical process so that I can anticipate or clarify any misconceptions the reader might have, knowing that I cannot foresee what those might be. In addition, I will be transparent about my own creative process and identify any non-textual cues readers may find illuminating.

My main challenge as an artist/researcher/teacher in academia is my struggle to find an equilibrium that is acceptable to academia while integrating creative personal expression and artistic interpretation. It matters to me that readers find this work rigorous in fields of both art education and qualitative research. To accomplish this, I use an arts-informed methodology to cross the boundaries between the creative practices of art and research in a way that encompasses my own tangled role of artist/researcher/teacher. A benefit of combining research and art making is a greater ability to reach beyond the surface of complex and subtle objects.

As an educator of art and teaching methods, and a researcher of art education, I am dedicated to understanding the process of creativity and self-expression in art making. Making art is the way I relate to the world. Processing ideas visually permit me to construct something new from old familiar concepts while I work in uncertain spaces. This art form is my voice and my way of understanding my experience and the experience of others. It is my mind and heart laid bare.

My initiation to art therapy

My initiation to art therapy was in November of 2017 when I was invited by a clinical

therapist, who specializes in youth trauma, to teach an art project to a group of teens in an outpatient psychiatric clinic. She believed making art with me might be an imaginative way for these youth to celebrate the end of their treatment program. Each had experienced bullying at school along with incidences of abuse in their home lives. Excitedly, I said yes! I was recovering from the disappointment of a previous project and this opportunity felt synchronistic. I chose, with her advice, to teach a collage exercise centered on violence, grief, loss, and trauma that often occurs in schools, and in our communities. The purpose of this project is to remove barriers and support positive relationships to promote equity and opportunity through talking, tearing, visualizing, sharing, and collage making. I arrived at the outpatient clinic on the specified afternoon loaded with art supplies. The therapist previously told me there was no way to know how many teens would attend, so I was prepared for anything. We set up a large round table with materials. She said only two were in attendance that day and I thought that was perfectly fine. The teens arrived at the appointed hour and the four of us sat together at the prepared table for introductions.

Next, I presented representations from artists who have made public personal pain caused by human to human violence; images that are often cast out of schools in the name of providing a safe environment. However, building a wall against the outside world does not reach the authentic lives of students or teach them to deal with the harsh realities of their everyday lives. I expressed that if they became uncomfortable at any time, to please let me know and we would stop and talk about it. I hoped they would feel safe in the familiar therapy setting to express vulnerable feelings that might come to the surface. The therapist and I participated so we could model vulnerability and acceptance through the sharing of our own stories and experiences. I began with Guernica by Picasso painted as a response to the Nazi's shocking bombing of

Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. I showed work by Nancy Spero, a feminist artist who explored female suffering and heroism; Kathe Kollwitz, themes of war, poverty, and hardships by the working class; Goya's Third of May showing tragedy of war rather than heroism. The teens were interested and attentive, but they didn't ask many questions at first. After a short discussion about personal experiences prompted by the images, we began to tear, glue, and create individual collages while talking, sharing, and addressing issues that emerged.

This was an opportunity to represent violence they may have experienced and to talk about positive action they have learned to make it stop or better cope with it. The therapist and I sat at the table and participated in the art making with them. It was my hope that this technique would allow everyone to feel heard and affirmed in a positive way. This approach to art pedagogy is feminist as it occurs in a framework of care, support, and respect of self and others (Leavy, 2015; Tanesini, 1999). It empowers, validates, and promotes growth through reflection prompted by art making. We hoped, because of this experience, they would feel validated, and empowered to interpret violence in a more positive way.

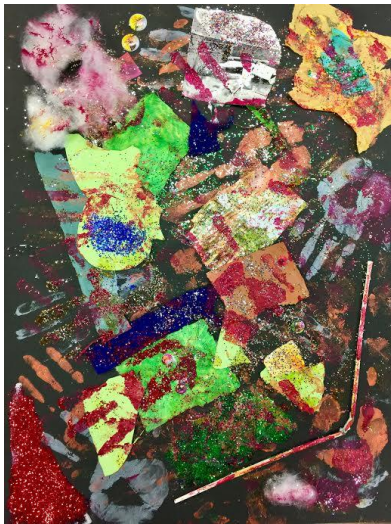


FIGURE 3. COLLAGE BY TEEN

The teens engaged wholly and enthusiastically in the art making, diving in and displaying no inhibitions about filling the space or experimenting with materials. They used materials expansively, extending out to paint, glitter, and other art media available in the room. While they worked, the therapist and I engaged them in conversation. One teen was excruciatingly quiet and the other more open and talkative. The outgoing personality of one appeared to open space for the other. As the hour passed, they talked more freely. They also began to

collaborate and be inspired by each other, expressing themselves, both verbally and creatively, only being constrained by the materials available. I observed they were not trying to make anything, no images or objects, they were simply playing and being expressive with the materials. Through this creative play, they made discoveries of what each material could do and progressively their inhibitions and reticence fell away. The session concluded with the arrival of their families. Each shared the experience and the art they made, hugged each other, and waved goodbye to us. This marked the beginning of my inculcation to art making in a therapy setting.

My reflection

Many months later, reading my notes of that experience, I was amazed by how much my thinking changed. I had been looking exclusively through my educator lens, expecting a product that expressed, through imagery, what these teens were feeling or experiencing. I realize now that I missed the point completely. They created and expressed without the need to plan, allowing their unconscious to take over, intuitively playing with the materials and becoming less inhibited as time passed. I read with wonder how disappointed I felt then and how narrow my vision was. I had observed from the limited experience of my art educators' eyes, focused on what product I might expect, and I almost missed the process of what was happening.

The teens were using the experience of playing with the art materials to visually reflect on the therapeutic process they had been experiencing and play enabled them to verbalize these thoughts. Product was inconsequential but still a source of pride and accomplishment. As I circle back, I realize how valuable it was to the youth who experienced it and to the therapist who knew better than I what their expansive play meant. I can see how encultured we are in art education to simply teach methods, skills, and value products over feelings, emotion, and experience in art making.

This invited experience marked the birth of my dissertation research idea. I wanted to further explore what art making looks like in the art therapy classroom to see how we could make art education a more rich, valuable, and holistic experience for students and teachers. I wanted to learn what the tenets of art therapy are and how these ideas and beliefs could benefit art education. I wanted to understand the extent to which creative activity, in a therapeutic environment, has the potential to help at-risk youth develop inner strength, restoration, and view their world as if it could be different (Greene, 1995).

Through this understanding, I hope to use this experience for guidance and support in blending values of art education with certain appropriate tenets from art therapy to construct a more caring and therapeutic classroom that might better meet the emotional needs of students. "Art educators can play an important role in preventing devastating effects of trauma by fostering resilience through art" (Heise, 2014, p. 22). Current art education standards push away and ignore the healing affective part of what the arts can do. Thus, we are teaching a stripped-down version of art education that only values skills, product, and cognitive benefits. I hope to show that a more holistic view of the arts is beneficial not just to students who have faced trauma, but to all students and teachers alike.

Conclusion

My work as an art educator in the community and at the psychiatric hospital provided a personal inspiration for this study. In an earlier project, observing an art program in a county jail with adolescents who are waiting to be tried as adults, I had to remove myself from a difficult situation. I had an ethical responsibility to not only withdraw from the project, but to act to ensure the safety of the youth. Something beautiful emerged from the devastation I experienced.

While I was pulling myself together after the loss of that project, a trusted friend and mentor relayed a tale about clumsy angels. In this story, angels reside above whose job it is to take care of us, advise us, and sometimes remove us from situations that might be harmful. They do not always have the time and resources to be diplomatic about their method of removal. They work in crowded offices lined with overflowing file cabinets along the walls with no place to sit and take a breath and no patience for that kind of lollygagging anyway. They do not have the luxury to gently hold our hands and lead us calmly out of trouble. Instead, they swoop in without ceremony and yank us from disastrous situations. My clumsy angel saw what was happening and knew she had to do something about it, for me and for those who were being taken advantage of. She flew down and snatched me out of there trusting that I would make the correct calls to address the problem.

During my grief for the lost project, I created a visual representation of this angel because art connects all my experiences and is the way I think things through. Out of the ashes of my devastation, this clumsy angel emerged and became a metaphor for the way I felt about the plight of art teachers, who are often overworked and constrained by time, resources, support, and occupation.



FIGURE 4. CLUMSY ANGEL BY RESEARCHER.

She exemplifies their struggles to overcome limitations that reside in the art education classroom while the world outside (art therapy, community-based art education) embrace a more holistic, and therapeutic application of the arts.

Her students are hungry and hurting, needing to be fed both cognitively and emotionally. She attempts to feed them from her bowl of strategies and methods but these, confined by national art standards, fall short of the needs of her students. Instead, they look outward and upward to the fabric of her wings. Fabric made of the leaves of creativity and feathers of imagination; holistic therapeutic methods that honor affective qualities of the arts (Andrus, 2006; Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000; Kramer, 1980; Rubin, 1999). Their survival depends on it as mine did.

These inclusive methods, within a blended art education curriculum that moves across disciplines could lift students on the wings of their imagination to experience transformation and wonder¹ that can spark inquiry and generate interest, which then directs outward into the world and returns to self-reflection promoting restoration and self-care (Costantino & White, 2010). This clumsy angel represents a visual metaphor that became the impetus for this study and directed an investigation into a different art community.

In the next chapter, the literature review, I will describe ways students in a Nazi internment camp (Makarova, 2000; Wix, 2010) and those out in our communities (Baca, 2005; Hutzel, 2007; Lawton, 2010; Prescott et al., 2008) have survived and sometimes thrived through a more holistic application of the arts. I will describe these and other underlying ideas by reviewing the literature of the three authors who inspire this study and creative disciplines of art education and art therapy, and the ways they intersect.

¹ I'm reminded of a professor who shared her childhood experience of the wonder of the moon and her perception that it followed her everywhere and so it must love her and how, as a child, she felt that love deeply and it made her feel safe and joyful. That is powerful stuff.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

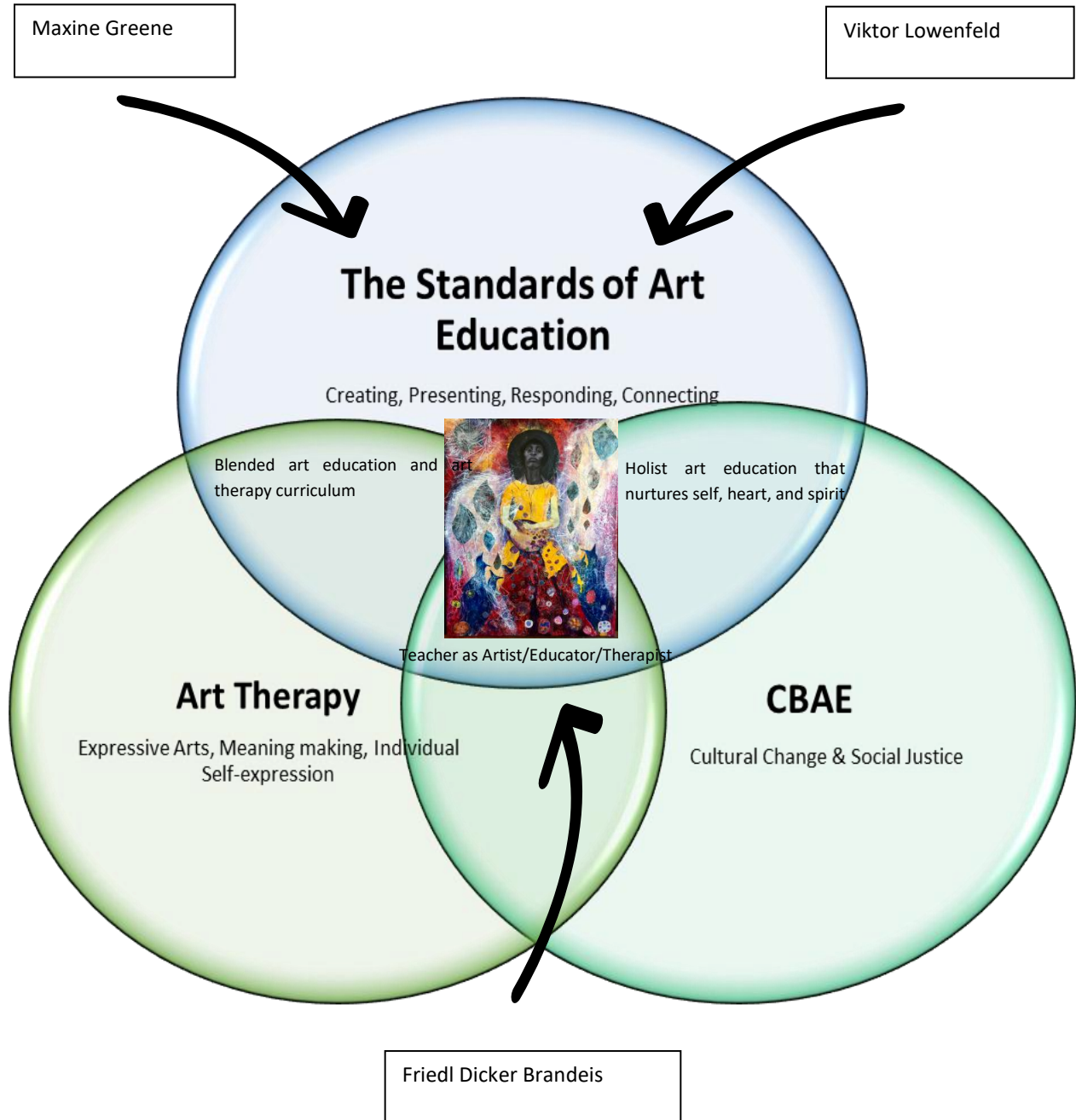


FIGURE 5. DIAGRAM OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS RESEARCH

This chapter and the above conceptual framework provide an overview of the key academic authors and bodies of literature that inform this study. I remind the reader that my purpose is to explore intersections of the tenets and practices of the fields of art education and art therapy by understanding ways participants respond to and reflect on experiences with a curriculum that blends these two domains. As such, I divided this chapter into three sections. The first provides a brief introduction to three key authors/artists who guided my path on this journey. They argue for a student-centered pedagogy that honors self-expression, reflective aesthetic experience, imagination, students as people with feelings, and a sense of wide awakesness that may address the whole child. Sections two and three provide succinct overviews of the aims and underlying assumptions of the domains of art education and art therapy, in turn, for me to imagine and implement a series of workshops that draw from the tenets of both. I will conclude by providing context for the ways these theories and methods intersect and how they informed this research. Ultimately, I envision an art education grounded in the current emphasis on understanding artistic processes, studio thinking and habits of mind, but also embraces the importance of affective self-expression and reflection, as well as providing a safe space for using art as a means of exploring personal difficulties or trauma. As these bodies of literature intersect, they informed my imagined purpose of a blended curriculum within the Saturday morning studio art workshops. Teacher as artist/educator/therapist in an envisioned blended pedagogy that nurtures self, heart, and spirit is at the center of the above conceptual framework; all components weaving together to inform the culture of the studio space.

Key Authors

Friedl Dicker Brandeis

This research is inspired in part by the voice and philosophy of artist/teacher Friedl Dicker Brandeis. She studied at the Vienna School of Applied Arts in 1915 and left four years later to live and work in the commune-like atmosphere of the Bauhaus School of Art and Design in Germany (Makarova, 2000; Wix, 2010). After her studies, she returned to Vienna, opened an atelier, and was commissioned to furnish an innovative kindergarten for Italian doctor and educator Maria Montessori (Makarova, 2000). This space came to be known as "the model kindergarten of proletarian Red Vienna" (p. 18). Her interest in art education led her to teach kindergarten teachers, children of refugees and, in the final two years of her life, children in the Nazi internment camp at Theresienstadt located northwest of Bohemia, 40 miles north of Prague. Her curriculum embraced an egalitarian² rapport between teacher and student fostering a delicate balance of individual expression and interdependent community (Makarova, 2000; Pariser, 2008; Wix, 2010). Child centered art education and art therapy are her legacies (Kramer, 1980) and she provided a therapeutic model of art education that inspired the art therapy movement.

In *Children's Drawings* (Makarova, 2001), written as an instructional aid to teachers while Dicker Brandeis was in the Nazi internment camp, she wrote "Although children need to be educated, nevertheless, they must, above all, be free in the expression of that which is essential for them to express" (p. 206). In describing the experience of a child in the camp, she wrote,

² Egalitarianism is a trend of thought in political philosophy. An egalitarian favors equality of some sort: People should get the same, or be treated the same, or be treated as equals, in some respect. An alternative view expands on this last-mentioned option: People should be treated as equals, should treat one another as equals, should relate as equals, or enjoy an equality of social status of some sort. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/> In this research I use the term egalitarian interchangeably with democratic.

The transformation of the other child has been just as favorable. She was separated from a teacher she loved very much. In the first drawing, the house (which always represents the child himself, Dr. Baumelova says) is pushed far into a corner, the doors are shut tight, the windows empty, all the lines depressively bent. In the second picture, drawn after the child received loving treatment and was able to emerge from a numbing sorrow, the house moves to the center. There are now curtains in the windows, the door has a peephole, there are flowers in the meadow and even the sun is no longer as faint as in the first drawing (p. 203).

Dicker Brandeis was aware that by teaching children to master art essentials through self-expression, she was creating personal space for "empowerment, meaning, and freedom amid dreadful oppression and daily horrors" (Wix, 2010, p. 19). By teaching children to observe and experience their visual world through the expressive arts Dicker Brandeis helped them to live imaginatively under horrific conditions (Makarova, 2000). She believed art to be "the expression of all-powerful freedom" (Makarova, 2000, p. 199)". A former student in the camp reflected,

We simply drew and did not analyze anything. I believe that what she wanted from us was not directly linked to the drawing, but rather to the expression of different feelings, to the liberation from our fears. She did this with an unusual level of energy and passion, which only she possessed. These were not normal lessons, but lessons in emancipated meditation. (Eva Adorian, Makarova, 2000, p. 216)

Friedl Dicker Brandeis' journey ended when she was sent to Auschwitz and, in a final act of bravery, she packed and hid two suitcases of the children's artwork. These works now reside at the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Simon Wiesenthal Center collection in Los Angeles.

Viktor Lowenfeld

Viktor Lowenfeld published an art education textbook, *Creative and Mental Growth*, in 1957, that espoused "physical, mental, social and emotional growth as aims for art education" (Efland, 1990, p. 228). He believed that art making should be about the individuals' well-being through forms of free expression that was uninhibited by skills focused instruction. He placed creativity as central to a curriculum that was student centered, with the teacher acting as

facilitator. His background was in psychology and as such, he was concerned with the growth of the whole child through combined efforts of art education and art therapy (Zimmerman, 2010). The first three editions of his textbook included a chapter on art therapy and that chapter is still valued as an important reference to art therapists. Unfortunately, from the fourth edition on, the publisher removed the art therapy chapter intending to publish it in a separate volume, but that plan was never realized (Saunders, 1983). There is conjecture, Silver (1984), that this was due to the art education field's uneasiness with tenets of art therapy during this time. However, Lowenfeld's work on the subject was revolutionary for its time and still influences art educators and art therapists. His philosophy that art contributes to a child's holistic physical, creative, emotional, and cognitive development, has made a lasting impact on both art education and art therapy (Eisner, 1972).

Lowenfeld (1957) wrote, "For the development of a healthy personality it is of utmost significance that a proper balance be kept between emotional and intellectual growth." (p. 54) and suggested that the following areas of growth: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic, are interrelated and essential for the development of creative critical thinkers. Thus, Lowenfeld's pedagogy advocated for the holistic growth of the child in a student-centered environment that encouraged self-expression with little interference from a teacher or adult. He stated, "Copy work keeps the hands busy but dulls the mind. When copy work prevents the child from facing and expressing his own world of experiences, the child may ultimately lose confidence in his own work and resort to stereotyped repetitions as a visible escape mechanism." (Lowenfeld, 1957, p. 51). His theory of the educator as therapist in connection with art education, and the multiple case studies of art as therapy he presented, inspired my concept of the safe therapeutic environment of a classroom, with a trusted facilitator, that makes space for

creativity through vulnerability and risk taking.

Although I struggle with Lowenfeld's outdated notion of a developmental hierarchy that moves forward in stages of children's creative and mental growth, I embrace his theory of creative self-expression and his child-centered approach as vital to this research.

Maxine Greene

Educational philosopher, writer, teacher, and social activist Maxine Greene (1995) wrote, "If we are to provide occasions for significant encounters with works of art, we have to combat standardization" (P. 380). In this case, she was speaking of going against convention and complacent hopelessness. She wrote that participatory reflective aesthetic encounters with art making can enable us to become "aware of ourselves as questioners, as makers of meaning, as persons engaged in constructing realities with those around us" (p. 382).

She believed that aesthetic experience begins with an encounter with a work of art, and that encounter might nourish a sense of wide-awakeness (Green, 1995). For Greene, wide-awakeness fights against what she sees as a hopeless indifference toward self and the world, and that encounters with art can awaken our unconscious. Her philosophy implies that through reflection on a work of art, we can imagine a life/world that could be different (Greene, 1995, 2001).

Greene did not believe that works of art and art making provide answers for us but that they can open a new dialogue about how to change perceptions about individual and social experiences that could become a vehicle for imagining things differently. In the context of this research, art making was neither skills based, nor knowledge based, although we did learn new skills and gained new knowledge, it was grounded in a reflective therapeutic encounter with the art the participants made. An aesthetic encounter with art of their own making allowed

participants to have a reflective conversation with others about an experience which in turn gave them new information and a perspective they had not previously considered.

Art Education

Discipline-based art education (DBAE)

The 1980s marked a turn away from Lowenfeld's philosophy of creative self-expression toward DBAE which placed emphasis on content knowledge and art education as promoting cognitive skills and development. "The Education Act of 1988, centering on the introduction of the National Curriculum, required standardized learning targets for all schools, and therefore a resultant intensification of assessment procedures by teachers" (Waller & Gilroy, 1992, p. 35). Because of this, the art room deviated from Lowenfeld's theory of free expression and moved toward Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). Classes became necessarily teacher centered so student achievement could be more uniformly assessed. DBAE was founded on principles of art history, production, criticism, and aesthetic experience that were considered rigorous, cognitive, and measurable. It is sometimes perceived as a response to the excellence movement, as "it reiterated many of the same themes that were first sounded in the 1960s, when curriculum reforms centered upon the disciplines" (Eflend, 1990, p. 253). But Lowenfeld (1957) believed that the absence of creative thinking and freedom of individual expression would not prepare students to "solve and express life's problems" (p. 58-59). Thus, a problem emerged in education in which emphasis was placed on the surface elements of standardized subject-based curriculum, and the development of student's creativity, critical thinking abilities, and holistic growth were overlooked (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). This was problematic because of potential harm that may be caused to the emotional and mental growth of students.

To depart from this developmental paradigm, Malin (2013) utilized, in her study designed to focus on the art making experiences of children in a school setting, a socio-cultural perspective to better understand children's motivations and intentions. Her results illuminated these categories of children's artistic motivations: storytelling, self-expression, and personal experiences, experimenting with materials, imaginative expression (making the imagined real), relational intention such as making art for others and more. These results showed that the children were intentional in their art making and motivated by intentions they set for themselves. The research found that children connect to their socio-cultural backgrounds through meaningful art making, which resulted in a shift of perspective that moved away from developmental toward a socio-cultural theoretical perspective. The researcher found that children may be driven by personal projects and will use available materials to investigate, represent, and transform ideas that are personally meaningful. She explored the children's own explanations of their artwork, observing that too often we do not hear from or listen to the perspective and voice of the child about their artmaking.

McClure (2013) also argued that we limit the pedagogical potential of research when we do not include the voice and experience of the child. In this study, the researcher offered video cameras (new media) to the children to emphasize voice and the active construction of an alternative view that fostered their visual rights and furthered understanding of the complexity of children's experiences and the roles that they play. McClure (2013) used the metaphor assemblage to describe her experience of the way children slip in and out of multiple subject positions such as gender, race, class, or ethnicity. She wrote that mapping these moving binaries in new media art making is helpful because of its interactive potential. Her claim is that children must have direct experience with art in order to understand the complexity of their relational

experience. The author contends that new media research in the past has not fully explored the complexity of experiences children have because they have not been allowed a relational experience with it.

These studies infer that DBAE may not meet the needs of the child because it negates the voice of the child and heart of art making, which is self-directed, personally motivated, self-expressive, relational, and emphasizes the meaningful imaginative voice of the child.

Contemporary art education (Visual culture)

Helene Illeris wrote, in *Essays on Aesthetic Education for the 21st Century* (Costantino & White, 2010) that the art world has shifted from modernist aesthetics toward an emphasis on art as relational to social settings. Meaning that while modernist artworks may be viewed as artifacts that are surrounded by an aura of grandeur, contemporary artworks often are intended to be experienced; the viewer is replaced by a participant. This places the viewer/participant in a relationship with the artwork that can develop in many directions. The artwork is no longer a “monument” but becomes an “in-between”, a break from an institutionalized experience to a social experiment of communication (Bourriaud, 1997, p. 29). According to Illeris (2005) young people today prefer art they can interact with, rather than traditional forms of art. In her interviews with 14-15-year-olds, she found they preferred performances, video-computer art, installations in which they could be active participants rather than passive observers (Illeris, 2005). Thus, contemporary art often fulfills a different function than traditional art, which represents a shift in curriculum, pedagogy, and content in art education classrooms.

Contemporary art education can be found in the work of Mcfee and Degge (1980), focusing on an art curriculum that intersects art, culture, and environment in a way that is socially significant and meaningful. Their ideas link with Lanier (1982) who further suggests that

art is socio-cultural in context and, mass media and other signs of culture must form a large part of the visual arts. Lanier proposes that art teachers include visual culture (mass media) in their curricular choices to better prepare students to make critically informed decisions about the art and images they encounter outside of the classroom. This contemporary approach integrates multiple perspectives through a blended curriculum of contemporary art and critical social issues. Greene (1978) wrote, “Art education can create domains where there are new possibilities of vision and awareness” (p. 196). Freedman (2003) expanded on this idea by synthesizing social, critical, cognitive, and curriculum theory in a model for art education pedagogy that teaches visual culture. She proposed utilizing “art and art education as aides to making life more meaningful, as a reflection of liberty, and as one of the ways in which people might pursue a constructive form of happiness, art education is a sociopolitical act” (p. 314).

Through this perspective, contemporary art education encourages students to question their place in society in relation to self and others. It involves the creation of artwork that includes self-identification and incorporates aspects of students’ visual culture. Freedman (2003) noted that “the primary purpose of such student art is not therapeutic; it is social and cultural. It is not just about individual emotions; it is about personalization of social issues...If education is working, students can make art that comments on social justice, community change, and concern for the environment” (p.148). Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) echo similar themes of self, place, and community for thematic inquiry and authentic instruction. Their approach defines art education as a transformative social practice that encourages students to reflect upon their own images, images of others, and the images and issues they encounter in everyday life.

Contemporary art education, as a critical sociopolitical voice of inquiry, is not “concerned with the practical and not the theoretical because the practical and the critical are

inseparable in this relationship” (Atkinson & Dash, 2005, p. xii). Artmaking, in much the same way, is not only about imaginative practice and manipulating materials, but also about deconstructing and then recomposing ideas (Lim, 2006). These approaches resonate with Greene’s (2001) thoughts about meaningful methods of art-making that have “to do with reshaping, renewing the materials at hand, very often the materials of our own lives, our experiences, and our memories” (p. 26).

Community-based art education (CBAE)

In the context of community-based art education, in this literature review, the word community is defined as a local environment that exists outside of the formal school classroom. CBAE expands on art education, but with an emphasis on community connections and social action. CBAE can be designed to teach art skills and knowledge in combination with an appreciation of local cultures, bridging social and cultural gaps, or to bring about social change, bringing people together with a common purpose (Baca, 2005; Hutzler, 2007; Lawton, 2010; Ulbricht, 2005). Ulbricht (2005) wrote that CBAE has become formalized in the past hundred years as teachers, artists, and community art centers have created organized programs designed for specific audiences. For example, the community art center through which I made art with youth in shelters as an outreach art teacher, connected my students to homeless communities (Helmick, 2018), and worked with youth in a county jail.

CBAE takes on varied forms of learning, engagement, materials, issues, and motivations for art making as needed by the individuals, institutions, or communities it serves. Ulbricht (2005) defined CBAE programs as outreach, public art, community service, and ethnographic or participatory inquiry. Bastos (2002) equated its value as “encompassing a variety of art frameworks challenges narrowly defined categorizations, inspiring participatory visions of art and

society” (p. 71). As such, CBAE often marks the beginning of a creative, artistic dialogue that "can inspire larger discussions about important issues in the community and students' lives" (Woywod & Deal, 2016, p. 44). For example, Judith Baca, sometimes referred to as "the mural lady", classrooms became "a dried river bottom, a low-income housing project, the agricultural fields of California where Mexican immigrants labored, and the most impoverished streets of Los Angeles". She wrote:

Murals sing gospel from our streets and preach to us about who we can be,
What we fear, and to what we can aspire.
In their highest moments, murals can reveal to us what is hidden,
Challenge the prevailing dialogues,
Transform people's lives.
Murals exercise our most important rights of free speech
And can indeed be the catalysts for change in difficult times.
Times such as these... (2005, p. 155-56)

Participation in these community arts-based events can instill a sense of social awareness in students allowing them to experience a real-world cultural interaction with members of a community. This type of involvement pushes back on the institutional confinement of education to become part of a multidisciplinary approach to art projects that are produced in collaboration with others for the purpose of social change or transformation. The experience of putting art out in the neighborhood benefits students and the community.

CBAE studies

Pamela Lawton's and Karen Hutzell's CBAE studies demonstrate how perceptions were altered and empathy developed using affective qualities of art as a process for change and action generating empowered transformation for all participants. Lawton's (2010) community-based art project connected pre-service art teachers and artists to the community by engaging them in a meaningful real-world way. Hutzell's (2007) participatory action study revealed that oppressive situations often develop strength of community and strong identities among the people living

there. Her interviews with participants exposed a strong commitment to improving the lives of those who suffer from oppression and revealed that the community is a place of strong social bonds that are resilient despite the presence of violence and drugs (Hutzel, 2007). She concluded that art class may seem "frivolous" in neighborhoods filled with violence, drug dealings, and shootings, but acting toward change through engagement with art can develop an awareness of the real "needs and assets of the community" (Hutzel, 2007, p. 313).

A study conducted by Prescott, Sekendur, Bailey, and Hoshino (2008) investigated creativity as a transformative element of resiliency in homeless youth and utilized quantitative and qualitative methods to identify a correlation amid creative action and achievements in life. Quantitative data demonstrated that when presence at the art center increased, the quantity of life achievements for the homeless youth increased as well. These achievements were identified as: secure housing, ending substance abuse, returning to school, employment, social skills development, taking initiative, and selling their art (Prescott et al, 2008). In a qualitative interview, one participant described "art as a friend that was always there" (p. 160) and she felt that making art helped keep her drug free and "away from committing suicide" (p. 160).

Halperin, Kessler, and Braunschweiger (2012) argue that many studies about the impact of art education are either biased, too short, the samples are small, or they lack a comparison group. When these authors attempted to rectify and overcome weaknesses in their 2012 study with an incarcerated population, they found that it seemed as if participation in arts education did motivate participants to further their personal and educational growth, but they also agreed that there is no way of proving cause and effect absolutely. Although researchers found that it may be too difficult to reach conclusive outcomes on the effects of arts education, they agreed the search for programs that demonstrate effectiveness of the positive impact of the arts needs to continue.

Washington (2011) described that "Change and transformation are interlocking concepts, and art has been understood as an important levee in this combination" (p.269). However, Washington (2011) also admitted that art education lacks active theoretical approaches that support or emphasize these transformative, life-changing experiences, and new ways to study these qualities is needed.

A place of intersection

hooks (1994) wrote, "Art constitutes one of the rare locations where acts of transcendence can take place and have a wide-ranging transformative impact" (p. 8). As a high school visual art teacher, in my own project that integrated art education with CBAE, my students and I connected with a homeless community through art making in a way that changed stereotypical perceptions. Our purpose was to provide "opportunities for high school students to engage with homeless individuals through partnerships with people and organizations in our community who serve this marginalized group" (Helmick, 2017, p.16). These experiences challenged stereotypes students held about homelessness, and they became aware of ways their own attitudes changed when we visually responded to the issue of homelessness in and out of the classroom. Bringing the voice of the community to the center of the classroom, we were able to "break down walls and build respect and empathy for the differences of others, creating an outward looking mentality that transforms to action for the empowerment of all" (Helmick, 2017, p.18). When integrated with CBAE, formal art education can become a rich and meaningful experience that encourages social justice and cultural change.

Art education

Efland (in Eisner & Day, 2004), described the art movements of the last 100 years as programs that focus on the following: elements and principles of design, fostering creative

growth, the importance of the common man, art in the community or art in the home which grew out of the Great Depression, and discipline-based art education which stresses a cognitive skills focused orientation of arts education. Evidence for these educational emphases can be found in k-12 classrooms where national art standards promote elements and principles posters, bulletin boards of cultural and historical reproductions, and students engaged in making art products that, while creative and sometimes depict their interest, mirror artist traditions/styles/ideas.

Gude (2010) recognized a gap when she wrote that discipline-based approaches to art education are, "... overlooking the actual processes associated with creative behavior" (p. 33). To address possible gaps, new national standards for teaching the arts were released in 2014 and replace the 1994 standards in this way:

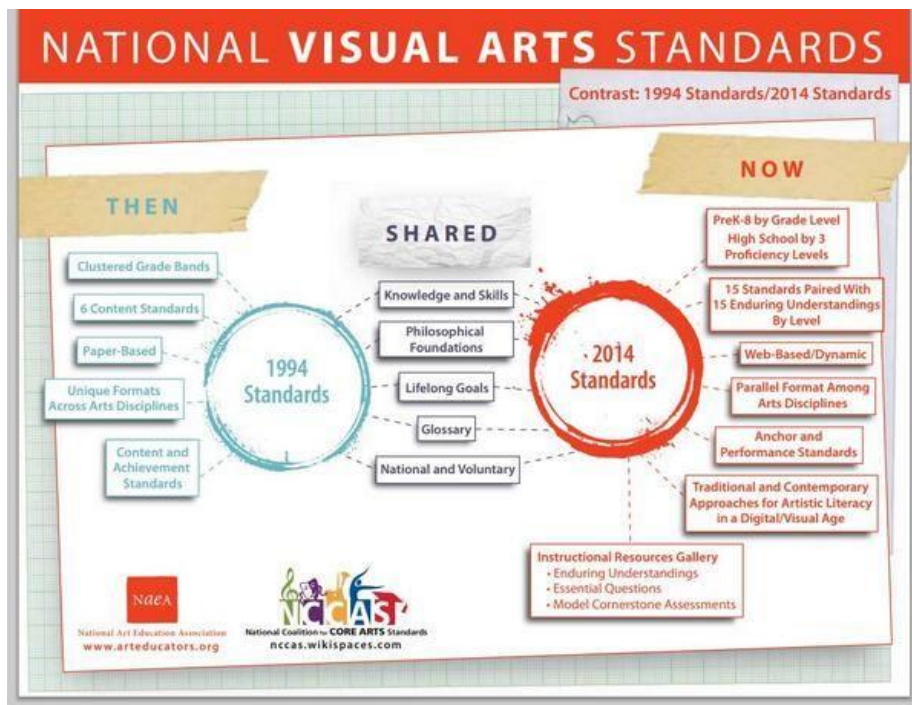


FIGURE 6. NATIONAL VISUAL ART STANDARDS

Authors provided the "establishment of significant ideas central to our subject and then teach for deep understanding of these ideas. In developing the new National Visual Arts

Standards, the writing team identified 15 such significant Big Ideas; they are known as Enduring Understandings" (Stewart, 2014, p. 6). These understandings are divided into four groups: creating, a strong emphasis on experimentation; discovery and invention that encourage students to draw upon relevant and contemporary personal interests; presenting, which requires students to assess, explain, and provide evidence of their learning; responding, which gives students the opportunity to reflect, pay attention, and make sense of the world; connect, which asks students to consider art's greater connection to the world (Stewart, 2014). Gude, during an interview, said that she hopes the new standards provide the space students need to make things that are personally meaningful (Sweeny, 2014).

Thus, the current emphasis of art education is on understanding the artistic process, studio thinking and habits of mind, demystification of artmaking, art experience as providing unique contributions such as artistic thinking, open-ended problem solving, risk-taking, invention and discovery, connections to the real world and personal relevance, and new visual art standards related to creating, responding, presenting and connecting.

While these new standards allow teachers more freedom to teach from their passions, they still neglect the affective piece of what the arts can do. "The removal of affect from an already emotionally flattened public school system leaves children unprepared to find what they are good at, to use their imaginations, to make school relevant in a critical period of transition into a technological world--thus, wasting precious human resources" (Wexler, 2014, P. 175). Unfortunately, in Western culture and education, emotions are often perceived as gendered, feminine, in need of control, suspect, and sometimes subversive of objective truth (Gouk & Hills, 2005; Ochsner & Phelps, 2007).

Today, even with new and revised standards, schools continue to push away the chaotic emotional world outside of the classroom, leaving the arts minimalized in the curriculum. This can lead to an educational experience that is less authentic, unvalued, too controlled and constrained (Quinn & Kahne, 2001). Administrators, educators, parents, and the public desire conformity, safety, and obedience in art education to protect students from the evils of the world (Desai & Chalmers, 2007) leaving art utilized as propaganda to sustain behaviors that resemble humanistic learning, to boost morale, and to simply break up the monotony of the ordinary school day. Jeffers and Parth (1996) observed that often art content is about the school lifestyle itself and not about life that exists outside of its walls or the interests of the students themselves.

McClure (2011) wrote that we suppress creative freedom through tightly established or under planned curricula that discourages authentic learning and ignores the sometimes-tragic reality of children's lives, their real concerns, and the possibility that children are contributing citizens in creative and artistic ways (2011). McClure (2011) and Tarr (2003) asserted that we limit children's potential when we do not think beyond commonly held developmental stages and beliefs. Maxine Greene (1995) pointed out that authentic creative experiences with the arts lead to realistic experiences with the world, and Eisner (1996) wrote that the relationship between the individual and the environment is a transactional one that requires emotional engagement. This is unquestionably important for schools and children as emotions have been shown to be essential to learning (Dewey, 1934; Dirkx, 2008).

Zimmerman (2010) noted that although creativity in the art education classroom has fluctuated through the decades with high points in the '60s and '70s, and a fall in the '80s with standardization, it is showing a rise in today's schools. Replacing out-of-date national standards with the current ones may have aided this rise and may provide an answer to some of these

issues, but they still fall short of students' contemporary needs, leaving art education less than holistic.

Additionally, there is a trend today toward removing the arts from schools due to lack of funding or a perceived lack of interest. Freedman (2011) wrote that even though the arts lack support in many schools and states who do not have required arts credit for graduation, statistics show that 93% of people in the United States believe the arts to be an integral part of education, 79% agree that art is an essential missing ingredient in schools today, 83% believe that the arts help children communicate effectively and 86% agree that the arts improve children's attitude toward school and learning. This would suggest that removing arts from schools is counterproductive toward the improvement of test scores and a well-rounded life. The author suggests that leadership and advocacy in the arts could be a valuable resource to reclaim a creative curriculum that currently diminishes learning through the arts.

Holistic art education

Zimmerman (2010) wrote that,

I passionately believe that as art educators we should reconceptualize creativity in the framework of a holistic education for the 21st century lest it become a character actor for supporting numerous roles for creativity and neglect the importance of each individual student's rights to creative self-expression and creating a body of art work based on his or her own abilities and concerns (p. 14).

She expanded on this notion saying that a holistic art curriculum should value the many processes and models of art education to further students' artistic development and that creative individual self-expression has value in and of itself, not only in service of other content. Holistic art programs could nurture skills, self-expression, and knowledge, focusing assessment on processes and uncertain outcomes. Finally, all students have the right to freely express themselves through a body of work of their own creative and critical responses to the world.

These ideas circle back to Lowenfeld, but maintain the embrace of the current emphasis on helping students understand an artistic lens and way of thinking, valuing artistic perspectives and practices in their own right, and adding back in a significant recognition of the importance of the affective in learning and knowing, in addition to a more holistic way of thinking about students as people with feelings. Lowenfeld, Greene, and Dicker Brandais all held a vision that art could change the world and it was up to each of us to play a part in that work.

Art Therapy

Overview of art therapy

Art therapy provides help through creative activity within the context and support of an art therapist (Malchiodi, 2003; Rubin, 1999). Its practice was founded on the concept that creative processes of making art are healing and affirming, vital forms of nonverbal personal communication (American Art Therapy Association, 1996) and most often encourage personal growth, self-understanding, and renewal (Malchiodi, 2007). "Art therapy has historically resisted an association with science and has favored a more arts-based stance in its philosophy and practice" (Malchiodi, 2003, p. 16). It draws from a variety of disciplines and a "large percent of art therapists describe their practice as eclectic" (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 10).

A relatively recent field, beginning around the middle of the 20th century, it was pioneered by Margaret Naumberg, Edith Kramer, Hanna Kwiatkowska, and Elinor Ulman. Edith Kramer, born in Vienna in 1916, fled World War II and arrived in the United States as a political refugee in 1938. Before her immigration she studied art with Friedl Dicker Brandeis, following her to Prague and working with her to help children of refugees. In 1958, after she immigrated to the United States, Kramer used art in a community of disturbed youth and, through creative

activity, identified different aspects of their aggressive behavior. She took on the role of art therapist and through her research found that although art may not instantly cure the individual, it had the ability to solve conflict and serve as a model of positive self-identity. Kramer (1958) wrote that, although much of her work was with children, art therapy could be utilized with adolescents and adults in many different settings to help measure participant's self-confidence, openness to the world, and attitudes toward change.

Contemporary methods

Contemporary art therapists develop protocols for patients who have experienced trauma much like art teachers develop lessons in the classroom. These protocols are built on the foundational idea that arts-based strategies do not rely simply on language for processing (King, 2016; Malchiodi, 2012). Malchiodi (2012) and King (2016) explained that expressive arts therapy is founded on the idea that creative self-expression requires multiple modalities that enable the reconnection of implicit and explicit trauma-based memories without privileging language. King (2016) described these components as ones that:

1. Demonstrate that neuro-development and neurobiology inform the application of expressive arts and play therapy to trauma-informed intervention.
2. Focus on supporting self-regulation and stress reduction.
3. Establish and support a sense of safety and positive attachment.
4. Support strengths and enhance resilience.
5. Respect the individuals' preference for self-expression.
6. Help identify the body's experience of distress.
7. Identify expressive arts and play as meaning-making experiences (p.212).

Expressive therapies continuum (ETC) are an approach the therapist I observed uses and one that may be easily adaptable to art education (Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000). This approach is like what Dicker Brandeis accomplished in the Nazi internment camp when she integrated aesthetic experiences and skill-based exercises through observation or flow into her lessons with the children. She called this process aesthetic empathy and her goal in teaching

these children was to care for them psychologically to survive the war (Wix, 2010). She believed that in helping the children master fundamentals of art and trust their own imagery, she was creating space for "empowerment, meaning, and freedom in the midst of dreadful oppression and daily horrors" (Wix, 2010, p. 19). Dicker Brandeis's thinking was influenced by former teacher and painter Franz Cizek at the Bauhaus School of Art and Design. "Like Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, Cizek focused on the inner world of his students and their unconscious" (Makarova, 2000, p. 10). His method of instruction was free and unstructured, instructing his students only "Today, show me your soul" (p. 10). To describe a similar art therapy concept, Edith Kramer quoted Susan Langer, "The primary function of art is to objectify feeling so that we can contemplate and understand it. It is the formulation of so-called 'inward experience', the 'inner life', that is impossible to achieve by discursive thought, because its forms are incommensurable with the forms of language..." (Kramer, 1980, p. 17).

For example, during expressive art therapy, rather than using language to explain an image you created, a therapist might ask you to re-present it in another art form. It is a method that includes "a variety of modalities for self-expression" (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 232). The expressive therapist works under the premise that "an integrative approach may bring increased understanding and a deeper experience because you use a variety of sensory methods of self-expression for personal exploration" (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 232). Malchiodi (2007) shared these examples: A young man with AIDS worked with collage in his therapy. Since he enjoyed writing, the therapist asked him to create poems or short stories about the collages he made. Tapping into his personal creativity helped him cope with and alleviate some of the depression he often experienced due to his illness; A seven-year-old who experienced nightmares due to sexual abuse used painting to express what she could not say out loud. The combination of art

and play with puppets made her less anxious and afraid, and helped her to express her experiences as well as to view her world as if it could be different.

Studies on the efficacy of art therapy

A pilot study on the effectiveness of trauma-focused expressive arts therapy in reducing PTSD symptoms in adolescents thirteen to seventeen years of age indicated promising results (Lyshak-Stelzer, Singer, St. John, Chemtob, 2007). Although both treatment groups improved, those who received expressive art therapy and those who did not, scores did show that those who received trauma-focused art therapy as part of their treatment showed significantly reduced trauma symptoms from pre to post treatment. Those who received art therapy also showed a decrease in the number of behavioral problems across all measurable indicators. However, since art therapy treatment occurs in conjunction with more traditional treatments, results cannot be shown as to the effectiveness of trauma-focused expressive art therapy alone. Results could also be due to increased treatment attention or simply general improvement through time (Lyshak-Stelzer et al, 2007).

Chapman, Morabito, Ladakakos, Schreier, and Knudson (2011) directed a study with pediatric trauma patients who exhibited symptoms of PTSD. They wanted to determine outcomes of an art therapy treatment that may reduce PTSD symptoms in hospitalized children, seven to seventeen years old, at one week, one month, and six-month intervals. They utilized the Chapman Art Therapy Intervention (CATTI), a drawing treatment which involves a verbal and expressive visual retelling of the event (Chapman et al, 2011). Although the difference between those who received CATTI and those who received standard hospital treatment was not statistically significant, the intervention did produce a reduction in all PTSD symptoms at one week and was still sustained at the one month mark.

While this finding could be due to regression to the mean, it may indicate that the CATTI may be effective in reducing acute stress symptoms and may allow children to discuss and process their traumatic experiences more effectively when compared to the standard treatment group (Chapman et al, 2011, p. 103).

Expressive therapy continuum (ETC)

ETC in the Adlerian³ Art Therapy method was a combination of Adlerian psychology and techniques of counseling with the most basic of art materials. According to Froeschle & Riney (2008), the use of art therapy created a safe space from which to express and explore, facilitated therapeutic participation, and allowed each person to be unique and true to self while contributing to others.

These uses create a safe non-threatening environment by starting the client/student with materials they feel most comfortable with and allowing exploration through six levels: kinesthetic, sensory, perspective, affective, cognitive, and symbolic to gain an understanding of the creative self (Hinz, 2009; Hinz, 2011). In ETC these levels rest along a range of: kinesthetic/sensory, perceptual/affective, and cognitive/symbolic (Hinz, 2009). They "reflect increasing complexity of visual expression and information processing, including the increasing complexity of imagery formation" (Lusebrink, 2010, p. 44).

For instance, each transpires to a different level of understanding. Kinesthetic/Sensory are early levels and stages of processing such as; infants and toddlers using the materials for sensory or rhythmic sensations, sounds, or patterns like hitting paint with hands on canvas, mashing or throwing clay, etc. The Perceptual/Affect level correlates with the schematic stage of

³ **Adlerian therapy** is a short-term, goal-oriented, and positive psychodynamic **therapy** based on the theories of Alfred **Adler**—a one-time colleague of Sigmund Freud. ...**Adlerian therapy** focuses on the development of individual personality while understanding and accepting the interconnectedness of all humans.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/adlerian-therapy>

graphic development. The final level is the Cognitive/Symbolic which corresponds to adolescents and the development of formal operational thought (Piaget, 1969). Each level has its own set of directives in which to work with patients. The goal is to be able to move between all six aspects of the continuum. Different materials may be utilized outside of the specified directive depending on the population. The bubble directive may be utilized for all six aspects:

- Sensory/ kinesthetic: blowing bubbles to music, working on breath, popping the bubbles with fingers.
- Perceptual/ Affect-acknowledging the bubbles marks as they land, find different images by looking at different angles and correlate colors with moods.
- Cognitive/ Symbolic- utilizing what had been found among the bubble marks to create images, characters, or a story.

Through this example you will find that some may stay in the first level, blowing bubbles, pouring out the bubble liquid on the paper, splashing on the paper. Some may work in the second level to find simple images or color in the bubbles and no identified or personalized images. The third, the person would be able to see a spaceship in the bubbles, create a world for it, and create a story about the ship's adventures.

Arrington (2007), and Smeijsters and Cleven (2006) found that using ETC directives and different media elements increased insight into patients' personal thoughts, belief systems, and behaviors as well as an increased understanding of mirroring these of others. Hinz (2009) and Lusebrink (1990) felt that art therapy ETC directives are acceptable ways to express certain behaviors through a method that is safe and non-threatening. The integration of different modes of ETC might assist in optimal learning about the way to control and regulate behavior. Through ETC and the use of art materials, clients/students may create goals which allow them to explore,

experiment, and discover new aspects to emotions, self, and behavior. These goals may be met through self-expression, esteem building, coping mechanisms, a breakthrough of defenses, social skills, insight into ones' thoughts, feelings and actions, self-control, alternate behavior, and possible empathy for victims (Lusebrink, 1990; Smeijster & Cleven, 2006).

Intersecting landscapes of art education and art therapy

When speaking about intersections of art education and art therapy, Kramer (1980) wrote that "basic to the practice of both fields are: process or product; praise, rewards, or mutual pleasure in art; the role of competition in the art room" (p. 16). She illuminated commonalities such as understanding and valuing the process of art production and having genuine respect for the creative products of children's efforts. She also described discrepancies that are ineffective in a therapeutic context, such as competition which can lead to despair when self-esteem is dangerously low. She voiced that many times distinctions between the two fields are oversimplified by viewing art education as product oriented and art therapy as defined by process believing this oversimplification demeans both professions. The art educator is often restricted by demands from parents and administrators to provide proof of learning and rigor through products. On the other hand, art therapists must be content with process because children may "endlessly experiment with art materials, vent their anger on them, or desert their work before it is finished" (Kramer, 1980, p. 16).

Allison (2013) wrote that art educators have much to gain from collaborating with art therapists considering both attend to human development through the arts. "A blended model of art therapy and art education that utilizes effective strategies from both disciplines and provides students with a therapeutic process to support instruction, empower students and produce art products the students can be proud to have created" (Albert, 2010, p. 90). Through a

collaborative creative process with art therapists, art teachers could implement a therapeutic learning experience in today's classrooms (Albert, 2010). This type of training for educators and students majoring in art education would prepare them for "working therapeutically with the students they teach" (Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000, p. 52).

Three factors emphasize philosophical and ideological connections between art education and art therapy: (a) the provision of services for children with disabilities, (b) preparation of art educators to teach children with special needs. And (c) sensitizing art educators to teach children with unclassified special needs (Andrus, 1995, p. 232).

Moreover, research (Konopka, 2014) showed that the brain may not distinguish between the processes of science and the making of art. The similar way the brain processes the cognitive and the affective can help us to replace dichotomized thinking of the hard and soft sciences (King, 2016). This is complex because although cognition and emotion exist together along a continuum, one end is easier to measure and the other more difficult. This could explain why, to be taken seriously in these times of testing for proof driven results, we sometimes neglect the heart of artistic creativity (Sabol, 2017). Accordingly, there is little solid research proving the therapeutic effect of art in an educational context. One reason could be because the potential for self-care and therapeutic experiences are not directly observable or easily measurable. They can only be reconstructed.

Further, current revisions in state mental health reform and health care insurance policy have significantly decreased availability for treatment for youth with emotional and behavior disorders (Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000). This means there is a pressing lack of educators who have specific training to support diverse populations and a greater ability to make accommodations to meet students cognitive and emotional needs. Students would greatly benefit

from teachers who have training in and open access to the therapeutic aspects of art processes (Albert, 2010; Allison, 2013; Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000).

Research shows that creativity, as a vital human need (Maslow, 1970), may be a foundational component in healing for individuals with trauma and mental health disorders (Levy, 2012). However, many public and private schools, due to lack of funding and lack of support, are removing access to arts education (Rolling, 2017; Sabol, 2017). Historically, the arts cognitive and emotive benefits have been undervalued in our educational system. To argue against this, Sabol (2017) wrote that, "Throughout history, the visual arts have been one of the central means through which human beings have come to discover and express their unique yet universal essence" (p, 10). Maxine Greene (1995) furthered this notion when she said that the arts thrive on the development of our imaginations and allow us to explore the landscape of our existence regardless of the state, time, or place of that existence. The visual arts give us freedom and permission to voice what it means to be human and the removal of this freedom inhibits our capacity to invent, adapt, control, and imagine circumstances as if they could be otherwise (Greene, 1995). Making art may also re-establish a feeling of wellbeing in individuals and provide opportunities to reconnect to self and to humanity (Baca, 2005; Hutzler, 2007; Lawton, 2010). Creative activity and attention to the imagination have been shown to open a sense of potential, empathy, and self-care within those who engage in it (Barone, 2008; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995).

Despite these results, the emotional needs of many children are not met or addressed in the classroom, something I knew from experience that art and creative activity could do if its healing properties were recognized and supported more freely in schools (Carrol, 2006; Heise, 2014). Wilson (1997) wrote that a main goal for art education research must be to provide

"knowledge about the way art learners use special artistic insights to expand their conceptions of themselves" (p. 3). I believe this is a call to investigate the affective values and purposes the arts may have on restoring resilience and positive self-esteem.

Conclusion

When I entered the teaching profession and the K-12 classroom, it was shocking to see the range of behavior disorders, stress from poverty, and 'different' abilities my students struggled with. And it was easy to see ways the arts, often accidentally, seemed to ease their distress. As such, I am interested in the way art might be used to assist the development of a healthy psychology of restoration and self-care. Philosophers Greene (1995), Dicker Brandeis (in Makarova, 2000), Lowenfeld (1957) and others called attention to the idea that creative activity is a continuum along which we can most fully express ourselves. This moves us away from binary thinking where art making is either this or that, not this or not that. We are taught to think in binaries from a young age, love or hate, up or down, male or female, so it is difficult for us not to place things into distinct baskets, such as, this is the way art looks in schools, this is the way it looks in the community, and this is how we use it in therapy. Amanda Allison (2013), addressing this concern, wrote that "each student has social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs" (p. 87) and in restricting our curriculum, we often address only one of those needs. If we could garner relationships with art therapists or be taught more specifically ways to support the lives of our students that is purposeful and not so accidental, we may engage in what hooks (1994) called transformative practice. Overarching goals for an integrated approach like this could be increasing self-advocacy, self-confidence, self-care, critical thinking, risk taking, personal storytelling, and relationship to cultural heritage.

Our need to advocate for the creative arts in formal educational systems has silenced its affective nature (Carroll, 2006) that is needed today where trauma in much of our youth is evident and goes unrecognized. Because of this, my research draws from intersections of art education and art therapy. I do not argue for a therapeutic model but instead emphasize that the art educator may openly facilitate learners, through a creative continuum, to discover their own imaginations, creative potential, and positive sense of self. This perspective is not meant to inspire educators to inappropriately act as art therapists, a role they are not qualified to take on but may help them develop a safe and creative space for students in a curriculum that has therapeutic ends.

My previous work

In my prior research and personal experience, I was and am interested in all the ways making art can positively contribute to individuals and communities, under oppressive situations and imprisoned conditions, whether these circumstances are self-imposed or enforced through the systemic removal of freedom. This research directly ties to my work that connected the homeless community with the classroom to change perceptions, to my art making experience and research at the Boys and Girls Club that helped me work more empathically in diverse contexts, and strongly aligns with my belief that every human being, regardless of situation, merit, circumstances and regardless of setting, color or wealth has a fundamental human right and need to express themselves creatively (Barone, 2008; Wagner, 2016). The mandate of UNESCO (2010) suggested arts education be used to promote a “balanced creative, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and social development of learners” (p.3) and UNICEF declared “a critical need for more research on emotional and social competence, especially emotion regulation, conflict resolution and social problem-solving among youth and children.” (UNICEF 2013, p. 1-7).

This is the core of my research agenda and provides a foundation for my belief that all students would benefit from teachers who have training in and more open access to the therapeutic aspects of art processes.

There seems to be a lack of clear understanding of the way arts programs, in the classroom, benefit holistic education and nurturing of the essential self, heart, and spirit (Carroll, 2006), of vulnerable youth. I hope to disrupt the way art education currently exists in the formal classroom showing that creative activity has value because the minds, spirits, and imaginations of all individuals deserve attention (Barone, 2008; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 2001). Integrated opportunities with the arts could make positive contributions not only toward restoration and social inclusion, but toward the freedom to think creatively and imagine the world as if it could be different (Greene, 1995; Lowenfeld, 1957). My objective is not to seek conclusive evidence or answers, but to gain information about the impact of therapeutic creative activity in educational situations, through a qualitative inquiry of the places art education and art therapy intersect, whereby adding to the literature with the intent to broaden available tools of future teachers and art educators.

This research

I have now viewed creativity in the visual and therapeutic arts from multiple vantage points and believe arts education, to be taken seriously in these times of testing for proof driven results, has neglected the affective power of artistic creativity through imagination and individual self-expression (Gude, 2013; Jagodzinski, 2013). To push back against this trend, this research first embraces Maxine Greene's (2001) foundation of aesthetics and imagination which may be an important purpose of art within education and could provide possible benefits to the world in which we live. She penned that the nurturing of the imagination through creativity is essential to

society and to the lives of individuals because it has the capacity to open the mind to possibilities beyond the habitual and the known. Greene described imagination as, "the capacity to see through another's eyes, to grasp the world as it looks and sounds and feels from the vantage point of another" (Greene, 2001, p.102). This could be key in facilitating "students to realize their deep connection to and responsibility for not only their own individual experience but also for other human beings who share this world" (Greene, 1995, p. 57). "Imagination gives voice to new connections made through creative thought," personal expression, and aesthetic experiences; it holds "the capacity to posit alternative realities," (Greene, 2001, p. 65). A skill necessary for personal growth in today's youth (Baca, 2005; Hutzel, 2007; Lawton, 2010; Prescott et al., 2008; Ulbricht, 2005).

Lowenfeld (1957) recognized that creativity exists in everyone and he was intrigued with the holistic development of the imagination from which creativity emerges. Both philosophers discuss creativity as a vital developmental tool of the whole person, saying the value of the arts is that they uniquely express and teach imaginative concepts. This research embraces the notion of students as people with feelings and as such argues for a student-centered pedagogy that honors self-expression, reflective aesthetic experience, imagination, and a sense of wide awakesness that may address the whole child.

Friedl Dicker Brandeis utilized aesthetic experience/empathy in her final classroom in the Nazi internment camp at Theresienstadt where she taught art to children from 1942 to 1944 (Makarova, 2000). She, like Maxine Greene, wanted to give children the ability to soar above normal and not so normal circumstances of life on the wings of their imaginations. She counseled that, "...children develop their abilities in very different ways. In imposing on children, the road that they must travel, we cut them off from their creative potential, and we cut ourselves

off from knowing the nature of these potentialities" (Makarova, 2000, p. 115). She knew that helping children with observation skills they could record their own direct experience with an object or a memory (Wix, 2009). Her teaching and her own artistic efforts were based on this theory of aesthetic empathy, believing that artworks provide insight into the soul. In this way, therapeutic aspects of art, woven into the fabric of life, may provide experiences that propel us forward and give proof of meaning, empathy, and intelligence that Dewey (1938) said sets us apart. Therefore, this research utilizes therapeutic creative activity in a way that may encourage imagination and aesthetic experience, which can engage body, mind, and heart, which may then promote change through restoration and self-care.

This chapter has introduced theoretical foundations for the study through the voices of inspiring authors and domains of art education and art therapy that have informed my journey. The next chapter offers the methodological foundations for this study and is divided into three parts. The first section provides the methodological foundations and research methods to illustrate my approach, design, and research orientation. This leads to the study's research focus and procedures by describing context, participant selection, data collection, and methods of data analysis I utilized. The final section defines my methodological considerations which include validity, ethical considerations, and generalizability.

Chapter Three: Methodological Foundations

Introduction

As a reminder to the reader, my overarching purpose was to explore intersections of art therapy and art education to reconceptualize an art education curriculum that recognizes students as whole and feeling people. To do this, I explored the practice of an art therapist at the first site, collaborated with two people to develop a curriculum that interlaced art education and art therapy, then explored, at a second site, the experiences of graduate students and educators as they participated in that curriculum through six studio art workshops that blended tenets of these art disciplines. This qualitative arts-informed transdisciplinary study focused on the lived experiences of these participants and draws ideas from existential phenomenological research perspectives, as well as ideas and methods of arts-informed methodological work.

In this chapter I describe the study's methodological orientations and methods. I have organized it in three sections. The first section, methodological orientations, provides the foundation for the work. This section describes my choice of methodological foundations and points out significant orientations that blend with both this study and this researcher as artist/researcher/teacher. Section two describes the research procedures I implemented along this journey. These research methods and procedures, setting, timeframe, participant selection, data collection, and analysis, are built upon and informed by the foundations described in the first section. Finally, methodological considerations of this study blend and intertwine these multi-layered sections together. In this section, I will discuss the methodological considerations that include validity, ethical issues, and generalizability.

Methodological Orientations

Qualitative research

Creswell (1998), divided qualitative research into five traditional paths, which include biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies. Since qualitative research moves across disciplines in a way that blurs boundaries between these different approaches, and because we need to know different things for different reasons, this makes it difficult to define. Butler-Kisber (2010) wrote that qualitative inquiry is an overarching umbrella term that encompasses a range of methodologies and approaches that have diverse purposes and attempt to answer different kinds of questions. It is complex in definition, terms, and tradition, and difficult to define because it is never just one thing. She proposed that qualitative research can be divided into three types of inquiry: “thematic, narrative, and arts-informed” (p. 8). Each of these defines a way of being in the research rather than steps or a particular method. My biography as a qualitative researcher is informed by being an artist, art education researcher, and art educator. My research position at the intersection of art education and art therapy requires that I integrate all these roles into my research practice. Similarly, because qualitative research seeks to understand the lived experiences and unique perspectives of individuals participating within a specific context, in this case, an art therapy setting and a studio art workshop in an education setting, a qualitative arts-informed inquiry is a suitable choice.

Transdisciplinarity

The objective of this qualitative arts-informed transdisciplinary research is to create a dialogue between and among disciplines from which to offer new conversations that may produce new visions, new interactions, and new knowledge of interwoven complex real world problems (Regeer, 2002). Nicolscu (1997) described four pillars that underpin transdisciplinary

research: learning to know through the building of bridges, learning to do by weaving together competences of several disciplines, learning to be with others in a way that honors and respects plurality, and learning to be through questioning because everything changes and so do we (Nicolscu, 1997). Leavy (2012) perfectly defined for me what this research attempted to do,

...the coming together of multiple researchers and stakeholders around a real-world problem; developing ideas, concepts, and a methodological plan based on the problem at hand and how to best address it; applying a holistic and reflexive approach to the project; and developing outcomes/solutions with clear real-world value are all trademarks of transdisciplinarity (p. 207).

This research exemplified arts-informed transdisciplinarity (Leavy, 2012) because I, an art educator, collaborated with an art therapist and a graduate student who studies art education and art therapy to construct a curriculum that honored each discipline and blended concepts from both art education and art therapy for six studio art workshops with the purpose of creating something new. Transdisciplinarity allowed us to connect across disciplinary boundaries, honoring rather than bracketing the positionality of each of us, as we worked to explore and better understand the perceptions and experience of these participants throughout this research process.

Existential phenomenology

I drew upon existential phenomenology to help collectively define the lived experiences of these participants and myself. Butler-Kisber (2010) wrote phenomenology is predicated on the work of Edward Husserl (1970), a transcendental phenomenologist, who theorized about “how knowledge came into being” and Martin Buber (1958), an existential phenomenologist, who believed that human understanding “requires a relationship of openness, participation and empathy” (p. 50). Creswell (2007) suggested these basic perspectives in phenomenology: the return of a search for wisdom, a requirement to suspend all judgments while being transparent

about biases, that reality is perceived through meaningful lived experiences (Butler-kisber, 2010, p. 51).

My understanding of existential phenomenology is that it brings together experience, perception, knowledge, cognition and being, to provide a holistic examination. While much of philosophy is focused on how things are or might be, phenomenology is about uncovering human perceptions and implicit experiences. The individual is what matters, and is free to imagine, create, or recreate their life in any way.

I am particularly influenced by existential phenomenology because of its focus on the individual and unique way we each perceive our lived experience of being in the world. When this methodology is married to arts practice, the lens through which the artist perceives these lived experiences are explored to reveal taken-for-granted meanings of self, body, and society that affect the way we exist in the world (Heidegger, 1962). As artist/researcher/teacher, my perceived lived experience manifests as an imaginary landscape of images, feelings, memories, social and cultural experiences and preconceptions that are connected to aesthetically felt colors, symbols, metaphors, and the self-expressive narrative content of creative works.

Thus, I utilized a heuristic approach of self-inquiry (Moustakas, 2001) to show the phenomenological process of intentional reflection and artistic reconstruction of perceived internalized meanings of the lived experience of each participant. This hermeneutic, interpretive process was further enhanced when multiple perceptions were unpacked and validated within a supportive arts-based learning community. To that end, this study was designed to open the vulnerabilities of our lived experiences to others so they could be re-interpreted, thematically structured, and described. The informal act of conversation allowed for a holistic atmosphere of sharing emotions and feelings that came up in the vulnerable space of creative self-expression.

This approach fosters receptivity through self and community dialogue (McNiff, 1998) and grants a spirit of positive regard for self and others through multiple perspectives. I reflected, analyzed, interpreted, and described phenomena respectfully and generously, bracketing for any bias I might have, but knowing that I cannot suspend all judgment.

My worldview as a white, queer, middle class artist/researcher/teacher positioned me subjectively in qualitative research that challenges the notion of a positivistic objectivity (Leavy, 2015) and argues that being neutral "is neither possible nor desirable" (Tanesini, 1999, p. 15). I embraced subjective relationships in a democratic community with others as my participants and I connected with each other and creatively expressed ourselves in the context of a studio art classroom. We were further empowered by the inclusion of multisensory arts-based data as research that privileged sensory experience.

This orientation placed meaning making in the hands of the participants, first through an egalitarian method of conducting a classroom, and second as co-constructors of their own knowledge through art making. Acknowledging that the construction of knowledge is social allowed the classroom to be a democratic place of building community with everyone learning together and from each other. In alignment with arts-informed arts-based ways of knowing, I pushed against taken for granted notions in research that view objectivity and abstraction as best practices and utilized subjectivity as an entry point to understanding our art making experiences.

Arts-Based and informed research

Definition of arts-based research. Whereas the field of qualitative research evolved beyond the 1970s, two key issues arose that opened space for the emergence of arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2005). There was an increasing need for research to address and be inclusive of a wider audience, and researchers were searching for other ways to explore the relational,

emotional, and interpersonal skills shared between the participant and the researcher (Finley, 2005). That is to say, researchers began to search for meaning from multiple perspectives, becoming disillusioned with ideas of absolute truth and objectivity (Barone, 2001). Arts-based research offered alternative and innovative methodological theories and methods from which to answer these needs. Arts-based research, rather than replacing more traditional or measurable forms of inquiry, simply recognizes and makes available diverse and creative pathways from which to inquire, and notes that “what counted as knowledge depended on perspective, time, interest and forms of representation” (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 19).

Barone and Eisner (2012) defined essential qualities of arts-based research as research that encompasses artistic or aesthetic qualities to understand experience and exploration, and employs “an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable” (Barone and Eisner, 2012, p. 1). In other words, this type of research captures, through the arts, what cannot be expressed in words alone.

Arts-based research varies depending on the art form employed and examined but its purpose is always connected to artistic activity and “is defined by the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and it’s writing” (Barone and Eisner, 1997, p. 73). A distinct feature is that this type of research does not offer certainty or predictions, but rather raises new questions and opens a broader conversation (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Its formats are less conventional and privilege the expressive language of lived experience over more direct and formal scientific language.

Arts-based research is the river from which the smaller stream of arts-informed inquiry, or as it is sometimes called arts-related research. Within arts-based research, art is the primary mode of or basis for inquiry. The difference, as I understand it, between arts-based research and

arts-informed research is that whereas arts-based is based in and of the arts, arts-informed is influenced by the arts (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

Definition of arts-informed research. Arts-informed research “brings together the systematic and rigorous qualities of conventional qualitative methodologies with the artistic, disciplined, and imaginative qualities of the arts acknowledges the power of art forms to reach diverse audiences and the importance of diverse languages for gaining insights into the complexities of the human condition” (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 59). Which is to say that a purpose of arts-informed inquiry is to blend alternative processes and artistic representations holistically with systematic qualities of research to enhance understanding, with the hope of reaching a wider audience (Knowles & Cole, 2008). Questions asked by arts-informed research may be: How can the creative arts inform the inception and construction of research and how can creative arts inform, exemplify, and contribute to the research process? (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

This research embodies arts-informed methods because art or the creation of it was not the focus of this study. For the purposes of this research, I blended the traditional language of qualitative methodology with the imaginative language of art to gain a more profound understanding of the lived experiences of my participants. Additionally, in using this dual language, I could widen the audience of my research. There seems to be a great deal of overlap between these two forms of research. Both claim to make research more accessible using creative languages. I would argue that is not always true. Artistic forms of communication are often ambiguous and open to interpretation, which can lead to a gap in understanding between the artists intention and the viewers reading. The greater the difference between the lived experience of the artist and the viewer, the wider the gap. That is one reason I chose arts-informed research. I hope to make rhizomic connections in the data through the imaginative use

of a creative art form because I am an artist, and then, as a researcher, provide a linear road map of textual description and explanation for the viewer. This way I could reach a wider audience through a rich and full communication of ideas that does not provide answers but might open new conversations.

Both methodologies embody the notion of the researcher's presence being evident through commitment to an art form and this presence is felt throughout the research process. As a painter, I used expressive portraiture to explore, represent, and understand the lived experiences of these participants. My presence is transparent throughout this research process.

I was also taken by the clear commitment of arts-informed research toward the improvement of the human condition by engaging in inquiry that is meaningful and could be transformative or revelatory. This quality speaks to the goodness in research to engage the audience in a way that might move them to respond or act (Knowles & Cole, 2008). Ideally, research, as does this project, lives in the heart and soul of the researcher.

In its broadest sense, this research project began with an artist utilizing their creative process to explore, understand, and represent the actions and lived experience of these participants. I constructed a mix of visual art and textual representation as a way of making meaning throughout the research process. In this way, art and research unfolded together. Accordingly, allowing myself to be an artist/researcher/teacher provided me with an expressive medium for experiencing, interpreting, representing, and sharing the findings.

Painting as inquiry. I practice art as a painter, and painters, in creating work as a form of self-inquiry and critical engagement, become theorists providing interpretation and giving form to thought in new ways that embody meaning, self-initiated ideas, and thoughtful actions for the maker (Sullivan, 2007). In this research, I represented data, experiences, reflections, analysis,

and stories by setting up an expressive painting practice. This resembled the way I visually interpreted the earlier clumsy angel story. Thus, expressive portraiture was the method through which I carried out the methodology of painting as inquiry.

Jongeward (1997) wrote that “within the naturalistic paradigm of qualitative research, the knower is inseparable from the known. A researcher’s sensitivity, empathy with others, and tolerance for ambiguity play an important part in the process and outcomes of research” (p. 3). As a human instrument and an artist in the research process, I needed to find a way to meaningfully embrace and represent the implicit experiences of these participants. Thus, I chose visual imagery, specifically expressive portraiture, as a non-discursive expression to bring understanding and insight to the lived experiences of these participants (Langer, 1953). The act of creating these portraits formed an unexpected intimate connection between myself and my participants. Ideas and emotions intuitively emerged from the making of the portraits; the making informed the maker. Meaning that this creative process heightened my understanding of these participants’ experiences and allowed me to express complex feelings and ideas that developed while I was painting. Therefore, “the processes of art making informed the inquiry in ways congruent with the artistic sensitivities and technical strengths of the researcher in concert with the overall spirit and purpose of the inquiry” (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 61).

In this way, the painting was informed by the act of doing it. As process or product, painting is a form of impassioned human engagement that can reveal new thoughts and understandings, and the distinctions between painter, object, and viewer blur as the settings or circumstances influence meanings (Sullivan, 2007). This interaction between artist, artwork, and viewer is vital to the ideas and responses sparked by an aesthetic encounter. Therefore, meaning is not static but open to multiple views and compatible contradictions. Meaning flowed outward

while I worked with a set of assumptions that “evolve and develop through my biographical, linguistic, and cultural experiences that grant access to particular ways of knowing, representing, and evaluating structures” (O’Donoghue, 2009, p. 355). My temperament, my space in relation to others, my biology and my biography surfaced subjectively in my art making and, in my writing, which problematize meaning making for public communication. However, when I engaged in multiple forms of communication, reflection, and dialogue new avenues of understanding opened that allowed the private to be made public and more accessible. My particular processes are explained more fully under the analysis section of site two and again in chapter eight.

Research Methods and Procedures

This section addresses layers of practical issues within the research procedures in each context. Here I will share, for each setting, the timeframe and context, my role, participant selection, data collection, and I will conclude this section with analysis procedures and how I represented the findings. Chapter four will dive deeper into the first setting, describing the rules, frequent visitors, and how HIPAA affected what I could or couldn’t do in the art therapy room. Chapter five describes the studio art workshops in the second setting.

Site One: Psychiatric Hospital

Description of the setting and time frame

Site one took place in the art therapy classroom at a small psychiatric hospital situated in a midwestern university town. The hospital is located just outside of town next to a high school. The art therapy classroom is situated on the first floor of the hospital and the therapist always

comes out to meet me because visitors must be escorted through two locked doors and down several corridors to get to the art room. The room looks like a typical mid-size art classroom with a paint covered counter and sink, a gray linoleum floor, and artwork covering the walls and drying rack. It has one window that faces an inner courtyard. There are two plastic tables in the room, one rectangular and one circular, with enough chairs around them for fifteen to eighteen patients. The window, doors, and cupboards are all kept locked. Art supplies are passed out by the art therapist, returned, counted and locked up again at the end of each session. A deeper description of this setting is provided in the following chapter.

This art therapist has practiced for six years at the hospital where he conducts group art therapy classes for adults, adolescents, and children. Sessions last one and a half hours and the therapist normally conducts three sessions a day. I observed and assisted in his Monday morning sessions that lasted one and a half hours and served adolescents. These observation sessions ended when the hospital's census was reduced for the summer.

Chart for Art Therapy Observations

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Dates | 05/07/2018 | 05/14/2018 | 05/21/2018 | 05/28/2018 |
| Attendance | 8 youth | 12 youth | 9 youth | 12 youth |

Description and selection of the participants

I utilized convenience sampling in this setting. My target populations were the adolescents who attended group art therapy sessions and the art therapist who enacted his practice at this hospital. Participants in the hospital setting were the art therapist whom I invited because we have an established working relationship, I in a volunteer assisting role, he as the art therapist in a group classroom setting. I observed his sessions with the adolescents who normally

participate in the Monday morning class, as that is the age range I am most interested in, familiar with, and have cited as a vulnerable population.

During the school year, teachers, counselors, and school personnel recommend students to the hospital for programs that address issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, suicidal and homicidal ideation, depression, or loss of their home. The youth are usually willing to go because it is a break from the routine of school and from stressful situations at home. In the summer, school-aged children are often left to their own devices unless a law enforcement officer is forced to admit them under duress and in handcuffs or unless child protection services (CPS) cannot place them in a home.

Because this was a vulnerable population, the IRB (Institutional Review Board) process was intensive. I spoke with the administrator of the hospital and we came up with a plan to gain permission for the research study. Although I was only observing the art therapist and the way he enacted his practice, we knew there was a possibility that I might want to talk to the youth and take photos of their work. Their interactions with the therapist may also come into play so it was important that I had permission for the adolescents to also be participants. The hospital only has short term programs, so the youth are only there from three to five days, although they often return for another cycle through the various programs. Because of this, we decided that I would create an informative letter addressed to parents/guardians, an informed consent form for parents/guardians to sign and an assent to participate form for the youth to sign if they wish to volunteer. These forms were given to the intake supervisor so that when an adolescent was admitted, the information was given and read to the family and the youth and they could choose to participate or not. They were given my information in case there was anything they didn't understand or had further questions. The hospital participates in many research study programs

with the university and they were familiar and comfortable with the process. The art therapist also signed an informed consent form. (Appendix B).

Researcher role

I took on the role of observer/participant while exploring the practice of this contemporary art therapist, once a week for four weeks. I had been volunteering in this space and with this population for the five previous months, so the art therapist, the youth, and the staff were familiar with me. The purpose of these observations was to learn about art therapy from the practice of an art therapist and the role it could play in an art education classroom. Art therapy is not my field of study and I needed context and information. As a volunteer and then an observer for research, I usually arrived thirty minutes before the session, so the therapist could brief me on his plan for the morning. I would sit at one of the tables to take written notes or make drawings and I sometimes walked around to talk with the youth and assist in the classroom. I passed out supplies, assisted them with art methods they were trying out, participated in conversations, and answered any questions they might have had.

Data collection

The data I collected focused on the way the art therapist enacted his role in the classroom, his interactions with the adolescents, and the myriad ways the youth participated in the art making. Data included field notes, journal reflections, interview recordings, photographs of the artwork adolescents created during the sessions. To protect their privacy, participants did not appear in the photographs and I could not record these sessions due to HIPAA concerns. I took field notes by hand because the rules prohibited me from audio or video recording due to HIPAA regulations. Data collection consisted of my handwritten field notes and sketches, photos of the

space and the artwork the youth made, my personal reflections written in my journal after each session was completed, and recordings of the two interviews I had off site with the art therapist.

Informal conversations. The therapist and I had many informal conversations which were included in reflections I wrote after each session. I met with him 30 minutes before each session so he could share with me the plan for the day. We also held casual conversations during the class and for ten to fifteen minutes after the session while we cleaned up. Once I returned home from each session, I would reflect in my journal on these conversations and the session for the day. These conversations held the richest and most useful data for this site. These conversations in addition to my interviews with him were where I gained the most information about his practice and the way he enacts it. They highlighted his interactions with his patients and the pros and cons of conducting a group therapy practice in a hospital environment.

Semi structured interviews. I conducted two videotaped 45-minute semi structured interviews with the therapist to further broaden my understanding of his perception of his practice and art therapeutic strategies in this context. One was (04/30/2018) just before my official course of observations began and another (05/30/2018) just after the observations were over and later transcribed. The first interview acted as an introduction to each other and what our goals might be personally and professionally. This data provided useful information about what motivated him to become an art therapist and gave me insight into his background and why he was doing what he was doing where he was doing it.

Participant observations. My role as observer was primary in this site, although I did help as needed during the sessions. I spent most of the time sitting off to one side, not at any of the tables, so I could observe and take hand written notes. Due to HIPAA rules, recording devices could not be used. Participant observation was vital to my understanding of how the

group sessions took shape and how each adolescent was affected by the art making they chose to participate in. I could experience firsthand how the youth responded to the art making, the materials, the therapist and each other. These interactions helped inform my assumptions about the way these methods might transition to an educational classroom. I could juxtapose my experience as an art educator against what I was observing in this context. After each session, I would photograph artwork the youth created during the session so that I could discuss art therapy methods through examples while including their experiences with therapeutic arts. That is, the visual imagery allowed me to express ideas and qualities about therapeutic art making that would otherwise be inaccessible in language alone. Through these multiple methods of data collection, I was able to observe what participants did, listen to what they said, and watch and experience what they made.

Research journal. My research journal was invaluable as a tool at this site because I could not audio or video record my observations as they occurred. At the close of each session, I would arrive home and immediately take comprehensive notes to document conversations, and descriptive analytic thoughts and perceptions. I used the photos of the artwork as reflective inspirations so I could record gestures, speech, tone, and interactions I saw when the adolescents interacted with the materials and the social space of the classroom. These photos served as writing prompts and visual sources of the techniques and methods he brought to the sessions. All of this enabled me to focus on the way art therapy was enacted by the therapist and accepted by the youth. I was also able, through my writing, to reflect on personal thoughts, feelings, reactions and biases I might be carrying with me in the research process.

Data management.

Each week, after the session, I would collect the attendance from the art therapist and then go to the nurses' station and they would hand me an envelope of permission and consent forms for the week. I kept those in a locked drawer of my desk, locked in my office at the university. I transcribed the audio recordings of the two interviews and added the photos I took to the transcripts so they could be stored electronically on an external hard drive. As I read the transcriptions, I would add notes to my journal. I found that listening to the recordings and later reading them and reflecting on the photos of the art work, I could write my impressions and thoughts as each of these data points corresponded with each other.

Considerations

The advantage to handwritten notes was that I could record events as they occurred, and I was able to interact with the therapist and the adolescents. I thought a limitation might be that I would seem intrusive but that was not the case. Patients in the programs at the hospital are accustomed to being observed in this space by multiple people for different reasons. At any one time in the room with the adolescents there would be the art therapist and me, a mental health technician (MHT) assigned to the group for that day, and interns from various universities.

A real limitation was that some information I observed could not be reported due to HIPAA privacy laws. This did not limit the scope of this study however since my primary concern was the way this art therapist enacted his practice.

Representation of findings

The findings from this site were folded into the collaboratively developed curriculum used at the second site. The ideas gleaned from this site and the process of developing the curriculum are described in chapters four and five. It was always my intention to use my analysis of the art therapy space and the way the art therapist enacted his practice to construct the six

studio art workshops for the second site that blended what I learned about art therapy with art education at the first site. Through the development of a growing professional relationship with the art therapist, I found that he was so interested in this research project that he offered to attend and participate in the curriculum planning sessions. I was able to gather the findings from the first site, collaborate with the art therapist and an art education/art therapy graduate student, with whom I met to construct the workshops. It ended up being a truly transdisciplinary effort that proved beneficial to all of us. We met at a local coffee shop, bringing together all our knowledge and expertise, four Saturdays in June 2018, and created a blended art education/art therapy curriculum for the six studio art workshops in site two. In chapter five, I further describe the nature of our collaboration around this curriculum development.

Chart for Curriculum Planning Sessions

| Dates | Times | Researcher | Art Therapist | Research assistant |
|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 06/01/2018 | 10:00 - 12:00 | X | X | X |
| 06/08/2018 | 10:00 – 12:00 | X | X | X |
| 06/15/2018 | 10:00 – 12:00 | X | X | |
| 06/22/2018 | 10:00 – 12:00 | X | X | X |

Site Two: University Classroom

Description of the setting and time frame

Site two occurred in an art classroom on the third floor of a school of education in a large R1 midwestern university. This classroom had plenty of countertop workspace and a sink. It was located near an art gallery and across the hall from a room of unlimited art supplies that one of the participants nicknamed ‘*the closet of awesomeness*’, which made the room easy to set up each week and convenient for everyone to browse available art supplies whenever they wanted.

It is also a familiar space as most of us either have taught in that room or taken classes there. The classroom is large and consists of tables rather than desks that can be rearranged as needed. We decided to push the tables together in a big square that everyone could sit around. This way we were all together and could see what each person was making or doing. It made for easy conversations and collaborations. This was helpful because a majority of the participants were not artists or did not work in a field of the arts and I knew from my years of teaching that it is beneficial to the creatively uninitiated to sit in close proximity to those who may be more comfortable with art mediums. They inspire and learn from each other.

This part of the research consisted of six consecutive studio art workshops for adults, specifically associate instructors/graduate students and educators who attend or previously attended this university. This element was vital if I was to know how or to what extent creative therapeutic methods could be transferred and integrated successfully into the art education classroom. These workshops lasted two hours, beginning on Saturday morning of July 7th 2018 through August 11th 2018, and allowed participants to experience methods that moved across disciplines of art education and art therapy.

Description and selection of the participants

Participants in the Saturday art studio workshop were associate instructors/graduate students and educators from a school of education, an art therapist, a music therapist, my research assistant (the graduate student in art education/art therapy), and myself. I sent out email invitations to those I believed may be interested in making art in community with others and to those who expressed an interest in participating in this research project. This email included information about the research and a bid to participate. Once interest was expressed, I emailed assent forms to those who wished to participate. I did not target artists or art educators

specifically but rather educators, most of whom were also students in graduate education programs. Educators were an important population for this study because I offered a blended pedagogy which could have possibilities of extending outward to other realms of education beyond just the art room. The workshops consisted of seventeen participants. Although this was a larger number than I anticipated, only one participant attended all the workshops. Seven participants attended most, three attended half of them, four attended a few, and two participants did all the projects outside of the workshops. Two participants attended as a couple and asked to be viewed and analyzed together. Twelve of the seventeen participants were not artists or did not work in a field of the arts. The attendance of each workshop had a group large enough to experience diverse conversations and art making experiences, yet small enough for everyone's voice to be honored and heard (Appendix C).

Researcher role

I collaborated with the art therapist and a graduate student in art education/art therapy to design this blended curriculum. I facilitated the workshops taking on the role of teacher/educator, but in an egalitarian way that promoted a feeling of being equals in the class. We were peers and friends, so this was natural.

I was also the researcher/observer in this setting. During the first meeting, I handed out the same information sheet each of them had received so that we could go over it in person to be clear and transparent about the process. I followed through with this each week before class started each time someone new arrived. Everyone was aware of the multiple roles I took on.

A/r/tography. There are multiple times in this research that I refer to myself as an a/r/tographer. A/r/tography, a methodology that also sprung from the river of arts-based research, is described as a continuous reflective practice where the researcher's viewpoint, power, and bias

are transparent throughout the research (English & Irving, 2008; Springgay, Irwin & Wilson Kind, 2005). The a/r/tographic researcher makes meaning through the multiple languages of the arts and writing, bringing together the strengths, values, and perspectives of artist, researcher, and teacher (Irwin & Springgay, 2008) to create research that exists as a work of art.

Although this research does not meet the criteria of a/r/tography, as it cannot stand on its own as a work of art, I position myself as an a/r/tographer because those parts of me, artist, researcher, teacher, are so entangled and embedded in the work that I cannot separate them out.

With this multiplicity in mind, I applied arts-informed inquiry that was inspired by the notion of a/r/tography (Barone, 2008; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; O'Donohue, 2009; Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005; Sullivan, 2007). Further, this research endeavored not to privilege text over images and particularly honored data grounded in the visual products and processes of people (Leavy, 2012; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). In this way the many languages of art allowed me to be a visual storyteller about our experiences through a phenomenological first-person stance while applying multiple voices and representations to these interpretations. My connection to this topic is personal, heartfelt, and values teaching and learning, responsive design, and researcher presence as valuable, fluid, and intuition driven (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

Research assistant role

My research assistant took on multiple roles of collaborator in the building of the curriculum, teaching assistant, research assistant, and participant. As a teaching assistant and a participant, she came to the workshops early to help me set up the cameras, get out the supplies and set up the room. She worked alongside the participants making her own projects, sharing and reflecting while also taking photos of everyone in the process of art making. She stayed after each workshop to help me clean up and we debriefed for about ten minutes to exchange

perspectives on what we saw and heard. Continuing her role of research assistant after the workshops ended, she transcribed the audio tapes of the individual interviews.

Data collection

Data collection in this study involves multiple strategies of interviewing, observing, and analyzing documents. This includes the observation of what is going on, informal and formal conversations, and examining documents and artifacts that are part of the context. Data collection entailed audio recorded semi structured individual interviews, video and audio recordings of the studio art workshops, casual conversation notes and reflections, field notes from observations and teaching reflections, and direct quotations. Also included were artworks made by participants, reflections (visual and written), and expressive portraiture painted and utilized for the analysis process. All of these were included in the thick record and treated to rigorous analysis, both written and visual. As such, I am not a passive observer but a participant in the shaping of the learning community and in relationship with others and as such, data generated in multiple ways.

Informal conversations. These participants and I met every Saturday morning for six weeks, twelve hours total. No one was able to attend all the sessions, but most attended as much as they could. Attendance was voluntary, not mandatory. Conversations occurred organically before, during, and after the workshops within our studio art environment. These took place in the classroom and most were captured on the recording devices that were turned on ahead of time. These conversations contained the richest and most informative data. These conversations illustrated how participants worked together, explored ideas about teaching, being a graduate student, the job market, life in general, and their experiences with making art. I also recorded and later transcribed the reflective 10-15-minute conversations my research assistant and I shared

each week after the workshop. These were valuable sources of information because I gained a second perspective of what we saw, experienced, or heard in the workshop. The final workshop culminated with a group conversation interview to wrap up and express feelings about what participating in the workshops was like. My purpose was to understand their explicit and implicit perceptions of the experience as a whole.

Semi structured interviews. I conducted voluntary individual final interviews with each participant, lasting no more than an hour, within the first month after the workshops ended. These interviews were held in an empty private office at the university. These involved tape-recorded conversational interactions between the participant and me with their artworks spread out in front of us to inspire our dialog. The final interview occurred in the weeks after the workshops ended. In seeking to understand their perceptions of the experience I used their art works to prompt and clarify the conversation. We sat in the office and spread out everything they made, which prompted a rich conversation. Some of the art works they made at home and I had not seen them. I paid close attention to "notice, honor, and privilege" (Hauk, 2010, p. 10) the remembered sensory experience of art making of the individuals during these interviews. These interviews were vulnerable experiences in which some participants shared things they had never told anyone. The art making experiences and later that remembered experience prompted by the art they made, gave them a way to express experiences and emotions they previously did not have words for. I came away from each interview feeling honored and valued to have each of them share with me in that way.

Chart for Workshop Attendance and Interviews

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Participants ⁴ | Workshop 1 Self-care 07/07/2018 | Workshop 2 The Ally Within 07/14/2018 | Workshop 3 Flow 07/21/2018 | Workshop 4 Lost & Found 07/28/2018 | Workshop 5 Creating from Chaos 08/04/2018 | Workshop 6 Mandala of Self 08/11/2018 | Individual interviews 1 hour | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|

⁴ All participants are identified by a pseudonym they choose themselves to protect their anonymity.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|--|
| Everette | | | | | | | 8/16/18 | |
| Agnes | | X | X | X | | X | 8/20/18 | |
| Laurel | X | | X | X | X | X | 8/15/18 | |
| Pia | X | X | | | | X | 8/23/18 | |
| CJ | X | | | | | X | 8/16/18 | |
| Martha George | | X | X | | X | | 9/10/18 | |
| Sylvia | X | X | X | X | X | | 8/22/18 | |
| Jade | X | X | | X | | X | 8/13/18 | |
| Cameron | X | X | | X | | X | 8/21/18 | |
| Empress | X | X | X | X | X | X | 8/14/18 | |
| Anne | X | | X | | | X | 8/30/18 | |
| Lauren | X | X | X | | | | 8/28/18 | |
| Abby | | | | | | | 8/24/18 | |
| Randy | X | X | X | | | X | 8/25/18 | |
| Veronica | | | | | | X | 9/4/18 | |
| Elizabeth | | | | | | X | 8/21/18 | |
| Antonia | X | | X | X | X | X | 8/18/18 | |

Participant observation. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) wrote that “all observation involves the observer’s participation in the world being studied” (p. 49). Robson (1997) further clarifies that “a key feature of participant observer is that the observer seeks to become some kind of member of the observed group. This involves not only a physical presence and a sharing of life experiences, but also entry into their social and symbolic world through learning their social conventions and habits, their use of language and nonverbal communication...the observer also has to establish some role within the group” (p.314). I was a participant observer in this site acting in multiple roles as researcher/teacher/facilitator/friend/peer/participant. In this study, observations enabled me to better understand if and how these educators perceive their experience in these workshops with each other, and with expressive art making processes and materials that blend art therapeutic strategies with art education in this context.

Research journal. My research journal was invaluable to this site as well because I was teaching and participating so I could not take notes during the workshops. After each workshop, I went home and immediately took comprehensive notes. I would write descriptive thoughts, feelings, intuition (Combs, 2001), and perceptions of my experience that day. Later, I used

photos of the artwork as reflective inspirations so I could record gestures, speech, tone, and interactions I saw when participants interacted with the materials, the art making process, and each other in the social space of the classroom. I was also able, through my writing, to reflect on personal thoughts, feelings, reactions and biases I might be carrying with me in the research process.

Data Management.

I video recorded the workshops for future analysis because as a teacher/participant I was not free to take notes and I wanted a record not only of what was said but the act of making art in the context of the workshops. Thus, each workshop was audio and video recorded, transcribed by hand, and analyzed. This was meant to be an unobtrusive method of data collection and to allow me to capture visual information as well as audio which gave me greater insight into participants' implicit experiences. However, videotaping may have affected responses and did prove difficult to interpret. The cameras were not always aimed appropriately, sometimes they stopped working, and occasionally they fell over unnoticed on the work tables. Each artifact was used to support, or bring into question, multi-sensory experiences of the interviews and observations.

Written and recorded documentation, visual products by participants, and photographs were kept locked in my office at the university or in my studio. My visual reflections and analysis were kept in my studio at home and at my office.

Representation of findings

I represented these findings (interpretations) through expressive portraiture which is congruent with my worldview and made sense given the focus of this research study. This was a quest for understanding by presenting my interpretation of the data in a new way, expanding the

data to forms that are expressive, visual, and metaphoric. Simplicity and complexity exist simultaneously as a layered metaphor in works of visual art (Sullivan, 2010) inferring that the same artwork can mean different things, at different times, contingent on the perception of the viewer. For instance, my clumsy angel painting first was an interpretation of a story told to me by a friend and advisor to explain an experience I had. When I looked at it again through my researcher/teacher eyes, she became a metaphor for art teachers and the problems they face in trying to meet their students' needs. This complexity offered important insights into the lived experiences in this research by making meaning through the symbolic properties of visual art. Jongeward (1997) wrote that, through the creation of visual imagery, we can inquire beneath rational perspectives and reach unanticipated connections that can bring a new wholeness to the analysis of the inner experiences of participants to reveal what could not have been known any other way.

Analysis Procedures

Analysis of data via expressive portraiture

Creating artwork as a data analysis and a representation of findings in the field of qualitative research is recent but as Leavy (2015) stated, "The arts simply provide qualitative researchers a broader palette of investigative and communication tools with which to garner and relay a range of social meanings" (p. 11). It is not sufficient to simply define an event, I must analyze and attempt to portray the experience, placing it in context. Dewey, Eisner, and others have acknowledged the benefits of using multiple methods to represent and analyze the data of rich artistic educational experiences. In my search "to find frameworks and strategies for representing the aesthetics of teaching and learning" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 6)

this combination of expressive portraiture embedded within a written document is my solution to best represent experiences during and after data collection in addition to informing the analysis.

My choice of expressive visual portraiture to complete analysis and communicate findings from the workshops is based on the premise that this method will broaden understanding in the disciplines of the arts, and other fields whose boundaries are crossed in the performance of art making. My experience and dialog with these educators circled me back to the art making process they engaged in. In our workshops, art making became a form of retrospection, self-care, and restoration. Thus, representing my analysis through expressive creative activity captured feelings and ideas I didn't have words for and allowed me to intimately reflect on each participant's experience and then finally on the workshops. Grounded in the role of a/r/tographer, I could maintain my integrity as an artist, staying connected to artistic intuitive ways of knowing.

In this research, art making was an intuitive creative action, a doing in which I, as artist/researcher/teacher, explored relationships, uncovered patterns, and found meaning during the inquiry and analysis processes. Acting as a/r/tographer, I searched for order in chaos, uncovered micro and macro relationships, and found patterns that crossed multiple data sets (Sullivan, 2005). During the process of making art, I immersed myself in the data, playfully sifting and sorting through it, which is valuable "for dealing with qualitative data" (Robson, 1997, p. 377). As an a/r/tist I worked to, "construct readings of the data that move beyond descriptive accounts and realistic tales to include visual images that contribute to the interpretive conception that frame the narrative" (Sullivan, 2005, p. 199).

Research is better served informed by artistic practice that is open to the unknown, and intuition of a complex wholeness to gain clarity and insight. As I worked, I uncovered a complementary nature between the expressive portraits and data analysis, and between the

expressive portraits and the participants' experiences. A deep intimacy was created between me and each participant through the process of painting. Because I asked my workshop participants, many of them non-artists, to take risks and do things they have never done before, I also felt I should create in a way I never have before. So, I investigated and utilized an encaustic painting process to better position myself in risk and vulnerability along with my participants. I will share in the following chapters discoveries about the expressive arts entangled with my own experiences, the alchemy of making meaning through art, and insight through creativity and acts of mindfulness.

I began the process by reading and re-reading transcripts, comparing different aspects of what participants said, made, or wrote, from multiple data sources, until I felt close to their attitudes, perspectives, and experience. Once I had an impression of what I thought was important, I started to paint, visually expressing my perspective in each piece. Two notes about the way I painted. First, I wanted to empathetically place myself in my participants' shoes in the workshops. I wanted to experience a vulnerability that was similar to that of those participants who were not artists and had not engaged previously in risks of art making. As a practicing artist, I wanted to be as vulnerable in the experience as I had asked them to be, so I worked in a way I never had. I painted with an encaustic medium; a medium I had never used and with which I was not familiar. Second, in most of the workshops, I asked each of them to paint or make without a preconceived plan. For example, in one workshop we used acrylics on canvas and painted to music. I asked them to just play with and experience the paint without sketching or drawing a plan. They were to release any notion of a final product and only focus on the process. In another, they made ink blots and drew into them without a plan, just drawing out the impression of what they could see within the image and the negative spaces. I used this unplanned

spontaneous process to create these expressive portraits. I began working with only an intuitive concept in my mind and I allowed the image to develop organically.

“The development of emergent themes reflects the portraitist’s first effort to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data” (Lawrence Lightfoot, Davis, 1997, p. 185). This process is “iterative and generative” where the themes develop from the data and then the a/r/tographer gives them shape and form. “This is a disciplined, empirical process of description, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis—and an aesthetic process of narrative development” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, Davis, p. 185). Imagine this scenario written by Nicolaides (1941):

Imagine that a man from Mars or some planet totally different from ours is looking for the first time at a landscape on the earth. He sees what you see but he does not know what you know. Where he sees only a white square dot in the distance, you recognize a house having four walls within which are rooms and people. A cock’s crow informs you that there is a barnyard behind the house. Your mouth puckers at the sight of a green persimmon which may look to him like luscious fruit or a stone.

If you and the man from Mars sit down side by side to draw, the results will be vastly different. He will try to draw the strange things he sees, as far as he can, in terms of the things his senses have known during his life on Mars. You, whether consciously or not, will draw what you see in the light of your experience with those and similar things on Earth. The results will be intelligible, the one to the other, only where the experiences happen to have been similar (p. 6).

As Nicolaides demonstrates in this story, different interpretations are shaped by context, prior experience, and knowledge and it is only through conscientious preparation of the researcher to inform their vision of the portrait will there be an empathic rapport with the participant. Clifford Geertz wrote, portraits “deepen the conversation” (1973, p. 29). Portraits can focus on metaphor, symbol and the narrative which then inspire readers to think “more deeply about issues that concern them” Lawrence lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 10). Portraits as data analysis could not

only widen the audience for research such as this, which is my intent, but it could also make room for broader and more personal interpretations.

Data analysis steps

Brené Brown (2006) wrote that in research there is no path and no way of knowing what you will find. This is particularly true of arts-informed research. Some of the difficulties I faced were: acknowledging that I could not fully understand these methodologies before using them; granting my participants the freedom to describe and define/redefine the research problem; releasing my own agenda and preconceived ideas; trusting the process as a visual storytelling one.

The first step. I believe that taking an existential phenomenological theoretical perspective in data analysis honored people's lived experiences rather than setting out to prove or disprove existing theories; it allowed the problem to emerge as the research developed. The recorded semi structured interviews, the video and audio tapes of the workshops, and informal conversations were fully transcribed as I explained earlier. Once the transcriptions were complete, I watched the videos while reading the transcriptions to get a more complete picture of what happened. Facial expressions, the way people worked, and the way they worked together were added to the transcriptions. Next, I added notes from my journal to corresponding areas of the transcriptions.

The second step. I read all transcripts, notes, and reflections to get a sense of the whole experience. While I read, I asked what the underlying meaning is here, and I made a list of topics, themes, and key terms that emerged in this first pass. I merged similar themes and topics and wrote them as codes, looking for categories and interrelationships in the data. This included verbal and visual analyses of the data. Meaning that I used the stages of analysis by Carspecken

(1996) to search for minor and major codes, assembling them into categories while I searched for themes. Segments were selected for Meaning Field Analysis (Carspecken, 1996)⁵ and



FIGURE 7. RHIZOMIC CONNECTION OF DATA CODES

Reconstructive Horizon Analysis (Carspecken, 1996)⁶ to explore patterns and then norms that lie under these events. I placed all these categories on my board so I could visualize the explicit connections they made with each other. During that process, I realized not only the relationships similar codes held for each other but also the way each code and theme

connected to and relied upon the others. A rhizome like tapestry surfaced in the research in a way that a/r/tography understands as a complex web that is both relational and fluid (Irwin et al., 2006).

Through member checking, participants shared insights with me so I could construct an interpretation that was as accurate as possible. These methods helped me clarify impressions of meaning gleaned from the observations and interviews, they also increased my own awareness of personal bias or misperceptions.

The third step. As described earlier, I chose to use expressive portraiture as a non-discursive artistic expression to bring deeper understanding and insight into the lived experience of each participant. This creative process allowed me to represent complex concepts that

⁵ To write a meaning field, you select an act. You articulate the range of possible interpretations of the act (meanings) from the perspective of the first person (which is mindful of second and third person perspectives as one's meaning is always set within the intersubjective context of possible understanding). There is a bounded range of plausible interpretations, err on the side of making these as broad as possible. (notes in 612-613)

⁶ Reconstructive horizon analysis is an analytic technique that helps us derive findings from the data. The kinds of findings this analysis yields includes patterns and divergencies of meaning, a display of the complexities of what typical interpretations of the people of study looks like, an understanding of the way truth is constituted through the interpretive patterns, what relations of meaning hold.

intuitively developed while I painted. Jongeward's (1997) method grounded and organized the way I thought about my experience. She wrote,

An artist seeks to understand something about the world, about self, about materials and ways of making expressive forms. Engaging with materials, thoughts, and feelings, an artist participates in a search. This search to bring something into being requires attention to details, a sense of relatedness among all parts within a whole, and tolerance for the tension of not knowing what will emerge. Simply stated, creative process goes something like this:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| I work on something | [action/interaction] |
| Something works in me | [receptivity/transformation] |
| Something comes into being | [emergent form] |
| I come to know something | [emergent meaning] |
| Something becomes seen | [visibility to others] |
| I see myself | [self-visibility] |

(p. 8)

I worked on the paintings and, in the process, I allowed them to work on me. My thinking deepened and changed as I was receptive to the experience. Each painting emerged congruent with its own meaning and I learned through the image I created. Then, similar to sharing codes and resulting themes through member checking, I shared the images with each participant, making visible my interpretation of their experience. I asked them to respond to what they saw and felt about the image and I saw myself through their response.

Transparency

To assure transparency and the trustworthiness of this study I used an arts-informed practice of reflecting on my own thoughts and actions as teacher, observer, interviewer, art maker, and researcher by recording my thoughts after every session, documenting my thoughts, feelings, and actions in my field journal every week. I used recording devices to ensure an accurate transcript that preserved the authentic voice of my participants, when possible, and throughout the interview process. My field notes and resulting thick record reflected low inference vocabulary as a method to monitor my subjectivity. I engaged in peer debriefing and

member checking periodically and shared my visual analysis for comments and possible revision. Carspecken (1996) wrote, "any theory of truth that depends on visual perception--no matter how many sophisticated modifications it introduces to this imagery--will be flawed" (p. 17).

I understand the world is experienced and described subjectively by others in diverse contexts and, as a researcher, I can only offer a similarly contextualized and subjective interpretation of it, without the goal of generalizability but rather of honoring a personal understanding these specific participants within these contexts. Further, there are always dangers conducting research as a middle class 'white' person, raised with privilege and bias in the United States.

These include biases and misperceptions of living in and benefiting from the dominant cultures' practices of discrimination and disparagement, class oppression, systemic racism, appropriation, domination, militarism, colonialism, corporate capitalism, and embodiment denigration. Researchers have noted the complexities of conducting research without giving proper attention to assure that research is actively anti-oppressive (Creswell, 2009).

Methodological Considerations

In part three of this chapter, I reflect on the methodological considerations of the study and makes connections between and among the foundations, methods, participants, and context. I will conclude with a description of my method for representing the findings.

Validity

In addressing potential validity threats, Hutzell (2007) provided an example of emergent research that subsumes the researcher as belonging to this process when she conducted her study

in her own neighborhood. Her motives and abilities were questioned because of her outsider status and she was often met with hostility (Hutzel, 2007). Validity was constructed when she spent months building relationships and listening so that she could become a contributing member of the neighborhood, taking the time necessary to become invisible to the community as an interloper. I established myself in the hospital setting by first attending volunteer/intern orientation and training, by attending staff meetings and events, and then by teaching art to small groups of youth in therapy situations and volunteering in the art therapy classroom. By the time of data collection, I had been working with the art therapist and youth in this context for five months. Additionally, in the second setting, my participants in the art workshops were peers and teachers who learn and work in the same education department as I do. These prolonged engagements and familiar contexts helped me develop a truly collaborative relationship with all participants. Because I had prolonged engagement in the field and used member checking along the way, I ensured that their voices were as accurately portrayed as possible.

I also dealt with possible validity threats through crystallization and member checking in the qualitative and flexible design of this research, allowing the focus to be on the responses and perspectives of these participants (MacDonald, 2012). I sought insight and understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their lived experience, in multiple and holistic and ways that allowed both the participants and this researcher to share and learn together. Richardson (2000) wrote,

In postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we do not triangulate, we *crystallize*. . . . I propose that the central image for “validity” for postmodern texts is not the triangle—a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. . . . Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know (p. 934).

The concept of crystallization, as I understand and used it, is a framework for qualitative research that blends multiple types of representation and analysis into a clear form “that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers’ vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them” (Ellingson, 2008, p. 4). It uniquely fits the goals of researchers who assume a creative interpretive analytic method and practice, utilize more than one genre, view knowledge as socially constructed, and adopt a reflexive approach. Most importantly for this research, it draws on the interweaving or blending of more than one way of representing data or knowing. Working in my artist/researcher role, I pulled data from observations, interviews, video, and audio recordings, reflections, and conversations to understand what my participants experienced in the process of making these projects. When I used a variety of evidence across data sources, weaving them together, I could find themes that I perceived to resonate with each participant and then merging commonalities into larger themes that connected to and moved across everyone’s experiences.

Because I immersed myself across multiple data sources and intuitively painted portraits of these participants’ experiences as data analysis, I used member checking to contribute to the validity of the study. I utilized these portraits to elicit a conversation from each participant about how they might interpret the portrait asking what do you see, and how does this image make you feel? Their responses enabled me to produce a final narrative that portrayed both my perceptions and the participants’ perceptions of their experience.

Ethical considerations

Participants were completely protected and not put at risk during this study. It was clearly outlined at the beginning of the process that I am a researcher and that I would be observing,

teaching, assisting, and taking notes, documenting their experiences throughout the research process. I created assent and consent forms that the art therapist, patients in the art therapy classroom, professional staff, participants of the studio art workshops, and myself went over together for clarity and understanding. I clarified that there will not be any special privilege for participating in the study and that participants can opt out at any time. All documents and conversations clearly stated that the study was voluntary and that signing the assent form does not mean they cannot change their minds later.

Further, participants and sites remained anonymous in the study, as pseudonyms were used for their names. There were no place or personal identifiers in the collected data other than using their roles of educator, patient, or therapist. Participation was voluntary and the participants were either new or veteran members of the therapy or studio art class. This inherently limited the study to only those who were interested in the arts, had experience in the class, or those who were at least interested or chose to be involved in an arts-based activity. Also, as a volunteer and researcher in a therapeutic hospital environment, I was hyper-aware of maintaining appropriate boundaries around what subject matters can and cannot be discussed in this setting. All HIPAA regulations were followed, which may or may not affect the outcome of the study.

Generalizability

In this study, in these contexts, in the traditional sense, these findings may not be generalizable. This workshop community, taught by this artist/researcher/teacher, during a specific time in a unique setting have originated results that have been influenced by numerous unique factors that generalizability may not be possible. However, through rich and faithful portrayal, the reader may recognize qualities that have common ground with their own lived

experiences. The reader, welcomed into this world, could gain new understanding through these unique individuals, contexts, and experiences that may otherwise be impossible. Finding the familiar through metaphor, narrative, and image might spark a familiarity in the viewer.

Conclusion

This research, as a qualitative arts-informed transdisciplinary form of constructing new knowledge through sharing and collaboration, exemplifies a practice that celebrates holistic, and out of the box thinking about a real-world question. It is an alternative educational model that privileges a form of social resistance to contemporary art education discourses and standards that do not currently embrace studio arts unique potential to engender personal expression and self-advocacy. This conceptualization disrupts binary ways of thinking about art education and the way it is enacted in multiple spaces.

Art making is how I make meaning and is my framework for exploration and analysis and this research is rooted in my artistic practice as artist and art educator. As such, "the processes of art making inform the inquiry in ways consistent with the artistic sensitivities and technical (artistic) strengths of the researcher in concert with the overall spirit and purpose of the inquiry" (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 61). Words alone are rarely adequate to tell the whole story (Barone & Eisner, 2012) and because of this "arts-based research counteracts the hegemony and linearity in written texts, increases voice and reflexivity in the research process, and expands the possibilities of multiple and diverse realities and understandings" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 268).

To address this concept, I honored data grounded in the visual products and processes of people and tried not to privilege text over images (Leavy, 2012). In this way the many languages of art allowed us to be visual storytellers about our experiences through our own voices and

representations. Stories that push out preconceived notions, misperceptions, and my own research agenda so that we can become witness to the experiences of each other. This happened in our co-created space of community, sharing information through creative activity and individual experience in ways that may promote growth and engender new knowledge.

In the next chapter, I will add structure to the research by describing the setting and telling the story of my observations of an art therapy practice in a small midwestern hospital and introduce the art therapist. This exploration moves toward answering the research question of how an art therapist enacts, perceives, and experiences their art therapeutic practice with adolescents in the context of a small midwestern psychiatric hospital.

In chapter five I will describe how I used this experience to construct, in collaboration with the art therapist and my research assistant, six art studio workshops that blended concepts of art education with tenets of art therapy.

Chapter Four: Hitting the Ground Running

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to first describe the setting of this research project and then findings from my observation and interview experience with Randy⁷, the art therapist at a small midwestern psychiatric hospital. This chapter describes the site, and my observation of the way the art therapist enacted his role within his art therapy practice. This chapter addresses the research question of how this art therapist enacts, perceives, and experiences their art therapeutic practice with adolescents in the context of a small midwestern psychiatric hospital. This bleeds into chapter five in which I share analysis of my findings at this site and detail the way the art therapist, my research assistant, and I collaborated in planning sessions to construct the curriculum for the six studio art workshops that blended concepts from art education with values of art therapy.

Findings With An Art Therapist

Research question: How does an art therapist enact, perceive, and experience their art therapeutic practice with adolescents in the context of a small midwestern psychiatric hospital?

The hospital and the room

The psychiatric hospital resides on the outskirts of a midwestern university town and since 1992 has dedicated itself to serving patients as they work toward restoring their health and getting a fresh start. The Hospital provides personalized outpatient and inpatient treatment programs for each patient. The staff includes board-certified doctors and clinicians that specialize in both adult and youth programs. They also provide group and individual therapy,

⁷ A reminder that all names, except the researcher, are self-chosen pseudonyms.

including art, music and recreational therapies. This hospital offers no long-term care, it is rather a place to transition to outpatient therapy or rehab from drug use or sometimes functions as a safe place for youth who have nowhere else to go or must leave a dangerous situation quickly. Many of the youth I met are in foster care or between placements. Some live at CPS until a foster family can be identified. The Hospital hosts patients as young as four up through adulthood. Many are admitted repeatedly because they are not in a place where continued treatment can happen, or they are returned to an environment that is not safe. When they are returned to an unsafe situation, the hospital serves as a place to get grounded, but the cycle reoccurs until someone steps in to create a change. Patients have no access to the out of doors or school instruction and programs only run on a three to five-day cycle so a patient's growth may stall or deteriorate after too long a stay.

This hospital is where I took on the role of observer/participant while exploring the practice of a contemporary art therapist, once a week for four weeks in May 2018. I had volunteered in this space and with this population for the previous five months, so they are familiar with me. The art therapist has practiced here for six years and he conducts group art therapy classes for adults, adolescents, and children. Sessions last one and a half hours and he normally conducts three sessions a day. I observed and assisted in his Monday morning sessions that serve adolescents. My focus was on the way the art therapist enacted his role in the classroom, his interactions with the youth, and the way the youth participate in the art making. As a volunteer and then observer, I usually arrived thirty minutes before the session, so he could brief me on his plan for the morning. I sat at one of the tables to take written notes or make drawings and sometimes I helped in the classroom. I passed out supplies, assisted the youth with art methods they were trying out, participated in conversations, and answered any questions they

might have.

Each Monday morning, I entered the hospital and announced myself to the receptionist. She would call the art therapist on an intercom, and he would come out to meet me. All the doors are kept locked, so I must be escorted to the art room each time. There are two locked entrances and several long hallways between reception and the art room. The art therapist unlocks the door to the classroom, and I walk from a dark carpeted hall into a light and airy space that would feel familiar to any art teacher. The floor abruptly transitions from the carpeted hallway to light gray linoleum. There are scraps of paper, plastic beads, and paint splatters on the floor inviting the creatively uninhibited.



FIGURE 8. ART THERAPY CLASSROOM



FIGURE 10. ART THERAPY CLASSROOM SINK

Moving counterclockwise around the room are light gray cupboards and a Formica counter space, only interrupted by a paint splattered stainless steel sink. Along the wall far to the right, are three large metal cabinets, of varying styles and sizes, with locks on them and a single set of drying shelves for storage

space. The cabinets and the cupboards above the sink and counter are locked. A torn paper sign is taped to each cabinet door that states DANGER KEEP OUT. The drying rack is piled with artwork and so are shelves along the



FIGURE 9. ART THERAPY CUPBOARD

wall directly across from me at the back of the room. Above those shelves is a window that looks out onto an inner courtyard.

The window does not open and later I learned that use of the courtyard is limited and open only to adults as there is a real fear, proven by past experiences, of attempts to escape. There is a desk next to the window piled high with papers and art projects, a computer, and a block of white firing clay. In the center of the room are two worktables, a long rectangular one in front and a small round one toward the back of the room. There are chairs for twelve people to sit comfortably and a stack of extra chairs in front of the desk. The wall to my left leads back up to the door and is empty of shelves but covered with the artwork of former and present patients. These range from drawings to paintings to posters and prints.



FIGURE 11. RANDY'S DESK

Randy

Randy (self-chosen pseudonym), spoke to me during our interview (05/30/2018) about how he came to be an art therapist. He said he feels like he has been using art to analyze himself since he was a youth. He believes it could be because he was adopted from an orphanage when he was very young and, as a result, has always dealt with separation issues and anxiety. He stated; *Art was the one thing I always knew was going to be there for me. It didn't matter if it was good or not. I was able to submerge myself in creative things.* He said, *Whenever kids are having issues at the center...I can therapeutically tie in my experiences and that helps them to feel more comfortable with some of the stuff that they may be going through.*

He said that throughout school art always gave him a sense of freedom and

accomplishment that the other content areas lacked. The influence of an inspiring third grade teacher was particularly notable. He became emotional when he spoke about her and shared that she was the first person who showed him that art could be more than just play. He said,

One Friday she told everyone to come to school dressed like a cowboy. Then, at lunch, she took us all out to the parking lot and taught us how to line dance. She was creative in all areas. Before she left, she drew each of us in profile as a gift. From what I hear now from the kids, school is geared toward tests. They don't read great books anymore, or even any books. We seem to be becoming simplistic. There is no deep thinking anymore. Where is the intellect? They miss the whole process that goes into creating. They see and then they think they can do it. That leads to frustration because the process is hidden. When they only see the product without learning the process, they are missing the point. It takes hours, many mistakes, and still it is never done or perfect. It's that resilience and creativity we need to get back to. Kids think wonderment and creativity is for children. They want to grow up fast, have babies, go to concerts. They think being an adult is the answer.

Randy shared (04/30/2018) that when he attended college, his major was art education, but it lacked something he could not put a name to. He came home for break and his mother showed him a pamphlet she had just received from the university. It was an advertisement for a new program in art therapy. He checked it out and consequently changed his major. He has been doing this work ever since. It was interesting to note that Randy at first wanted to be an art educator and this feels important to me because later, in an interview (08/14/2018) with my research assistant, she had the opposite experience. She was studying to be an art therapist, but she found herself dissatisfied with that path and switched to art education. Albert (2010) wrote about her journey of being both an art educator and an art therapist. She understood that students

are in need everywhere and she could adapt and blend these two models and increase her ability to reach out to troubled individuals in either setting. She found that integrating art education pedagogy with art therapy process did not diminish the power of either but provided a structure for the making of personally meaningful art (Albert, 2010).

Thinking as a teacher and knowing that I can follow the path of my students for many years, I asked Randy if he keeps in touch with his patients after they leave. He said he usually never hears from them unless they cycle through treatment again. The hospital is only a short-term care facility. A place to even out or dry out so that extended treatment as an outpatient can be effective. Unfortunately, many are released from the hospital and never seek further treatment so the cycle repeats itself until something changes. He said sometimes when he sees them again, they tell him about work they did on the outside that was ignited in the art room. His favorite was a gentleman who was admitted with a very rough story and according to his file was a dangerous individual. Randy said (04/30/2018), *I was apprehensive at first to work with him. I never thought he would be someone who would take to the arts. I've seen him a few times now and every time, he finds fulfillment and peace in his art making. The last time I saw him he told me that he created a studio in his home. He still has a long way to go but he appears to be more put together.*

What I did

I observed each Monday morning in this space, during the art therapist's adolescent sessions for four weeks. Because of my secondary teaching experience, my observations at a county jail, and my work at a Boys and Girls Club, my interest resides with adolescents rather than children or adults. Monday mornings were the best time in his schedule for me to observe this age group and I arrived every Monday morning during May of 2018. Census is light at the

hospital in the summer and almost nonexistent for children and teens in June, July, and August, so this was an appropriate time to begin and end my observations there. During the school year, most children and teens are sent for inpatient treatment by the school system. During the summer, youth are sent by parents, CPS, or by the police, sometimes in shackles and handcuffs. Many are lost track of during the summer.

Seven to eighteen youth file into the room on these Mondays, led by the MHT (mental health technician) that is assigned to them that day. They shuffle around to find a seat. Sometimes the MHT comes in and sits with them, sometimes they sit out in the hall. There may also be students interning from local universities observing and they often join the youth in art making. Randy stands by the door to take attendance by asking their name and how they feel. He asks them to use either a descriptive word for how they feel or a number from one to ten. One being happy and content, ten being depressed, angry or I do not want to be here. I heard more positive answers than negative.

The teens arrive dressed in everyday clothing or paper scrubs. They do not have belts for their pants or shoe strings in their shoes. Anything they might use to harm themselves or others is restricted or locked away. All art making tools are locked in cabinets and counted at the end of every session. After Randy checks everyone in and hands out paperwork to those who are new, he introduces the room and unlocks the cabinets. Introducing the room means he unlocks each cabinet, opens the door, and describes the art supplies that are available inside. The first ten minutes feels like confusion to the uninitiated but that is because everyone wants to do, make, or learn something different and Randy rushes around to make sure everyone has the supplies they need. He makes rounds a second time to teach concepts to those who are trying something new or who ask for help. He often utilizes these opportunities to promote individual conversation, to

check in, or to listen if they wish to talk or have a concern. One session could consist of shaving cream printmaking, splatter painting, bubble painting, drawing, marbling, sculpting in clay or making play dough. All these activities can be happening at once to allow each person the freedom of individual creative expression.

There is a tension here between the images of children being locked in, not being free to go outside, arriving in shackles, and the assumption that this is a safe space where they can turn on free creative expression. Can we express freely when we are locked up or locked in?

However, listening to the conversations of the adolescents with Randy and each other, many of them consider this a safe space away from the abuse and trauma of the world outside. Some of these youth do not know where they are going when they leave here. Their family structure has fallen apart or never existed and they may have been removed from one home, not yet knowing where they would go next. The hospital serves as a place of transition and there is a great deal of fear and anxiety for these adolescents out in the world. This makes me wonder, are they locked in or are the dangers, abuse, and trauma of the world locked out. In this case, most feel like this is a safe place in which they can freely express themselves, albeit a temporary reprieve.

I observed a few who are sullen and quietly rebellious, putting their heads down on the table in a statement that they will not participate. Sometimes the others draw them out and sometimes not. In this environment, they are left to decide for themselves how they want to participate in these activities. Patients are not allowed to stay in bed or in their rooms all day; they must go to the therapeutic counseling and activities that are part of their prescribed program, but they can decide how they will participate in these sessions. This allows them to withdraw until they feel safe enough to be part of the group.

I have been here long enough to see the revolving door of the hospital. Some of the teens

have returned and they remember me. Thus, I can sometimes see the progress they have made in engagement or participation. There is a relief on many of their faces when they return, this is a place they are familiar with. There is a sense of belonging and even pride when they can show another patient where the paint is kept or how to make something that is particular to this space or explain the rules of the art room to someone new. Many of them have never known security or the familiarity of consistency. They know, in here, they will be fed, clothed, protected, have a warm place to sleep without fear, most importantly they will be listened to and respected.

Gender

When I interact with or observe these adolescents, I deliberately choose not to note or label their gender without first asking for preferred pronouns. I have observed, both here and in the classroom, that gender is notably fluid while youth are figuring out who they are. I have observed here that Randy and other adults honor these wishes. This is one way that Randy can promote this classroom as a safe place of respect and personal freedom of expression. When he asks their name, they give the name they wish to be called, pronouns they wish used, and these might change from day to day. These teens, without a stable family, often struggle and grasp at any identity, anyone, or anything that makes them feel grounded and stable, even if it is not safe. Some of the choices I heard are joining a gang, identifying as a cutter, an addict, a criminal, or the black sheep of their family. For most of them, safety and consistency are unfamiliar concepts.

The freedom of gender fluidity is a safe way to make their own choices, choose their own path, decide for themselves who they are. They are free here to try things on and see what fits. This autonomy is important because there is so little in their lives they can control. Home for most of them is a place to be feared and protected from, not a place of safety. One day Randy engaged with a youth while they worked with clay and they told him that they were afraid to go

home. This worry overshadowed everything because they did not know where they were going and time in the clinic was almost over. I noticed that when he engages in conversation while they are working on something expressive, they are more likely to be verbally expressive. The expressive creative activity in this setting tended to increase the verbal expression of participants. Meaning they more freely shared difficult personal things with a group of people they did not know well while everyone was engaged in creative activity. I was often amazed how quickly I have seen that happen in the context of an art making session, whatever the setting.

Expressive Therapy Continuum (ETC)

Referring to the literature review, Randy is a practitioner of Expressive Therapy Continuum (ETC)⁸. A triad of artwork-patient-therapist with reflection at the center. He works under the premise that art therapy can rekindle creativity and heal connection to self and others. He feels that this method is valuable to his practice in this setting because many times he sees teens with attachment disorders⁹ meaning that they are not always able to verbally explain or understand their emotions. Studies in art therapy have shown that ETC can restore the ability to verbalize emotions, understand empathy, and emotionally self-regulate (Lusebrink, 2004, 2010). Hinz (2009) wrote that the creative process of ETC can sooth the human mind from pathogenic care and correlating symptoms. By which I mean, the focus of ETC is on the strengths of the client and their difficulties processing information, rather than diagnostic categories pertaining to psychopathology (Lusebrink, 2004, 2010). Randy works to create a safe environment where clients can express themselves, facilitate engagement in therapy, and allow each individual to

⁸ **Expressive Therapies Continuum.** A means to classify and organize art media interactions with the advancement of complex mental and emotional processing (Hinz, 2009).

⁹ **Attachment Disorder.** An overall global model of symptomology nonspecific to one but a combination of elements of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and other DSM diagnoses (Potter, Chevy, Amaya-Jackson, O'Donnell, & Murphy, 2009).

remain uniquely themselves, giving them access to materials they feel most comfortable with. He believes that using ETC, clients may meet goals of better coping mechanisms, greater self-esteem, insight, self-control, and empathy.

Randy said (05/30/2018) that some patients come into the art room in a bad mood and he observes their mood has improved when they leave. Patients have described to him their temperaments are calmer, cathartic, and positive and they are better able to release and express feelings and emotions appropriately. Patients have been able to identify, use, and exhibit different methods of expression, and a behavior change after art sessions has been observed by other staff members. Randy further said that expanding to other arts-based modalities may have a greater impact on patients. This hospital has only one art room and art therapist, a music therapist who visits once a week to provide a group therapy session, and physical play therapy conducted in a small gym on site. Randy is inspired by the improvements he sees from these therapies and works to provide as much consistent creative care as he can.

All levels of ETC are thought to promote healing through the reintegration of both sides of the brain which, Randy believes, can happen during the experience of flow. Undergoing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008) “clients/students can experience highly focused behavior, an altered sense of time, and moments of peak joy” (Lusebrink & Hinz, 2017, p. 50).

Flow

Time in the art room often seems suspended or sped up and Randy sometimes calls this a *time warp phenomenon*. Time doesn’t exist at all and then suddenly it is over. The students will look up and exclaim, for instance, “Where did the time go?” “I don’t want to leave yet!” I heard many of these same exclamations during my time as a high school art teacher. Students will get in the flow of art making and time slips by unnoticed.

The experience of flow was Friedl Dicker Brandeis gift to the young artists in the Nazi concentration camp. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) described flow as “intense concentration on the present which relieves us of usual fears...” (112). While many artists in the Nazi internment camp recorded the awful circumstances in which they were imprisoned, Dicker Brandeis provided aesthetic experiences for the children in her charge (Wix, 2009). By teaching them to observe and experience their visual world through flow she enabled them to live imaginatively in horrific conditions. She used the view out of the window. A small reproduction of a master’s work. She tapped into their dreams and hopes for the future.

The experience of flow during art making is something Randy encourages his patients to take home with them. Many complain of boredom in their lives. Boredom slows time down and makes an hour or a day seem interminable. They are bored in the hospital, bored at home because caregivers take away phones, tv, video games, or ground them. In school, they might sit in suspension for hours. Teaching them the art of being creative, no matter their circumstance, can alleviate much of the boredom and uselessness they feel. As a solution, Randy attempts to give them tools they can use outside of the hospital, outside of the art classroom. Many times, they do not, or believe they do not, have the luxury of being creative. We may not think of having access to the arts or art making materials as uncommon because maybe it is common for us. But we would be thinking from a place of privilege when we assume that.

This has also challenged my assumption that parents teach and encourage creative activities in the home. That is not everyone’s experience. In conversations with other educators and through my outreach experience with the art center, I have found that many children go to school not knowing how to use scissors, hold crayons, and are unable to creatively entertain themselves. I have found that many children and teens do not have access to traditional art

materials at home, or do not have caregivers who are able to or think to provide art materials so they can entertain themselves through creative activities and develop their imagination. They are not given opportunities or shown ways to express themselves creatively, a voice that may help them problem solve, process, or express emotions.

Randy promotes notions of learning to make the best of things, using creative voice and practicing imaginative skills in his sessions with the adolescents. Helping these youth look for or discover opportunities to be creative, gives them a chance to discover passion, engagement, success, challenge, and flow outside of the classroom or hospital. When he has an opening to promote this, he teaches them how to make playdough out of flour, salt, and oil, how to fold origami from simple squares of paper, and how to create sculpture and collage out of scraps of material, paper, and found objects. I have observed the joy several of these teens have found when they are able to pass on this knowledge to others. It is almost as if they have discovered a great secret.

Preservation

Art, as a reflective tool, can be used to grow and learn or it can be an escape. Randy explained that escape can often look like preservation. Preservation is when someone is stuck in a cycle. They may do something repeatedly, or they might continually wad up and throw away their work saying it is never good enough. They are cycling, preserving because they cannot move past it. This can reflect the way they deal with life. They get stuck in thoughts of not good enough, it is not perfect, or it did not work out the way they wanted which translates to how they deal with jobs-kids-school-family-themselves-life. Randy said this is one of the reasons it is so important to let his patients know that there is not a right or wrong way to create art. He said (04/30/2018), *My mother used to always tell me to stop just short of done. Never judge artwork*

or yourself because neither is ever truly finished. This way of thinking helps patients/students think around issues of preservation. When Randy sees this in the art therapy setting, he will sit down with the patient and talk about how individual art making is and that there is never just one way to make art, all the ways are right. I use this technique as an art teacher, but I never thought deeply enough about the way it translates to life choices outside the classroom.

Reflection

The ability to reflect or enter your own thoughts can be seen in the art therapy room in many ways. During one observation (05/14/2018) three teens were sitting together playing with shaving cream. They made piles of it on the table and mixed it with different colors of paint. They covered their hands, swirled it on the table and built colorful towers with it. Shaving cream is an expansive material meaning that it is difficult to manipulate and control. Randy



FIGURE 12. SHAVING CREAM ART

explained that working expansively keeps patients outside of themselves, not allowing introspection. As the teens grew more comfortable in the room they transitioned from shaving cream to clay. Clay is less expansive and can be more deliberately manipulated. I watched as they gradually became quieter, moving into their thoughts as they molded the clay. This is a sign of growth that Randy looks for. Some youth will continue with the same material never ready to enter their own thoughts, while others show signs of a willingness to be with themselves. This is one instance of how I learned that art therapy considers the material in relation to psychosis or trauma. Randy often judges the room before getting out certain materials much the way a teacher will gauge the room before deciding how to proceed with a lesson. I had never connected

materials to feelings before, so this was new to me. He told me that the way a person uses a material and the materials they choose to work with is very telling in what they are experiencing in that moment.

Several Directives¹⁰

The bridge directive. Randy most often utilizes free expression with the teens because they rebel against a directive. It feels too much like school. They do not have many choices or control in their lives so in the art room they want to freely express themselves. Make their own choices. Do their own thing. But there were a few times that I did get to observe a directive.

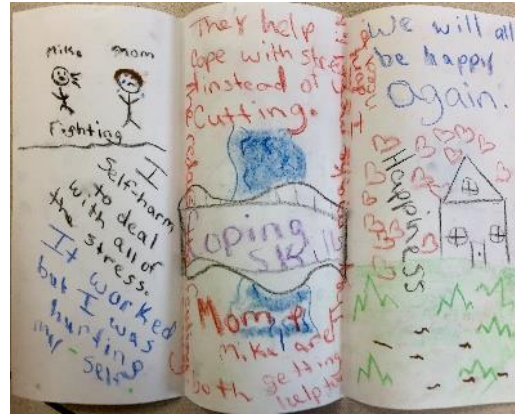


FIGURE 13. YOUTH BRIDGE DIRECTIVE ARTWORK

Randy began this directive (05/21/2018) by handing out large paper, folded in thirds, to everyone. This directive is called the bridge drawing and it allows them to visualize their growth. He held up an example and explained the purpose of the exercise. He told them that through this drawing, they will be able to illustrate and visually see their growth from before they arrived through today. On the first third of the paper, they are to illustrate the past. What happened that put them here? In the center third, they are to illustrate where they are now. What is their current emotional state? How are they feeling right now? If they have been here before, they can reflect

¹⁰ In art therapy a directive is similar to a lesson. The terms can easily be exchanged.

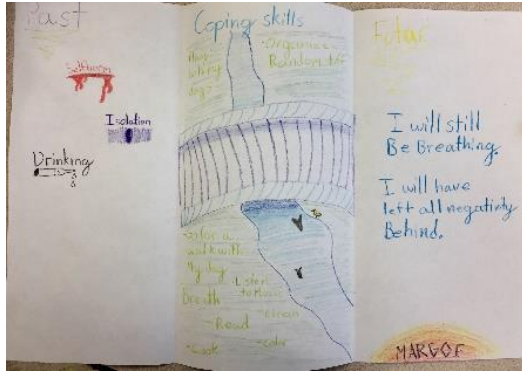


FIGURE 14. YOUTH BRIDGE DIRECTIVE ARTWORK

on what is different this time. The final third is about goals. What do they hope for the future and how is what they are doing now going to manifest what they envision for the future? Do they match? Is there an obvious path? Next, he opened all the cabinets and said they could use any media they wished. Once settled with their chosen materials, they quietly

engaged in the project. The radio played in the background. I observed that many of them started with the past third and chose black or dark colors. One individual started with the present. The present seemed to come faster and easier for some of them. When we were halfway through the period, Randy told them they could stop if they wanted to and move on to something else. This way he allowed them an out if it became too difficult or emotional and they could stop and pick it up next time.



FIGURE 15. YOUTH AFFIRMATION PILLOW

Affirmation pillows. A three-dimensional object I

observed (05/07/2018) them make were positive affirmation pillows. These are made from recycled t-shirts, stuffed, and hot glued together since sewing materials are out of bounds.

Randy would ask them to put an affirmation, or an essential oil, or



FIGURE 16. YOUTH AFFIRMATION PILLOW

a precious object inside before the pillows, which often become bears or pocket monsters, are closed.

These stuffed creatures are often used by the youth to protect themselves from their fears, their inner monsters.

Transition

Transitioning objects provide a kind of closure of their time in the hospital. A freedom and release to move from one place to another. I witnessed many times when a teen is looking forward to being released, they are also sad to leave this place and the friends they made. Transition pieces can be in the form of posters, cards, or letters filled with affirmations for friends they are leaving behind or t-shirts that are decorated and then signed by everyone that they can wear home as a keepsake. Having treasures to take with them serve as a reminder of the personal work they did and helps them remember to use the skills they learned while they were here.

Cleaning up provides the same kind of closure that allows an easier transition from one place to another. It is often a difficult process because the youth usually do not want to stop or leave this creative space. This is a precious time where they can express themselves and have a little personal freedom and choice. Randy reminded me that cleaning up provides closure and closure allows an ending. Closure before moving on is a vital survival skill to teach and model for these adolescents.

Conclusion

During my time with Randy, we began to discuss what studio art workshops that blended art education and art therapy would look like. He was excited about the possibilities this might hold and offered his assistance in creating these workshops. As a result of my ongoing

relationship with him, and my relationship with a graduate student (Empress¹¹) in art education who had also minored in art therapy, we began to hold weekly planning meetings throughout June and July in a local coffee shop. This was a true collaborative partnership through which we all learned together, bringing our unique and individual skills to the table. I believe this is how we were able to create a true blending that moved across art disciplines. We respected the knowledge and talents each of us gave to the project. In the end it was decided that I would lead and teach the workshops, Randy would take on the role of co-constructor of the curriculum and participant, and Empress would act as co-constructor of the curriculum, participant in her own art making experience, and research assistant by taking photos, helping with the setup and cleanup of each workshop, share reflections with me, and later it was decided she would transcribe the interviews.

In this chapter, I illustrated my time at the psychiatric hospital with Randy, immersed in his art therapy practice. I shared information about Randy the art therapist from my observations blended with information from the two interviews I conducted with him. This exploration was important to this research so I could construct a curriculum that blended aspects of art education with values from this art therapist's practice. In chapter five I will share an analysis of my findings from this site and detail our collaboration to construct the curriculum for six studio art workshops that blended concepts from art education with values of art therapy.

¹¹ The pseudonym my research assistant chose for herself.

Chapter Five: The Curriculum Planning Sessions

Introduction

In chapter four I explored my time at the psychiatric hospital with Randy, the art therapist, and the adolescents who participated in his group art therapy sessions. This time was valuable to my research because my purpose was to investigate ways these concepts might be beneficial to the art education classroom and to art educators. Art therapy and art education share the same roots and speak the same creative language of art. Lowenfeld (1957) bridged these two fields in his innovative book and many art educators and art therapists view their fields through his child centered lens. I hope that by identifying places of intersection, the differences may not seem so dissimilar.

This transitions to chapter five in which I discuss what I explored and what these findings might have to offer a curriculum that blends art education and art therapy. Next, I discuss our collaborative planning sessions for the studio art workshops and share the curriculum we created. An increasing number of students in our schools who have experienced trauma are labeled at risk. Often this label means that trauma may affect their capacity to learn and function in a social context like a classroom in a school environment. Many students are struggling with teen pregnancy, separation from families and refugee status, sexual abuse, homelessness, and substance abuse, to name just a few troubling issues they might bring into the classroom. Regardless of the reason or the degree to which they have experienced trauma, many students in all types of educational settings have and are experiencing traumatic stress personally and collectively, and it is becoming more vital that teachers have the tools and resources to serve the needs of all students.

An Exploration of Findings

What did I explore?

In this research, I sought to address the issue of teachers' preparedness in the face of identified and unidentified traumas students may have experienced by broadening the tools available to teachers in the classroom. My purpose in this segment of the research was to explore and understand ways this art therapist enacts his practice so I could investigate the possibility of designing a curriculum that blends values of art education and art therapy. My hope was to create a more holistic view of what art education could look like in our schools.

Research question: What is the nature of a collaborative process, between an art educator and an art therapist, to design a curriculum that blends the tenets and practices of both fields?

What was the point?

Much of the research I found on integrating this type of pedagogy came from the perspective of art therapists who later became art educators and integrated their art therapy practice in the classroom. It is my hope to offer a different perspective and show that a classroom teacher might facilitate, in an education setting, an art classroom that can have therapeutic ends. This perspective is not meant to encourage educators to act as art therapists, a role they are not qualified to take on, but to help them develop a safe and creative space, with students at the center, that might better meet students' needs as people with feelings (Andrus, 2006).

What did it offer?

If art teachers could collaborate with art therapists, hear their stories, strategies, and challenges, it may help them explore pedagogy and curriculum, while blurring boundaries between art education and art therapy methods in the classroom. It offered me an opportunity to do this and share what I found.

Choice. The curriculum in the art therapy classroom was open, flexible, and offered fluid boundaries. The adolescents were given choices and options, even within directives, rather than an “irrelevant curriculum that students must endure and frequently ignore” (Barth, 1991, p. 126). Randy most often offered free self-expression rather than directives, and choice of material patients were comfortable with. After introductions, I could see on the faces of the youth that they were waiting to be told what to do. I saw signs of relief in their body language and attitude when they realized they could choose what they wanted to do and materials they were most comfortable with. This was interesting for me to watch because, in my teaching experience, I often got the opposite reaction. High school students are accustomed to being given assignments, direction, worksheets to fill out, and tests where only the right answer is acceptable that when I gave open ended assignments and creative problems to solve, they became anxious and stressed out. They wanted step by step directions with a specific end. Many of them might be taking art for the first time and had a lot of fear around the uncertain outcomes of an art project. The adolescents in the art therapy setting had no such fear. For them, this was a place where their choices were respected, and they felt free to participate, experiment, play, or not. This freedom made them feel valued and safe, giving them a certain amount of control and autonomy.

Another reason choice is useful in this environment is that patients are divided into groups of children age four to twelve, adolescents age twelve to eighteen, and adults. The adolescents I observed, as opposed to a traditional school setting, are mixed together in the same setting even though they are in different grades and functioning at different developmental levels in both maturity and art making experience.

Safe environment. Randy promoted a safe environment of free expression in the art room even though his patients sometimes arrive at the hospital in restraints and are locked in. The

hospital offers no education curriculum, patients are not permitted outdoors, and visitation with the family is limited to twice a week, for only three hours each time. The days are structured with groups and individuals moving from one planned activity or therapy session or doctor appointment to the next. This sounds very prescriptive, but it actually gives the adolescents a consistent daily routine, which provides a sense of security and safety.

I reflected earlier that it feels like a conflict to ask for creative freedom in an environment where everything and everyone is either locked up or locked in. But I intuitively sense these adolescents feel safe here to be themselves. It may not be so much that they are locked in but maybe it is that the danger is locked out. It is a place where they can remove their armor if they wish. Here, they can express themselves creatively and appropriately without fear of punishment, or ridicule. The youth make friends quickly in this environment. Many come in with the feeling of being an outsider and viewing themselves as 'other' and they feel like they do not fit in the outside world. In here, however, they find common ground with peers who recognize and gravitate toward each other.

Randy provided a psychologically safe environment in several ways. First, he listened to them. When patients came into the room, he asked for their name and how they were feeling. They saw him write their responses down and when they were undecided about what name they wished to be called, they noticed that he did not read back to them the official name he had on his paper, and neither did he contradict them. He simply waited for each of them to decide and then he honored their choice. It seemed like such a small thing, but it was a really big move. I could see bodies relax and shoulders untighten once they realized their choice was accepted without judgment or question. Another way he made them feel safe was when he walked around the room to touch base with them or teach a concept or help with a problem, he either sat or

kneeled so he was at eye level when they spoke. As I watched him do this, there was a sense that only the two of them were in the room. The teens felt like they could talk about anything with him and he listened without judgment.

Despite this sometimes being an emotionally charged environment with the potential for acting out sometimes with violence, Randy created a supportive environment. He quickly established clear boundaries and expectations, while offering a nonjudgmental space to take risks. He was firm but authentic with them. Several times I heard a youth use a swear word and another would step up to say that that is not acceptable in this space.

Relationships. Randy understood that most of his young patients do not trust adults. The adults in their lives have let them down in some way, so he is careful to show each of them respect, to listen to them, and grant their wishes as much as that is possible. He is patient and has a natural ability to connect to the teens. In this context, the discussions he facilitates and the relationships he creates are at the heart of the therapy process. Relationship building and communication, I believe, are also at the heart of the classroom as it represents “the meaning system mutually constructed by teachers and their students... Dialogue [contributes] to reflective awareness in teacher[s] and students [and] provides opportunities for deepened relations with others” (Greene, 1991, p. 8). Through meaningful dialogue, Randy finds his work with these patients rewarding. He feels like working with them is a circular process in which he gives to them and, in turn, they give back to him. According to Freire (2000), “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (pp. 92-93). Dialogue fosters communication and art is about communication. In this environment and an educational one, communication is a relationship that connects teaching and learning.

Process over product. In the art therapy room, the art making focus was on process rather

than product. The hospital is in a constant state of flux because the programs it offers are short term and out-patient care is often nonexistent. Randy describes this as a revolving door system. In the short time I volunteered and then conducted research there, I have seen patients cycle through the programs more than once. Enough times that we recognized each other. This fluctuating census makes it difficult to complete a project and the art room is filled with left behind and incomplete artworks. There were a few times the youth would take projects with them. Most of the time these were gifts they made for someone or, like the affirmation pillows, projects that had a purpose beyond the process of making them.

I observed that without the expectation of a final product, the worry of assessment, the teens could indulge in creative play and experimentation. As Kramer (1980) noted, one difference between art therapy and art education is that art therapy emphasizes visual art processes to identify and reconcile emotional conflicts for treatment while art education teaches students to produce and critique art products. A focus on process allowed the youth to experiment and play. They took creative risks it is difficult to inspire students to do in school.

School is sometimes an environment of fear to fail rather than one that grants the freedom to experiment and see what happens, although there are many curricular frameworks and many art teachers who encourage and permit freedom to experiment. When students find themselves in school settings or school classrooms where there is an environment that induces fear to fail reactions it is often because teachers are required to follow mandates for standardized curriculum. Teachers may not be knowledgeable about how to differentiate curricula, or may not have time/materials to do so, or classmates are intimidating & teachers do not monitor bullying, etc. Neither classrooms nor teachers are 'inherently' or 'universally' unsupportive for the emotional needs of students. In this case, I believe fear of failure was behind the adolescents'

rebelliousness against directives. When Randy would give a directive (lesson), the youth would rebel saying that it felt too much like school. On the surface it would seem that they were rebelling against school but digging deeper, it was fear of the possibility of failure underneath those claims. I found that when he eliminated any expectation of a good or final product, he also eliminated the fear of creative exploration and risk taking.

The Planning Sessions

What I imagine

Randy, Empress¹² and I met Saturday mornings during June and July of 2018 at a local coffee shop to collaborate and plan the six studio art workshops. We met for about two hours each time to share thoughts and ideas with each other. These meetings were casual and organic, allowed to be a creative dump of thoughts and ideas. These ideas emerged from our collective experience as teachers, artists, and therapist. I took notes in my journal so I could use reference our thoughts while I put together ideas to present to the group each week and so I could add these notes to the thick record of this research project. At our first meeting (06/01/2018) I shared what I found in my observations at the hospital to check in and see if these felt authentic to Randy's experience as well. I said that I imagine a curriculum that is grounded in understanding artistic processes, studio thinking and habits of mind¹³, but also embraces the importance of a safe space for affective self-expression and reflection. We decided to try and incorporate concepts of safety, process over product, choice¹⁴, and relationship building from the findings

¹² Empress is the pseudonym chosen by the graduate student who acted as participant and research assistant in this study

¹³ These concepts refer to the current national standards of art education.

¹⁴ For examples of choice-based art education methods or approaches (See Andrews, 2005; Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Sands, 2016; & Art Education volume 71, issue 5.

and values of studio thinking, artistic processes and habits of mind into the workshops along with ideas that organically come up in our meetings. After each meeting, I would go home and, using notes from our collaboration, put together a composite plan for a workshop or two, bring these ideas to the next meeting, and we could go over them to make decisions together. We went back and forth like this until we had a plan for all six workshops that we felt was a true blend of both disciplines.

Workshop organization

Before considering themes for each workshop, we discussed how each workshop should be organized because it felt important to equally balance concepts from art education and art therapy in the main structure. We decided to begin each session with a mindfulness meditation using guided imagery. Both Randy and I use mindfulness techniques in our art making spaces and practice. Randy introduced us to the book *Spinning Inward: Using guided imagery with children for learning, creativity, and relaxation* by Maureen Murdock. Mindful techniques promote learning and creativity through relaxation and integration of both sides of the brain and “using imagery along with information we know is one way to put whole-brain learning into practice” (Murdock, 1987, p. 7). We agreed that visual meditations would be a valuable method to bring us fully into the present quickly since the workshops last a short two hours. This element is both therapeutic and educational, becoming more commonly used in both settings. In a therapeutic setting and a classroom, guided meditation can prompt imaginative studio thinking, creativity, relaxation, and calm in each class. Randy most often uses it for relaxation and to bring calm to stressful situations that can occur in the hospital environment. I use it in the classroom to bring students into the present moment and let go of the stress they might have brought into the room. We adopted this concept to bring participants into the present moment and prepare them to

look unconsciously inward as they created. This inward visual exploration would act as an imaginative exercise to get creative juices flowing quickly.

Next, we elected to bring in the philosophy and artistic history behind each project so participants could explore the art world and have a historical context for what we were about to do. This is a concept from art education, something Randy never uses in his art therapy practice. I have found that even with choice-based education, it is valuable to provide historical background and context to show students how others have solved creative problems and expressed themselves through different artistic processes.

We also decided to focus on process and downplay the importance of a good art product. We agreed that this was a valuable art therapy tenet that could be significant in an art education space. Many students have little experience in the arts or with art making in general. We wanted to negate the fear of creativity and perfectionism that I see in education and promote an environment of exploration and play that Randy most often finds in his art therapy practice.

I would demonstrate what we were going to do, only as much as was needed to give an idea of how to technically manage a procedure, so that participants could engage in a studio practice they may have never seen before. This kind of group demonstration is an art education technique that I rarely saw in the art therapy setting. Each project would combine learning new techniques with inner self-expression allowing for the art making space to be introspective and therapeutic. In setting up the workshops we made sure to have many different supplies available and the supply room always open so that new ideas and free expression would be possible.

We decided to end each session with a time to reflect where participants could share what they made, why they made it, and what their experience was while making it. This sharing through reflection is a studio practice and an art therapy tenet that we knew would be valuable to

the participants and to the research. This would be a voluntary sharing and a chance to reflect, explain, and inquire into the reason behind their process.

| Plan for the workshops | Two hours |
|--|------------------|
| Tea, coffee, and introductions/relationship | 10 minutes |
| Visual meditation/imagine/envision | 5 minutes |
| Introduce the project and artists who have embodied that concept/art world | 5 minutes |
| Demonstration and introduce materials Observe/choice/process | 5 minutes |
| Make/explore/play/engage/express | 70 minutes |
| Reflection/sharing | 15 minutes |

Workshop Themes

In considering themes for the workshops, we wanted them to be interesting to everyone, relevant to life issues, embodied in process, and provide an opportunity for self-expression/exploration and include several aesthetic practices and techniques. We also were aware that many people would not be able to attend every workshop, so each workshop had to be self-contained. Meaning that one week's exploration could not carry over into the next week. Only the first workshop allowed for continued exploration at home that was to be shared during the individual interviews at the completion of the workshop series.

After much discussion and back and forth sharing of ideas, we created the curriculum below that incorporated all our thoughts and ideas as much as possible (appendix D). We also knew we could renegotiate after each workshop to see if anything should change to better align with the individuals participating. This is in line with my teaching philosophy of being flexible and open to the needs of a class and to Randy's art therapy practice of assessing the needs of the

room before proceeding with any planned activity. Every class is different, and no curriculum is successful in meeting the needs of its participants if it is set in stone and inflexible.

The workshop themes were:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Workshop one | Self-care through a creative self-portrait/Bildung |
| Workshop two | In touch with the unconscious through your inner ally/inkblots |
| Workshop three | Using flow to express feelings/emotions Painting to music |
| Workshop four | An aesthetic experience of being lost and found/finding a new perspective/collage |
| Workshop five | Creating from chaos/embracing gumbo ya ya Spray paint through nature |
| Workshop six | Mandala of self/Virginia Satir: the components of happiness |

Workshop one. Collectively we decided the first workshop would focus on self-care through the creation of an expressive self-portrait. I introduced Randy and Empress to the German concept of Bildung. According to modern translations, Bildung is about personal growth and transformation. It is about being and becoming someone and that felt like a good place to begin. As we talked, Empress flipped through Maureen Murdock’s book *Spinning Inward* and found the meditation Waterfall of White Light (1987, p.22). This meditation is short, easy to follow, and completely focused on self-care. In chapter six, the workshops, I share the complete text of the meditations we used so the reader can follow along.

In expressive art therapy (ETC) materials play a role in creating a safe environment for the patient. Randy uses this concept when he allows patients to choose materials, they feel comfortable with. As an art educator, I have found that traditional art materials can be intimidating to the uninitiated. It can be more frightening to work on canvas than it is to work on say a paper bag. We chose paper grocery bags for this project for two reasons. The first was the

reason I just mentioned. It was the least frightening canvas we could think of and this project would be in two parts, grocery bags have two sides.

In the expressive portrait exercise, we would ask participants to create an expressive portrait on what they show the world about themselves. How do they choose to portray themselves to the outside world? This would also inspire a reflection on what they keep hidden. We did not want them to draw a traditional self-portrait so we knew we would have to explain what we meant. We went to social media for this, suggesting that they could investigate the photos they take. How do they document their Life? Then they could choose images, metaphors, or icons that would represent how they portray themselves to the world. This gave them a great deal of freedom around representation.

The other side of the bag was to be a representation of what they hide about themselves from the world. We thought this was too risky to make in a community with peers, so this part of the project was for sharing in the individual interviews after the workshops were over. This way they had several months to complete that part of the project and what they keep hidden could stay hidden, only to be shared with me in the interview if they so choose.

At the end of each session, we would provide reflection time for anyone who wanted to share what they made, how they made it, and what their thought process was. In each workshop design we kept in mind a curriculum grounded in artistic processes, studio thinking and habits of mind, which include but are not limited to engagement, studio art making practice, observation, meaningful expression, imagining, exploration, and reflection. Some of these overlap with art therapy values and to complete those we added the importance of a safe space for affective self-expression. We used this same thought process for the construction of each workshop. I will briefly share our process for the rest of the workshops and in greater detail in the next chapter.

Workshop two. For workshop two, Randy brought up the idea of using the concept of an ink blot. He said (06/15/2018) jokingly, *that's what everyone thinks of when I tell them I am an art therapist, the Rorschach test.* This made me consider the Surrealists and the games they play to jump start imagination and the childhood game of looking at clouds to imagine shapes and objects in them, which can be similar to looking for images in an ink blot. We would ask them to draw out images they found in the ink blots.

We choose a meditation that was a visual journey with an imagined ally, and I found a Surrealist method Salvador Dali used to tap into his subconscious. We knew this was going to be a real journey into the imagination and we also knew the ink blots could prompt this journey better than a blank piece of paper. Our participants wouldn't be starting from scratch, which we hoped would bring a measure of safety. We also knew that sometimes getting an idea is the hardest part.

Workshop three. Both Randy and I work to bring the idea of flow to our students/patients. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) described flow as “intense concentration on the present which relieves us of usual fears...” (112). Randy has seen the idea of flow when the youth are engaged in their work and time passes without them knowing it has gone. As artists, Randy, Empress, and I have all experienced flow as times we are fully present in our work and time does not seem to exist. Empress and I have taught painting to music in the past so we thought about ways we could incorporate a free embodied exploration with paint to music in the space of the workshop. We knew that exploration and play would be important to this concept so instead of a visual meditation, we chose a meditation on breath with watercolor stained bubbles that Randy uses in his therapy practice. Blowing bubbles is very playful and childlike. We hoped that would relax everyone and prepare them to play with paint. We also wanted everyone to

stand so there would be freedom of movement. I brought up using tabletop easels and canvas. We knew this would feel intimidating so we would have to ask everyone to embody process and play letting go of any expectation of a product. I decided to show work by the abstract expressionists so I could talk about using paint to explore inner emotions through energetic brushwork.

Workshop four. When we were discussing workshop four, we were still a little overwhelmed with worry about using easels and canvas for the previous workshop, so we decided to make collage the focus for number four. Collage is often used in a safe art making environment because crushing, cutting, tearing, and gluing does not feel intimidating. We had a long discussion about themes for this project. What could we do with collage that would be engaging, explorative and personal? Somehow, we were discussing the labyrinth downtown which led to a discussion on mazes and being lost. I want to say here that many times our decisions were organic or synchronistic, not academic or intellectual. We were in a coffee shop, it was summer, the atmosphere was as relaxed as we were. We were creatively exploring in a free flow of ideas. There was nothing organized about our process.

We decided on a narrative storytelling theme of being lost, which we hoped would lead into making a collage about an experience they could each share. We chose a meditation called *The Wave* (Murdock, 1987) in which you are floating at sea. We also wanted to incorporate a scribble activity drawing activity. This activity is a group scribble drawing where everyone scribbles for one minute, then the paper gets turned and everyone scribbles again. Everyone is also looking at the paper from a new perspective each time, depending on where they are sitting. This leads nicely into a project about being lost where maybe, making that experience visual will enable participants to look at it from a new or different perspective.

Workshop five. During these organic casual meetings, we talked about the way we work as artists and how we could bring some of those methods into the workshops. Both Empress and I work intuitively, creating most often without a plan. We had already decided most of the creative activity in the workshops would be about process and we would be asking our participants to work without planning first. I suggested we go outside and throw nature on canvases, pouring paint through it, like I do so many times, creating chaos on the canvas. We did not want to return to canvas so we thought cardboard could be a sturdy and unimimidating background for these works. I was not sure how we were going to manage the paint pouring but we decided to come back to that later. I introduced Gumbo Ya Ya¹⁵, which is a term from New Orleans meaning multiplicity. Empress said (06/22/2018) maybe we could draw into them after they dried just like the ink blots. Participants could investigate the chaos they created and see if they could make sense of it. Were there images they could bring out?

Randy suggested playing an imaginative game instead of meditation for two reasons. One, we knew the paint would need time to dry. Two, we wanted to jump start their imaginations. I have played an Exquisite Corpse game¹⁶ in past projects so I offered to bring this to the workshop. In some of these workshops, we didn't get into details of exactly how each project or idea was going to be accomplished. That was a task, as the researcher and facilitator of the instruction, I took on.

Workshop six. Randy brought us the idea of making a Mandala during our final meeting. He utilized mandalas in his work to help patients visualize what they would like to see in their

¹⁵ As a way of illustrating multiplicity, Barkley Brown (1992), a feminist women's studies scholar, introduced "gumbo ya ya", a creole term that denotes a moment of multiple voices spoken at once.

¹⁶ "Exquisite corpse, also known as **exquisite cadaver** (from the original French term *cadavre exquis*), is a method by which a collection of words or images is collectively assembled. Each collaborator adds to a composition in sequence, either by following a rule or by being allowed to see only the end of what the previous person contributed" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exquisite_corpse.

lives, putting themselves at the center. We really liked the idea of self being at the center and this felt like a good ending. While Randy was telling us about his mandala work, Empress found a mandala meditation in Maureen Murdock's book (1987, p. 95) we were using. This felt synchronistic, so that is what we decided to do.

After our meetings, as I was researching for examples to show of a mandala, I found Satir's mandala (1982) which was used by clients to visualize challenges and strengths. I thought it might be a good illustrative example that could get everyone started in making a mandala of self. I put this workshop together after our meetings ended because time had run out and it was time to begin.

Conclusion

I shared concern at our meetings about the possibility of not having enough participants because these workshops were scheduled toward the end of summer when so many were traveling and spending precious family time in ways that cannot happen during a rigorous Ph.D. program. I found that was not the case. Seventeen peers, friends, and coworkers showed up in important ways to support me in this effort. These participants not only showed up for me but made themselves vulnerable in the process of art making and reflection. Artists and novices alike blew me away every week.

In this chapter, I introduced an analysis of findings from my participant/observation of Randy, the art therapist, and the way he enacted his practice, including general remarks about the adolescents' responses I was free to share. Due to HIPAA rules and concerns, I was limited in what I could present outside of the hospital environment. I also revealed our informal thought processes from the planning sessions in which I collaborated with Randy and Empress to

construct the following six workshops. In chapter six, I detail each workshop, showing what we did, what happened, and what we made. I utilized the voice of these participants as much as possible and shared a personal reflection from my journal at the end of each workshop. I concluded this chapter with a reflection of my own final thoughts. In chapter seven, I will complete the data gathering process of the workshops and will delve briefly into the individual semi structured interviews with each participant through the second part of the expressive portrait project from workshop one. I conclude chapter seven with a brief introduction to themes I perceived to emerge from the data.

Chapter Six: Workshops, The Heart.

Introduction

Sharing what I found increases the transparency of this dissertation by employing significant events from the workshops, the interviews, the art making experiences and artifacts as vehicles to carry major themes that emerged through what we did, what we made, and the conversations we had. I use visual and oral data to illustrate themes that developed while we made and shared in our studio art community. I share information about the project done in each workshop and discuss high points of what happened while utilizing the voices of these participants. Finally, I will share reflections prompted by the artwork they made; privileging participants' voices as much as possible while preserving anonymity through self-chosen pseudonyms. I identify myself as researcher anywhere that I am part of the conversation. I conclude each section and this chapter with reflective thoughts inspired by my journal.

We met for two hours every Saturday morning for six weeks and discussed many topics that were both personal and professional in the workshops. This type of art making experience was unfamiliar to most participants, requiring that they trust me to safely steer them through the complexities of the process of the work. Trust in me and in each other was already in place with most as we had established peer/friend relationships. In our meetings, this trust allowed us to pilot through feelings of belonging, frustration, loss, anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Our combined identities as students, educators, therapists, friends, and peers centered us in connection and granted a safe space from which to navigate difficult conversations prompted by our art making. We were unified in our desire to make connections, find comfort, and move out of isolation and into the community. As graduate students and educators, we often struggle with feelings of isolation and stress from the weight of work we must do. There are never enough

opportunities for collaboration, sharing, and relaxation.

Research question: What is the nature of blended art education/art therapeutic strategies in this context?

Our first workshop

The first workshop began with lots of laughter and a light atmosphere. Eleven participants arrived, some traveled far to attend, and because it was summer, there was catching up to do. The mood was relaxed and jovial, an interesting transitional space of summer vacation and travel. All attendees were either graduate students, educators, or both, except for two therapists, one art and one music. I provided coffee and tea to create an inviting atmosphere of care for my participants, so the first ten minutes were settling into comfort and introductions. Many knew each other but there were new faces each week, so we performed introductions every time. I asked that we share who we were, what we do, and why we are here.

After introductions, I handed out a project sheet so everyone could follow along. We began with the meditation *Waterfall of White Light* (Murdock, 1987). We chose this for the first workshop because it was short, easy to follow, and provided an experience of white light moving down the body until you are filled with the gentle calm the light brings with it. It was our intention to provide a safe calm atmosphere from which to begin.

Close your eyes and begin to focus your attention on your breath. Give yourself the suggestion that with each exhalation your body becomes more and more relaxed. Now imagine that a beautiful waterfall of white light is entering the top of your head. You feel its gentle healing energy throughout your brain and pouring over your face, your chin, and your neck. The waterfall of white light now continues to move into your chest and shoulders and back. It moves down your arms and hands and out through your fingertips, taking with it any stress that you have held in your body. The white light continues to flow into your abdomen and solar plexus, your pelvis and buttocks. It continues moving down into your thighs, knees, and calves. Now it enters your ankles and feet and goes out through your toes, taking with it any stress or discomfort that you have stored in your body. Now you are in a continuous waterfall of white light. Every part of your

being is filled with white light. Allow this energy to wash over you and enjoy the gentle calm it brings. (pause one minute) Now slowly bring yourself back to full waking consciousness. I will count to ten. Join me in counting aloud at six, and open your eyes at ten, feeling relaxed and alert.

One...two...three...four...five...six...seven...eight...nine...ten.
(p. 22).

The first project was an expressive self-portrait and our canvas was a paper grocery bag. Choosing a non-traditional surface on which to work can sometimes eliminate the fear of creativity, and many participants in the workshops were not artists or art educators so their making experience was limited. In my experience teaching students who are non-art majors and in Randy's practice, choice of materials matter. Drawing or painting on a paper bag does not carry the same intimidating fear of art making as painting on a canvas.

I introduced the theory of Bildung, which is a German term and according to modern translations, it is about personal growth and transformation. It is about being and becoming someone. Bildung is a creative process through which an individual educates and improves or develops themselves (Siljander, 2012).

Utilizing the idea of Bildung, I asked each participant to create an expressive self-portrait on one side of the bag, not a mirror image. By expressive, I meant this visual portrait would represent their uniqueness that they allow the world to see. Meaning, what do you offer of yourself to the world? What do you allow the outside world to see or know about you? This visual portrait was meant to be an image or a collection of images that reflect the integrity and complexity of who they are or choose to be, to the world. For a jumping off point, I asked them to consider several questions. What is the role of the self-portrait today? Is the activity of gazing at and creating an image of oneself a revealing self-reflective activity for those who have seen thousands and thousands of images of themselves through social media? As it is becoming more and more common to have a cell phone camera with us, might it not be more revealing of self to

consider what we notice and save. I suggested that one way to do this is to act as an anthropologist of the future investigating how you document your life using your phone. The anthropologist catalogs photo archives of the subject under investigation. Who or what did you document? Did people pose or were they photographed unaware? What other aspects of life were collected? Animals, meals, places, objects? Were pictures used as diaries or as visual note taking, mnemonics to remember intimate moments or practical details? I asked them to consider how seeing the photos one takes may be more revealing as a self-portrait than seeing a photo of a person. They could decide what is the most accurate representation of life they show the world.

This project was the only one that continued past the time constraints of the workshop. I asked them to take the bag home to complete the other side. This side should represent what they hide from the outside world. This is the side that denotes what no one sees or what they choose not to share. I told them they have plenty of time to complete the project and that it would be important to bring this to our individual interviews at the end of the six weeks.

Once studio time began, some chose to paint, some drew, some sketched first and then created on the bag, some collaged. The openness of the project and the wide collection of materials we offered allowed everyone to explore in their own unique style. They collaborated and reminisced about childhood art making experiences.

Pia: Kids don't learn to cut with scissors anymore.

Jade: I've noticed that out in schools. They cut and paste on the computer or have limited time at school.

Lauren: Do you want to give 30 kids scissors and glue? And they don't learn it at home anymore.

Anne: I made paper dolls and a dream house out of the JC Penny catalog.

Lauren: And shoeboxes! That was a rare and precious item. Cardboard from your dads' new

shirts. Kids don't make anymore. Not from scratch anyway.

Anne: I wanted to make a bicycle built for two. It didn't work out well for anyone. But everybody was going to try it.

This gravitated to a discussion about how, through time, humans have made special to survive, even thrive, in their circumstances.

Lauren: I used to make art at home. It's important for me to get back to it.

Anne: I purposely look for opportunities to make art. Trying to make it fit in my life even though I teach it every day. There is a theorist who would say survival is why we make art. To make special (Dissanayake, 1992)¹⁷. From the days we couldn't survive without others, we created rituals. The theory is we must make special to survive.

Lauren: I've been in survival mode for a long time.

Thoughts of making for self-care were also reflected in the reasons some gave in the introductions for being here:

Lauren: I'm trying to reconnect with myself after the loss of a loved one.

Anne: I'm looking for a way to get back into making. It's who I am or was and it's what my job is.

¹⁷ Dissanayake (1992) advocated that our human behavior of making important things "special" was significant to humanity in ways that extended beyond survival.

Final reflections

During the final reflection time, Anne explored the things she carried with her. *The nomadism I experience every day. I live in bags. A college professor had us draw a backpack and we read "The things we carry". The backpack lesson is why I became an art educator and an art teacher educator. The backpack lesson is still haunting me.*

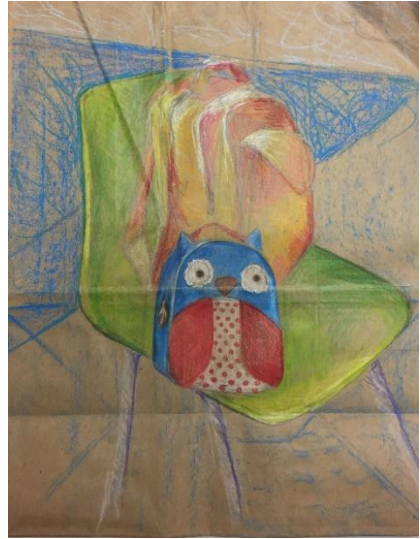


FIGURE 17. ANNE'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT



FIGURE 18. SYLVIA'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

Sylvia said, *When I listened to all of you sharing, I looked at mine and thought busy, because I am. I started feeling some emotion about that and now I'm feeling that emotion.* She began to tear up and shared that emotion with us in a way that was courageous and vulnerable.

Pia explained that she felt like she was *concrete and not abstract like an artist.* She said, *this is me blowing*

bubbles. I'm blowing bubbles of what I think people see of me. Some of those things pop and there are two sides to every coin. Where some may see this image as glowing, others may not see



FIGURE 19. PIA'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT



FIGURE 20. CAMERON'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

it as glowing. Most people see me as a person who works with young children, caring, nurturing, handholding, seeing the best in them. Then I added an old person because that's how I think I am.

Cameron began with the idea of looking at pictures on social media. I'm never in the pictures I post. I take pictures of things I love, people I love, and things I see. So, I made a camera and a black silhouette. It shows that you don't know the other side.

I made half of myself in black because I'm a neutral person in some ways, and half in color because I can be kind of out there. A road with an end because I am driven but I'm also neurotic. If you don't know me well, I come off cool and collected but then I'm crazy, so I did a blue background in between with yarn going all over the place. I have a lot of things I love in my life, so I made a heart out of buttons. Buttons for all the things I love.

CJ shared that when his parents ask him how school is going, he replies, *I'm just trucking along. This is one of the few things I feel confident in being able to artistically render, a*



FIGURE 22. THE INTERIOR OF CJ'S PORTRAIT

road going off into the sunset. I'm going down this road and it is kind of scarce and empty because in grad school you're focusing on this one thing you're trying to do, with the hope that somewhere down the road there is

going to be the opportunity for nice things like money and job security.



FIGURE 21. CJ'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

Right now, there isn't a whole lot outward. My outward identity is very much tied into I'm a grad student. That's all I have time to do. It seems like a stretch into the unforeseeable future. This scarce existence, the anticipation there could be more but there just isn't yet. On the inside, I started tying a bunch of yarn between the two sides. There is a lot that's holding the inside and outside together. There is a lot of tension between the two. Sometimes they tangle. Sometimes they break.

Lauren thought about symbols and shapes that might represent the things she tried to portray in her daily life. *Thinking of the books and being a scholar, scholarly journey. All these are part of me but outside of me, what you want people to think about you. My heart, caring and loving. My artistic part is kind of falling off, but people still think of me that way. The apple is my teacher self, but I also have an orchard and a garden. This shape is my dog. I post a lot of pictures of my dog. No one wants to hear the horrible.*



FIGURE 23. LAUREN'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

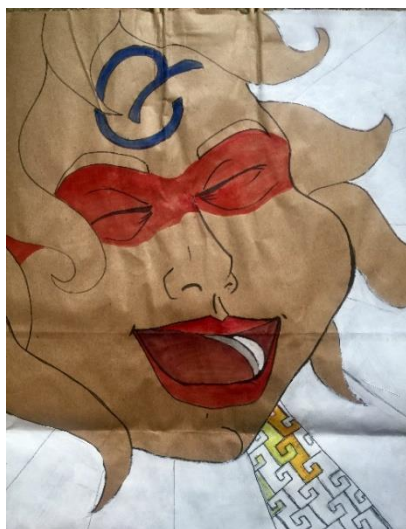


FIGURE 24. LAUREL'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

Laurel found it easier to first write down all the things she didn't want to show. Listing these things helped her uncover what she wanted people to see. *The trickiest part is that I don't have tangible icons for confident, adaptive, and caring so I just did a face. It was the only way I could represent these things. An icon for who I am in public. A happy and confident face that beams with color. Beams that represent travel, educated, and maker.*

My reflection

Each community member was so open and vulnerable about struggle, survival, and scarcity that there was applause after the last person shared. In two short hours, we became a trusting community. Some of the trust had been built in because I had a previous relationship with most participants. They already knew me and thought of me as a trustworthy competent peer, classmate, and friend. Also, these participants are highly educated higher educators, teachers or therapists, but only five of the seventeen were artists or work in the field of the arts. Thus, it was important to promote creative safety by choosing an unconventional canvas for the art making and allowing everyone to use the medium they were most comfortable with by providing the opportunity to choose for themselves. We also chose a subject matter that was the most public and knowable parts of whom they perceived themselves to be. We allowed the most vulnerable private part of the project to be completed at home and shared individually in later interviews.

It became clear that many participants were using this study as permission to make art, and to self-care through making. If we do not have a valid reason to play and create then we do not do it. In the first workshop Anne said, *I'm looking for a way to get back into making*. Later, Lauren said, *I used to make art at home, it's important for me to get back to it*. This led to the conversation about making special and why we feel the need to make special.

I was surprised to find that relaxation and self-care seemed not to be a good enough reason to make creativity a priority even for those who work in creative fields. We feel that we must always be productive even in our play. Thinking about play and art making in an age of anxiety and the constant need to be productive was an important theme in the workshops. As early as this first workshop these sessions were used as permission to play and express

themselves. Participants held the notion that even if their wellbeing benefited from playful art making, art making for no outward purpose, they felt like they could not or should not indulge in it because there were more important things they should be doing. But once they had committed themselves to my research project, suddenly the art making had a purpose. They were obligated to do it and so it was ok if it also felt good. I was amazed at the ease with which everyone went deep and found meaning in the art making so quickly.

We came together every week for six weeks to engage in artistic practice in community with others, to become aware of our experiences as educators, students, therapists, art makers, and people. We integrated elements from art therapy such as, intentionally creating a safe environment where participants could express themselves and explore a process approach rather than product focus, and an atmosphere of contribution rather than competition (Froeschle et al, 2008). Modifications took place each week to adapt to feedback, circumstances, and the needs of the attending community of the day. Attendance fluctuated, personalities and moods changed, projects were modified, but the structure of the class stayed the same in order to provide continued opportunities for learning, connection, art making, and reflection.

Workshop two-the ally within

Empress and I arrived early so we could set everything up. I remember being worried that this project might not be as profoundly meaningful as workshop one. It felt fluffy to me compared to the expressive self-portraits, but I decided to push those thoughts aside and see what happened. Eleven participants arrived and after coffee, tea, and introductions we handed out heavy paper and bright colors of ink and liquid watercolor. I explained that we were going to create ink blots on the page, and we needed to do this early so the ink/watercolor would have time to dry. I asked everyone to pour a generous amount of ink or liquid watercolor onto their

paper using one, two, or three colors and fold the paper, pressing firmly, in half. We would then gently open the paper and allow time for it to dry. If they were not satisfied with the results, they could try adding more inks or paint and folding it again. The folding and opening yielded beautiful surprises and some were so excited they made several of these.

Lauren: *I'm starting to see something in the blots!*

Sylvia: (laughing) *It looks like a party.*

We set those aside to dry and participated in the *Inner Ally* (Murdock, 1987) meditation:

Close your eyes and focus your attention on your breath moving in...and...out...of your nostrils. As you continue to breathe at your own rate, imagine that you are on a path in a very thick forest. All around you are beautiful green trees, and you walk down this path toward the sound of water. You come upon a small stream, and you walk over to the stream and look at your reflection in the water. (pause for a moment) Soon you feel another presence standing next to you, and you feel completely safe. You see another reflection join yours in the water. This other presence may be that of an old, wise being, an animal, or another image of a being who you feel is your ally, someone whom you have known for a long time, someone whom you can trust. Your ally beckons you to follow across a small bridge that crosses the stream. You follow and find yourself climbing a hill that leads to a cave. Your ally enters the cave, sits down, and gestures for you to follow. You enter the cave and sit down, and your ally begins to tell you about yourself. (pause one minute) You may have a question you wish to ask your ally, and you do that now. You listen closely to the answer. (pause one minute) Your ally tells you that you may return any time you wish. They will always be here waiting for you to help you with anything you need. You thank your ally, walk down the path over the bridge, looking once again at your reflection in the water. You notice how you feel as you walk up the path, out of the forest, and become aware of sitting here, fully present. Count to three to yourself and slowly open your eyes (p. 87).

We shared these meditation experiences, and many were deeply personal and emotional. Sylvia spent time with her mom, George and Martha were each other's ally, and several had an experience with allies they did not expect. After this brief sharing, I introduced Surrealism, Salvador Dali and the paranoiac critical method, created in the 1930s, he used to get in touch with his unconscious. We discussed looking for images in clouds and I showed them the

photograph of an African tribe within which he supposedly saw a hidden image. We discussed the difficulty artists sometimes have coming up with ideas and that Surrealists used games and play to free the process of inspiration for art making. Next, I asked them to look at the inkblot they made. I prompted them to think about their meditative experience and the ally they conjured, be patient, and wait for images to emerge. I invited them, using any media they like, to start bringing out the images they saw or adding to the inkblot.

I'm not an artist

Right away Cameron said that she could not draw on her ink blot.

Cameron: *What if we don't want to draw on it? I see things in it, but I don't want to mess it up.*

Researcher: *You could get a piece of paper and draw next to it, be inspired by it.*

Cameron: *Maybe I can use tracing paper? That way I can draw what I see but not mess it up.*

This prompted a conversation about not being an artist, not being able to draw, and being afraid to keep going for fear of messing it up and not knowing what to do. Pia commented that, *Preschoolers just know what to do. You don't have to tell them to fold the paper, they just know to do it. All the time. They are just curious and always ask, what happens if I do this, and they just do it.*

Randy: *I wonder when we lose that?*

Pia: *I do too. I think some people never do. I think I did early.*

Randy: *You feel like you lost it early?*

Pia: *In a lot of ways. I say that but I work with preschoolers. I like to experiment, and they like to experiment. A lot of people think you must be good at something before you can do it. You must be good at writing before you write. No, you just do it anyway. Paint if you want. Write if you want.*

There were many non-artists in the room, and they were nervous about putting themselves out there. After a robust conversation about cats Agnes said, *What does it mean if we think we've ruined it? Like I've gone too far. I'll see these amazing things but then lack of ability keeps me from bringing them to life. It's really frustrating.* Lauren said, *Write it down.* Sylvia replied; *I would write that down in a reflection.* Agnes said, *Replicating something is one thing, but coming up with something from scratch is a completely different beast.* These fears and concerns were to become a recurring theme in the workshops, a theme that demonstrated to me just how courageous everyone was to continue making despite feelings of inadequacy and frustration. I wondered what it was that kept them coming back. Was it the commitment they made to the project and to me or were they getting something else out of it? Something more meaningful and fulfilling? This might be a result of culturally inculcated notions that valued art must be of a certain disinterested quality rather than from primal experiences of art as expression of relationships between physical/human/non-human/spiritual realms? It seems that there was an implicit directive to push through or aside those inculcated notions but have become so embedded in these participants as to skew their concepts of what art is or should be.

Final reflection

I prompted the final reflection with two questions:

The feelings and thoughts I got while I was creating were _____.

They might have been prompted by _____.

Randy: *I was thinking of space and expansiveness and bringing an awareness of everything. It's supposed to be a light on the inside and a dusting on the outside. Lots of times people are aware of the outside. Lots of times people are aware of everything around them but not so much of how it affects them and how that, in turn, affects everything else through all these experiences. It is interesting to take a step back and internally visualize self and the reaction with other images and people.*

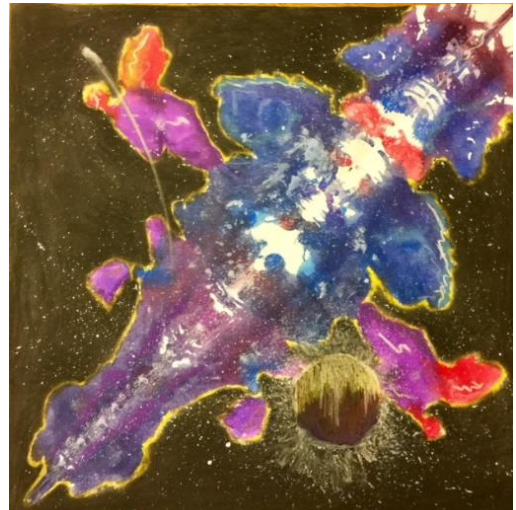


FIGURE 25. RANDY'S INK BLOT

Cameron: *I did several. This is how the first one came*

out and I didn't want to mess it up. I worry about screwing things up. I traced what I saw but I

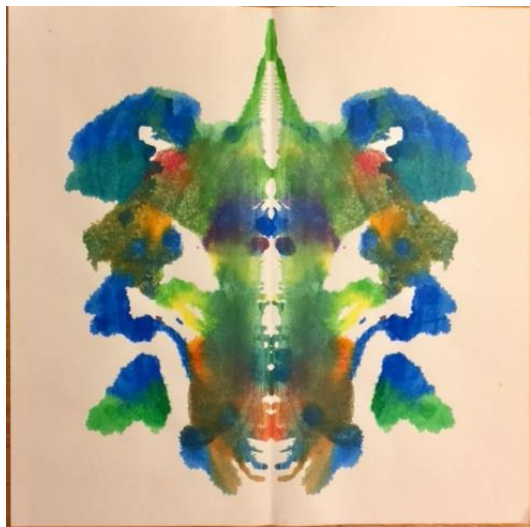


FIGURE 26. CAMERON'S INK BLOT

will show you this one because it looks better than what I drew. Mine connected back to the meditation; I saw a wolf type creature. It was like my ally. But also, my Mom kind of popped in and out. Not being there but in my mind. I thought it was interesting that purple is right here because that was her favorite color. She passed away two years ago. I see her entering the wolf. (Cameron is moved to tears.) I

thought it was interesting that cool colors are on the outside but there are pop ups of warm colors. It seems like they are the eyes and ears and nose and mouth of the creature.

Agnes: *I had a similar experience. I lost my father three years ago and I also saw a wolf in the cave. I don't know why these images kept coming up but when I was working on my piece, I saw two wolves, but they also look like hips and ovaries. And then I started getting frustrated because I was afraid I was losing the original image. So, I turned the ovaries into lavender, a garden, pineapples here, some crabs up here. I saw a masthead, a woman, and when I started drawing it, I couldn't get her exactly like I wanted. So that was frustrating. The eyes are vivid.*



FIGURE 27. AGNES' INK BLOT

Sylvia: *Mine's just crazy. I saw twin trees and these two figures in the middle of this Dr. Seuss-*



FIGURE 28. SYLVIA'S INK BLOT

like orchard, and I do love the trees. The feelings I got when I was doing it was playful, fun, and wonder. My mom was the person in the meditation. My question to her was how do I serve the needs of others and stay connected to my needs. I'm working hard on self-care. My mom's answer was as you meet your needs, you will serve other's needs. The roots are yellow, so I think of light and spirit and radiance and spirituality.

The branches are yellow in random places. I am not an artist and I do not do this ever. I just do little kid drawings. I had to get over the 'this doesn't look like anything' voice in my head and be playful like I would be at work with music and just let whatever come. But I did have fun creating.

Pia: *It's funny because when I did the meditation, I wanted the person to be a woman as my ally. I was reflecting on the woods, the people I love the most. What I saw were two people down here looking up, and this creature that looks kind of scary, almost like a mouse, coming at me. The tongue was the worst, coming out of the mouth. Like I want it to be kind, powerful, beautiful, but that glow can be interpreted as dark. The rodent's tail became part of a butterfly which seems to me a mixture of light and dark. And then I thought it was interesting because at the bottom are hands reaching up to the top. I got really frustrated because I know what I want those hands to look like, but I can't make them into what I want them to look like. It is fascinating how some of us found big things and others found little things.*



FIGURE 29. PIA'S INK BLOT

George: *So, I initially saw a bishop but also a phoenix. My ally was Martha and I wasn't sure how those three things intersected. So, the first thing I thought, and really the bishop was the*



FIGURE 30. GEORGE'S INK BLOT

overwhelming image. I thought I don't really know what to do with this. Should I put it behind a cage? And, I have anxiety because I am not an artist at all. We are all educators here and it's beautiful and everything but I have a lot of anxiety so I put all of this behind these bars and I picked colors I associate with Mary and I'm not a practicing Catholic at all but I was raised Catholic and so I was thinking, 'why am I seeing this Bishop?' It was

bothering me that there were all these flecks of white and I covered them with my favorite color orange. Martha helped me realize my favorite color was orange. Then I wrote a bunch of stuff over here once I realized I could write. I'm much more comfortable with writing because that's what my art is. I felt much better once I realized I could do something I was more comfortable with.

Martha: I saw lots of pairs of people. George was my ally too. The question I asked was about our upcoming transition. So that is the bottom part. There are two people and they are connected but it is difficult for them to stay where they want to stay. They are turned away from each other. But then I was thinking about new possibilities and they are still tethered together like when an astronaut goes out to work on the shuttle. They are in this cool nebula where stars are born. It's a very exciting, scary, but also generative place. Up here is a little sacred respite where it is far away but it glows. I didn't draw hands, I'm like no, so I drew these scary mittens.



FIGURE 31. MARTHA'S INK BLOT

My reflection

As everyone was cleaning up and getting ready to leave, George stopped me and said, *I didn't expect this to be so meaningful.* I was also struck by how deep and meaningful this session was after my initial worry that this project might be fluffy compared to last week's art making. I expressed my surprise at the depth of their creative response.

This early in the workshops, participants also identified and respected the emotional

safety of the space so they could have a place for rest and restoration. Anne said, *I needed permission to make* and others agreed that commitment to my project granted them the approval they needed to make art and be creative. I had underestimated the power of consent to facilitate restfulness and restoration through a community of art making.

Although participants expressed discomfort with their art making skills, they were not uncomfortable sharing these and other personal feelings and frustrations. This workshop further illuminated the fear of drawing and making art that was present, but it also demonstrated how safe everyone felt to take a creative leap anyway. This made me think there was something here more powerful than the fears and anxieties they were experiencing. This fear was particularly strong in workshop three when we worked on canvas. Painting on canvas on a tripod proved to be intimidating for those who did not work in the arts.

Workshop three-flow

I was nervous when I arrived to set up this workshop. We were going to paint on canvas to music and hopefully experience flow, the ‘getting in the zone’ that sometimes occurs when artists or musicians are so engaged with their work, they lose all sense of time and place.

Reflecting on the past workshops, I knew they would have to overcome fears and anxieties about making art and it would be twice as difficult because we were using traditional artist supplies which can be intimidating. Eight attended this workshop to explore the medium of paint, how it felt, how it moved, and how it looked. After coffee and tea and a quick round of introductions, I asked everyone to write down on a piece of paper how they were feeling, fold the paper, and put it away. Our meditation this time was a practice on breath to bring each into the present moment and to introduce an atmosphere of play. They were to draw a circle on their paper with a permanent marker. Then, with bubbles stained with food coloring, they were to try to blow

bubbles that fit inside the circle. This takes focus, a concentration on breath, and brings them into the present moment. There was a lot of laughter during this play and Laurel said, *I'll have to do this with my students during finals week when everyone is stressing out.* Randy reminded us, *One aspect to this is a relinquishing of control. You have control over your breath and control over the bubbles but once it's gone, you have to let it fall and see what it creates.* That was a perfect transition to the painting we were about to do. I challenged them to throw out any notions of good painting in order to access raw emotion. I asked them to let go of any idea of a product. We were going to actively play and only engage in the process of painting. To do this, we examined how Abstract Expressionists used painting to explore inner emotions through energetic brushwork and bold use of color. We looked briefly at works by Francis Bacon, Otto Dix, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Kline, and Elizabeth Peyton as models of this approach. This project was about flow and resting in uncertainty. Empress and I had arranged easels on table tops so we would have to stand to paint, engaging our entire body. I wanted everyone to try out different kinds of mark making inspired by emotion, and movement, and to lose themselves in the music, letting their creative inhibitions go. Paint as if no one is watching to get in the flow of unconsciously painting to the beat of the music and what they were feeling. I put on instrumental music of mixed genres and we played. While they were painting, a conversation arose about writing, Anne Lamont, and the concept of the shitty first draft (SFD).

SFD

Agnes: My students don't think of writing as a process. They think of it as a product. They are nervous about making drafts. Like Anne Lamont says in her book Bird by Bird, SFD's are about being ok with not perfect. They are afraid to make mistakes. If they read a paragraph and it's not what they want it to be then it isn't worthy of anything.

Randy: *I try to have that Bob Ross mentality in the art room. There are no mistakes and I try to free them up. But what do we do? We clean them up. Modify them. We get caught up in the right way and with judgment.*

Agnes: *One time I bought a journal, but then I was so into collecting them that I couldn't write in them. I was afraid of ruining them, so I just kept a lot of empty journals.*

Final reflection

In the final reflection, I asked them to pick up their folded piece of paper, read it, and tell us how they are feeling now.

Antonia: *I was feeling nervous and headachy. I'm still a little nervous but the headache is gone.*

Researcher: *Why are you nervous?*

Antonia: *Because I am the only non-artist in the room.*

(Multiple people resoundingly said "No!")

Sylvia: *I'm a non-artist. I've never painted before.*

Antonia: *But you are a musician.*

Sylvia: *Yes, but that is different from art. It feels like another world.*

Lauren: *I'm not trained as an artist.*



FIGURE 32. ANTONIA'S PAINTING TO MUSIC



FIGURE 33. AGNES' PAINTING TO MUSIC

Agnes: *I'm not an artist either and I don't work in that field. I was feeling a little anxious but now I'm feeling more open. I try to make an effort to open my chest here because when I sit and write I tend to huddle over and close up my chest and lungs. The physical aspect of what we did, standing and painting, helped me open. I also used colors I felt were soothing. I liked the way they showed up on the palette. It was pleasurable to mix them and see what color would come out on the brush. The experience of the whole process was nice*

and soothing.

Anne: *I was feeling content and fulfilled but now I'm feeling pensive. I was in the zone and I wanted to play a couple of more hours. For me, this space is always filled with love and happiness, especially these mornings with people who want to make or experience uncertainty together. It's really wonderful and it makes me want to be here.*



FIGURE 34. ANNE'S PAINTING TO MUSIC



FIGURE 35. LAUREL'S PAINTING
TO MUSIC

Laurel: *I was feeling content and tired and the overwhelming feelings were kept at bay. While I was doing this, I wasn't thinking about the list of things I need to do, the growing list. I've done this before where I've told my students art is for different reasons, it isn't always about the product. Sometimes it's just for the enjoyment of doing it or getting your hands dirty. So, I was able to embrace this pretty well and let the painting tell me where it wanted to go. But it is a process to get to that point.*

Lauren: *When I started out, I was stressed so I was excited to play. I really just started making marks, not any shape or anything. But my mind went back to the ink blots and I started to think about what the shapes reminded me of. I kept trying to avoid the shapes but the more I avoided them the more shapes I could see. So, I finally just went with it. Certain songs brought out different things too. I would use the brush in a different way during some songs and some songs would make me feel different ways and that affected the way I was painting. So, I really loved the way the experience made me feel.*



FIGURE 36. LAUREL'S PAINTING
TO MUSIC



FIGURE 37. SYLVIA'S PAINTING TO MUSIC

Sylvia: *I wrote down that I was feeling disappointed this morning. After it was over, I was feeling sad and that's ok because I think it's an opening for me. (She is in tears) Part of my painting is a mess in the middle and its very busy. There's that word again. This week I experienced a lot of anger which I usually don't, so I had some big blotches of paint I threw on with the brush and that was red. The other parts are growing things and feel forest-y on top of the busyness. It probably is me, but I will try not to judge it or analyze what it means. I'll*

just let it be information for me, an expression.

Empress: *My word was stuck. I started out with four colors and I just kept getting more and more colors. I did a lot of layers and I wanted it to be light and fluffy but it's not light and fluffy.*

Randy: *My word was anxious. I have high anxiety and a bunch of other stuff. I was trying to be more aware of the music rather than cognitively going into the process. When Shining Star started to play, I went completely to the top of the canvas and was more fluid in terms of using my hands as an*

instrument. I just let the music dictate what was going to happen instead of forcing anything. I use ETC which teaches us how to work with specific mediums based on where a person is at. If a person is restrictive in terms of emotions, someone very flat, we would use a fluid medium such as pastels that will allow them to open up their expression as well as a sensory experience.



FIGURE 38. EMPRESS' PAINTING TO MUSIC



FIGURE 39. RANDY'S PAINTING TO MUSIC

People who are very cognitive will go right for the pencil and write a lot of words and use a ruler. I've found that if a person is not in the best state of mind, they are going to strive for something they can control.

Researcher: So, if you are feeling weepy you might not want to use watercolor because it would make you feel weepier?

Randy: Or you could make a restrictive mandala and use watercolor. The mandala would create containment. I do that with expansive children. If I know they are going to be all

over the place, I'll have them work with a mandala so they can stay inside that space.

Laurel: When you do that do you use a coloring page or is it one they design themselves?

Randy: It depends on where they are at. A lot of times I will draw a big circle on the paper and ask them to draw in it. Maybe pictures of their family or how they are feeling and go from there.

My reflection

This conversation ended the workshop, and everyone took their time to stop painting and clean up. Even though it was difficult to start, it proved problematic to paint without a plan, it was just as difficult to stop. They wanted to make sketches, figure out what this was going to be, where it was going. I had asked them to rest in uncertainty, to not think about an outcome and be in the moment, but they continued to be stuck in the idea of a final product. The idea of playing without specific instruction was tough. However, once they got into the flow of the moment, it was easier, and they wanted to keep going.

Making art in front of others was also risky because everyone could see their lack of artistic ability which sometimes made them feel less than. So, there can be a great deal of anxiety

attached to being creative and that can inhibit one's ability to take risks. This often came up in the space of the workshops, but less so when we worked with unconventional materials. It came up in the conversation about journaling and it came up in seemingly isolated remarks like *I don't know what I am doing*, and *this feels like another world*, and *we are always looking for the right thing to do*. As such, it became especially important to engage in the process and let go of any expectation of a product. Once we stopped being product focused the art making became freer and more relaxing, but then it was over too quickly.

Workshop four-lost and found

Nine participants arrived for workshop four and we began in much the same way as before but with a little less emphasis on introductions. I shared a breathing technique I had just learned from the book *Rising Strong* by Brené Brown. It is a mindful practice utilized by the military and perfect for times of stress. The school year was approaching, and you could feel the tension of the impending transition in the air. This technique engages both sides of the brain by requiring you to focus on your breath and count at the same time. You breathe in and count to four. Hold it while counting to four. Breathe out to the count of four. Hold it to a final count of four. It is sometimes called a mindfulness square. After we practiced, we participated in *The Wave* (Murdock, 1987) meditation.

As you breathe in... and... out, imagine that you are on a wave on the sea going up... and... down ... up... and ... down. You are perfectly safe, either lying on your back in the water, lying on a raft or surf board, or sitting in a sail boat being gently rocked by the motion of the sea. And as you continue to move up ... and ... down... back ... forth, you will notice the warmth of the sun relaxing you and feel a gentle ocean breeze. You may notice the color of the sky, the smell of the sea air, and the sound of sea birds above. You notice a sense of calm throughout your entire body as you experience the gentle rocking motion of the sea. Allow yourself to feel nurtured and supported. (pause one minute) Now it is time to come back. I will count to three, and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes. One ... Two ... Three (p. 141).

I introduced this as a collage project and asked them to look at the experience of being lost from a new perspective. Sometimes when we are lost or disoriented, we are required to be mindful and fully present. We acquire a heightened awareness of our surroundings so we can orient ourselves. We may sometimes find ourselves more profoundly after being lost. We looked at Mark Bradford's map-like paintings that defy orientation and then I asked if they would like to share personal lost and found stories. These stories brought up how difficult it is to be lost today with GPS on everyone's phone. The stories they told were about intentionally getting lost for the adventure of it, getting lost at a young age, and getting lost in a remote location where there was no cell service or Wi-Fi signal. Reminiscing on these experiences inspired the collage making by reminding everyone what it felt like to be lost and then the relief of being found. I noticed too that sharing these stories brought out common experiences that united us further as a community. This day the conversation never lagged, and stories continued to be shared all through the art making, which opened more space for camaraderie and comfort.

Empress and I had filled the counter with every collage making material we could think of and propped open the door to the supply closet participants had renamed the *closet of awesomeness* if they were inspired to look for new and unusual supplies. I said, *Uncertainty sometimes forces us to be fully present and have a more heightened awareness of our surroundings. Once you have reflected on a personal experience of being lost, I would like you to tell the story of this feeling through your collage. A narrative of being lost.* Storytelling continued all through the making, which was more relaxed than in previous projects. I have found that sometimes collage is a less risky art project because it only involves tearing and cutting and gluing and no painting or drawing. Also, this was our fourth workshop together and everyone was more comfortable and open with each other.

Final reflection

Researcher: *Can I ask that we start to share? How did it feel to make your feelings of being lost visual? Did it change anything?*

Cameron: *I shared a few weeks ago that I lost my mom a few years ago. Being lost, that was the first thing that came to mind. I was finding a lot of stuff to try to represent that and one thing I*



FIGURE 40. CAMERON'S LOST COLLAGE

found was this Facebook wall thing that says, write something. A couple of years ago I started a project right after she passed away and I found that to be very therapeutic, writing about her. The last time my art was about her and I think it is this time too. It's

about finding the right mediums to help you deal with

these things. The hardest part of healing from this loss is not having my mom to talk to all the time. She was always the first person I would call and ramble on to about anything. So, it was a challenge to find a picture to represent that. Oddly enough a goal of mine was to start this Ph.D. program, so even though I lost my Mom, it was even more meaningful to continue that journey because we had talked about it so much. So that is how I was found after the loss of her. (This was an emotional telling.)

George: *I want to say how weirdly serendipitous looking through a magazine can be. I found an article in an old Time magazine and I'll read the caption from the photo. "Trump spoke in January at Jerry Falwell's University in Lynchburg, Virginia". Which really captures a lot of my anxiety about moving*

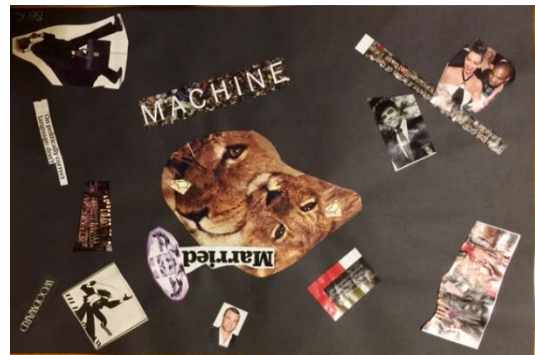


FIGURE 41. GEORGE'S LOST COLLAGE

because we will be leaving this beautiful sapphire bubble that I love very much for a place that's not. And yeah, I'm kind of lost about that. But being married centers me and I am getting excited to make a purple state bluer.

Agnes: I do a lot of fiber arts, crocheting, and knitting and I think that the meditative process is soothing for me. Purposely repeating an action over and over, that's why I love washing dishes.



FIGURE 42. AGNES' LOST COLLAGE

I did the first stitch of crochet, the braid knot or whatever it is called, and I put them on a horizontal and vertical axis like a map. At one point I thought I will stitch this through to the paper and it was interesting to force a thicker thread through small holes. Kind of like having the thread itself go on a

journey through the paper and there were times when it got in a knot. I wanted to force it through, but I thought don't do that. Just let it keep its shape. If it is messing up or knotting up just let it do that. I was pushing back on my instinct to control things and make everything perfect. I've got a picture here of some drawers. That was really soothing because it felt stacked and foundational and sturdy at the bottom. So, I was really going for shapes and textures that were kind of soothing and letting them be themselves.

Sylvia: Cameron, yours reminded me a little of mine. I didn't realize before I started doing it, my dad passed away two years ago, but this lost in the woods is my childhood home where we grew up and my experience was hope and direction because I like the way I got out of the woods. I started with being found and worked my way backward. It just felt better

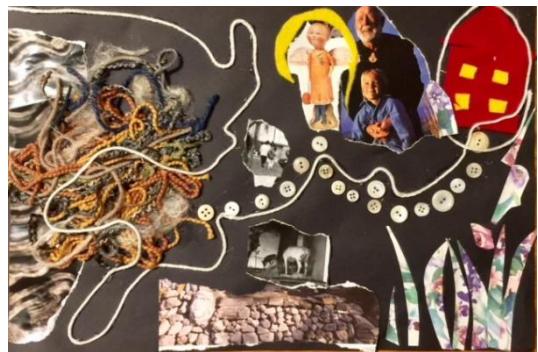


FIGURE 43. SYLVIA'S LOST COLLAGE

that way. Here is my childhood home and this tangle of yarn is the woods and I'm the white yarn going around it. We had rock walls from back in the nineteenth century and woods everywhere. I decided to use buttons, like Hansel and Gretel, to find my way out. These buttons were my path out and some of the buttons lead to this pretty angel child because the only way I can get out of anything is through my spirituality, my belief in something greater than myself. The buttons continue to lead me home. Then I decided to count the buttons and there were twelve (getting emotional) and I'm in an addictions program, so twelve steps are also my way of getting out of being lost. And there's a garden where my house is because I planted flowers with my dad a lot. There is this really nice picture of an old man who kind of looks like my dad, holding a little boy and there is this look of real love, so he is not lost anymore. I got a lot out of this actually, more than I expected, more than I realized until just now.

Cameron: I can bounce off that. I was trying to find a picture of a mom and daughter for mine and I found one that was a Jenny Craig ad that said half her size. I noticed that I forgot to cut that part off then I thought it fit because without her I am half. As much as that annoys me, it is fitting.



FIGURE 44. LAUREL'S LOST COLLAGE

Laurel: I'm only about halfway done, but it truly has me in its grips. I say that with love. I guess I would call mine paths and obstacles. It is like the idea you come to a river and do you see it as a path, or do you see it as something that's impeding you. And I feel like that right now. I don't feel anxiety lost, but I have

some things that are irritating me. Like the upcoming school year and things, I could see as obstacles that are making me feel trapped or lost. I feel like I have lost control of a situation, less

free. It is kind of like being lost is a mindset and I have to take a minute to calm down and recognize that maybe it is a path, not an obstacle. There are a lot of different paths here and they keep bumping into each other. They are not straight paths and I realized that sometimes you just have to walk the path even if it leads you back to where you were before. You think you are lost, but nope, you are right here.

Antonia: I don't want to frighten anybody who doesn't have children but wants them. Mine is about parenthood. You think it is going to be this beautiful blue and white kitchen but instead, it is cats falling out of the sky. There's a lot of change and meaning along the way but cats keep falling out of the sky.



FIGURE 45. ANTONIA'S LOST COLLAGE



FIGURE 46. EMPRESS' LOST COLLAGE

Empress: So, I chose some words from the project description and I just kept repeating them: confront, unfamiliar, anxious, disorientation, freaking out, journey, and lost. I wanted these to be trees, but they look more like flowers which I am not too happy with.

I have mountains in the background, and I realized both the times I was physically lost was in Maine, and my dad passed away in Maine. I feel like these colors remind me of Maine. I think this is a Mark Rothko painting and his name was Mark.

My reflection

I felt there was a great deal of synchronicity¹⁸ happening in the finding of images and during the making. Many discoveries occurred during the process of collage making. Opening

¹⁸ Allan Combs (2001) wrote that Carl Jung used the term synchronicity to describe meaningful coincidences or experiences that conventional ideas of time and causality cannot explain.

the workshop by sharing a difficult topic brought everyone closer, illuminated commonalities, and making art about it made the topic less risky to talk about. They empathized with each other through these similar experiences. Fear of making was less present, and I have previously found that collage making prompts conversation in a way that other art making does not. The layered imagery in the process of cutting, tearing, and gluing exemplified multiple perspectives from which the makers could see and re-experience their world. Meaning was socially and visually constructed during the collage process that moved implicit feelings to explicit storytelling.

Workshop five-creating from chaos

I was excited about this workshop because it mirrored the way I work with nature as an artist. Only six people could attend which was perfect for what we had planned. Ahead of time, I had collected artifacts from nature, leaves, bark, plants, twigs, and filled several grocery bags. Empress and I tore the edges of poster boards so our canvas would be irregular and organic, and I brought in cans of spray paint in a variety of colors. When everyone arrived, we went outside to begin. We spread out a tarp and demonstrated what I wanted them to do. I asked them to choose a canvas and select pieces of nature to toss on it. I did not want them to try and arrange anything, just lob the nature on and let it land where it wants. After they had finished, they were to take a can of spray paint and spray all over it, being sure to allow some negative areas where the board



FIGURE 47. SPRAY PAINTING OUTSIDE

shows through. While we did this, I spoke about the Dadaists and creating from the accidental. I heard exclamations of *isn't it gorgeous* and *beautiful* and *that one looks like a dragon's egg* as they dumped off the nature to see what shapes were produced on the canvas. There was laughter, experimentation, howls of delight, and fun. When we went back inside, we set our works aside to dry. I introduced them to an Exquisite Corpse word game meant to free up our imaginations. To begin, I offered a worksheet with blanks showing the grammatical parts of a sentence. Adjective-noun-adverb-verb-adjective-noun. Each person would fill in a section, fold the worksheet over their response, and pass the paper on to the person next to them. The point was for each person not to see any of the response's others have made. Once all sections were complete, we unfolded our worksheets to reveal a complete sentence constructed by different members of the group. We took turns reading them out loud.

Antonia: *The tingled cat gently walks the foolish shirt.* (Much laughter)

Researcher: *The sad castle quickly travels to the warm giraffe.*

Sylvia: *The green lion rambunctiously jumped into the feathery tea. Splash!* (laughter)

Antonia: *These would be fun to illustrate.*

Laurel: *Windy paper tiredly trumpets to the sunny crow.*

Sylvia: (crowing) *Sunny crow! Sunny crow! Sunny crow!* (laughter)

Veronica: *The sulfurous tree ran and jumped into a cheery shower.*

Empress: *The slimy banana slug lightly ran with a garish smile. What does garish mean?*

Antonia: *Over the top. Like Mardi Gras.*

Anne: *Gaudy. The curly home merrily cries for the purple table.*

Antonia: *This would be a great English lesson. I love grammar.*

Sylvia: *It would be fun to diagram too.*

After much laughter and a conversation about foolish shirts, I introduced them to the Creole term Gumbo Ya Ya. I explained that it stood for multiplicity and the chaos of multiple voices spoken at once. I said that *we are Gumbo Ya Ya in that we are not just one thing, we are a multiplicity of things. Sometimes all at once or sometimes in different moments of the day. This can feel like chaos or madness, but we can rejoice in all those things. So, thinking about that, I want you to look at the chaos on your canvas paying special attention to the negative spaces and free your imagination. Look for one minute then tell me what you see.*

Sylvia: *I see an embryo. A fetus. The head and this little indentation like the body wrapped around.*

Antonia: *I have a fish.*

Empress: *I have a whale.*

Anne: *I have an above view of a map. Like little bitty roads that lead nowhere or maybe by these big shopping malls.*

Veronica: *Mine feels really aggressive. It feels like these are swords and maybe a hatchet. And this looks like a boot. It could be just a general comment on my state of mind right now but...there's a boot and I saw that right away and when I was turning it, this looks like a butterfly underneath the boot.*

I asked them to take another minute and quietly contemplate those shapes and say whatever comes to their minds.

Veronica: *Maybe I'm the boot!*

Anne: *Power. Your power is in this moment.*

Sylvia: *Maybe the butterfly is landing on the boot.*

Laurel: *I have a duck head. I was thinking of a mallard because it is dark. There are a lot of duck things going on here.*

Empress: *I see a whale and a palm tree and a buoy.*

Next, I told them to start where they are with what they see and work their way out to the edges.

No planning just let it happen.

Final reflection

For the final reflection, I asked them to consider how they made their mark in this chaos.

How did they make themselves heard or known in this work today?



FIGURE 48. LAUREL'S PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

Laurel: *So, mine is about edges and transitions. It is about smoothing things out or defining things. I kept looking at this duck head and it felt like it was about refining. I'm right in the middle of a transition with school about to start. A sharp edge, the school bell rings and that's it. Smoothing out the details. Smoothing out my intentions. I think that's where I am. School starts next week.*

Empress: *I'm from New England and I lived in a house on the beach for twenty-two years of my life. So, I've been really pouty with myself this summer without a beach or the ocean. Being my total spoiled self. I moved here in August for graduate school on a whim. But it has been a lot! I had a friend at work say that she really likes and respects me, and she sees changes in me and my positivity, so I would like to think I'm the buoy staying afloat. So, we will see.*



FIGURE 49. EMPRESS PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

Veronica: *I've been thinking a lot about my own research and just life in general and about*



FIGURE 50. VERONICA'S PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

simultaneity. How things can simultaneously be things that seem to be opposite. So, the world can be really beautiful and wonderful and amazing and also awful and horrible. I'm feeling that in my personal life and I'm trying to accept it. I value kindness and happiness and forgiveness, but I also think it's important to be angry and mad and not to forgive sometimes. I think you can simultaneously forgive and not

forgive someone. I'm thinking about those dichotomies. I started with this boot and then this fire and then I saw the butterflies and went with that. And so, sometimes I'm the boot, sometimes I'm the fire, sometimes I'm the butterfly, and sometimes I'm the stick. And sometimes I'm all of them at once.

Sylvia: *I have a question. While you were making those, what emotions were you feeling?*

Veronica: *The boot felt kind of dark and it is literally dark to me. It felt cathartic making the fire. The butterfly felt peaceful. I was looking in the negative space, looking for wings and they kept popping out at me. I felt like the sticks tied everything together.*

Anne: *I don't exactly know what is going on in mine. I can't tell if it is just because I've been on a plane every other week for, I don't know how long and being far away from everything. I can't see the big picture because I'm in the forest. I'm trying to plan the curriculum for all of my classes, and I'll go into details for one day and then I have to go back out. So, an overview of a*



FIGURE 51. ANNE'S PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

road map, kind of like beautiful paintings I'm always intrigued by. But then it became blue and water, so I don't know. There is a fluidity to it that I didn't expect. There is no clear entry point or exit point. Maybe that's the stress of curriculum building for me. I'm not good at linear thinking because everything is a rhizome. So, when I think about getting from the first day to the last day, I'm just not good at that. I see everything as connected so it is hard for me to see a sequence.

Antonia: I have absolutely no idea what's going on here. We have fish and some birds and the



FIGURE 52. ANTONIA'S PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

moon and a couple of angels and a broken broomstick. I don't know. And nothing is in scale. I'm not much of an artist but scale is something I just can't do. I just don't get it. I felt bizarrely detached. I was just trying to see what was there and what I was capable of actually doing because I don't do art.

Sylvia: What is the word you just said. That prompt again.

Researcher: How did you make your mark in this chaos? Or how did you make yourself heard or known?

Sylvia: *That part, heard or known. This is an embryo or fetus. I suddenly thought about it as I was feeling like I'm still within, like in terms of my creative voice. It's been on hold for many years. (she gets emotional here) I feel like that's the source of my voice, and there is this life inside me. Then all the blue is like little ponds, little pieces of water. There is light around everything so that is very spiritual to me because light is a word I use for the divine. Inner light and seeing the light in others. This is the umbilical cord and the baby is attached to the placenta but I'm not sure where it is and there are these two little things. They aren't anatomically correct but maybe they are ovaries. I'm in menopause so there are all these symbols and meanings. I like the surrounding border because boundaries are important to me and I have trouble with them a lot in my life. So, it holds the idea of being held by the blue, peaceful and containing. Lots of little connections between things. I feel like this is important, my inner voice is at an embryonic stage.*



FIGURE 53. SYLVIA'S PAINTING THROUGH CHAOS

My reflection

It was telling by the conversations that we are getting close to the beginning of the school year. I tried to loosen them up with fun and being outside, but they went deep fast. They were prepared to be introspective because I created a culture for that each Saturday morning. This project, like the ink blot, invited contemplation by looking for images that were accidentally created by the process we employed. This process made feelings that were implicit, explicit by asking that they draw what they see and reflect on it. In each project, this was easier and easier as they became more comfortable with each other, and with manipulating art materials. I am not

saying that their fear of making disappeared, it certainly did not, but being brave, they made their thoughts and feelings visible and sharing those emotions in the space of community became easier.

We built an atmosphere of trust and invited openness without judgment which sometimes became cathartic. This happened more powerfully than I anticipated, and I do not know why I did not anticipate it. I created a safe environment, and open creative projects that asked for this but did not demand it. It could happen organically. So often in the art room, this kind of introspection or catharsis happens accidentally. There is also a kind of emotional contagion that occurs when the emotions of one trigger the emotions of another in a group.

I thought, what if we were trained to purposely set up circumstances that contributed to emotional growth through artistic introspection. This could even be a class that was separate from other art classes so kids would know why they were there and what they were getting into. An introspective self-expressive art making space. These were my thoughts after this workshop, and I found myself looking forward to and feeling melancholy about the final workshop ahead.

Workshop six-Mandala

I was feeling a little sad and a lot grateful as I arrived for the final workshop. Immersing myself in this community as they experienced these workshops was transformative for me. Getting here had been a long and difficult journey with many obstacles to overcome and I was grateful for these wonderful peers and friends who had shown up for me. They had given their time, pushed past uncomfortable fears and anxieties, bravely shared personal stories, and courageously expressed themselves through whatever media I threw at them.

We were going to make Mandalas today and Empress and I had decided to draw the circles for them ahead of time to remove anxiety they might have. We filled the counter with art

supplies one last time, made the coffee, and prepared for what I knew was going to be a large group. Twelve people arrived for this workshop. Vacations were over and school had started for most of us. After coffee and introductions, I set the mood by playing my singing bowl and told them I learned in my mindfulness practice, it was a good way to begin or end any ritual or practice. While everyone was trying their hand at the singing bowl, we discussed what they knew

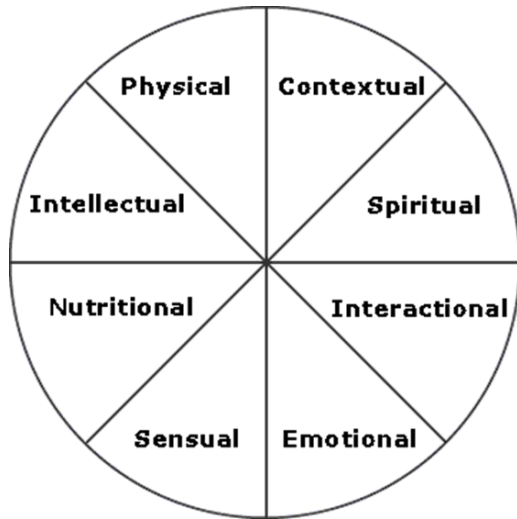


FIGURE 54. SATIR'S MANDALA: THE COMPONENTS OF HAPPINESS (2009)

or understood about Mandalas. I said we were going to use, as an example or as a place to start, Virginia Satir's model of the Mandala of happiness (Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 1991). I drew the model on the board for everyone to see. Her philosophy is that we are composed of different parts and each part needed to be nurtured and cared for every day so we could find balance and contentment. I said to think of themselves as the center and they could create this in

any way they like. Before we began, we participated in a *Mandala* (Murdock, 1987) meditation.

Close your eyes and begin to breathe slowly through your nostrils. Now take three deep breaths, releasing any tension that you may carry in your body as you breathe out. (pause) Good. Now continue to breathe at your own rate and focus your attention on a point in the middle of your forehead between your closed eyes. Imagine a circle in this spot that slowly begins to expand with each breath you take. As you breathe, your circle begins to grow and grow, getting larger and larger, until you and the circle are one. (pause) Your circle continues to expand until it encompasses everyone in the room. (pause) As you continue to breathe, your circle gets larger and larger and encompasses all of your friends and family, the world, and finally surrounds the entire universe. With each breath you take, you and the entire universe are one, in energy, spirit, and love. (pause) Continue to breathe into your circle as you imagine yourself as mandala, being both the center and the whole of the universe. (pause 1 minute) When you are ready, and only when you are ready, count to five to yourself and gently open your eyes, becoming aware of your physical body and of the other people around you. Try to stay in the feeling of being one with the universe as you work on this mandala

project (p. 95).

When we completed the meditation, I said there are many ways to represent themselves as a mandala and all of them are right. This mandala is theirs to complete any way they choose, they could paint, collage, draw, build, whatever brings them joy. Everyone started gathering materials and visiting with each other; some had been traveling, and others were here for the first time. Once everyone began working, a conversation started about the structure of the example mandala.

Judgment

Agnes: *I was wondering if this was a wheel of judgment.*

Elizabeth: *I don't know how well most of you know me, but I don't do things correctly in my life.*

Veronica: *You do things the way they are right for you and that's society telling you how you should do them!*

Elizabeth: *I could use you to come over and lie to me on a daily basis.*

Veronica: *It's not a lie, it's the mantra I live by. I think about how I can defy the boundaries.*

The room was also filled with discussions about the job market, food stamps, giving an elevator speech, teaching, research, family, kids, and marriage. Well into our time of making I asked if anyone would tell me what some of their favorite projects were. The inkblot in workshop two, the painting in workshop three, and spray painting outside in workshop five were the favorites all for similar reasons. The freedom that was built into them for personal expression was *therapeutic* and *cathartic*.

Final reflection

Agnes: *Having a day to push back against those instincts to always have to plan out and worry about what is this going to look like. Going against what we do every day.*

CJ: *Being with the process rather than the product.*

Pia: *We are taught to have a product, but in early childhood, it is the opposite. We have to refrain from years of being told that your focus is the product. In early childhood, it's all process. Let them get paint on their arms if they want to.*

Laurel: *I'm at the far end of that in high school. I'm constantly torn between my students wanting*



a product and I'm grading them on the process. They judge and value themselves harshly and won't turn something in. Then they beat themselves up about it. I try to get them out of that. I want them to make something ugly. I want them to take that jump and feel like they are in a safe environment where they are allowed to fail.

FIGURE 55. LAUREL'S MANDALA

Pia: *What did Picasso say? It took me my whole life to learn to be an artist like a child.*

Randy: *Trying to create an atmosphere of play, as an adult, is seen as taboo or childish. You shouldn't be having fun. You have responsibilities. You should be miserable.*



FIGURE 56. RANDY'S MANDALA

Agnes: *I tied that thought to writing because my students, they*



FIGURE 57. AGNES' MANDALA

haven't been taught to write through. To just keep writing and writing even if it is awful. They want to write their whole paper the night before. After the painting session, I've been doing more free writing, saying this isn't going anywhere and that's fine. The actual writing process is the point. I'm getting back to the process rather than focusing on the product and I'm doing a lot more writing as a result. Just doing

it for the sake of doing it and it's all because of this workshop.

Veronica: *It's been really nice to have my daughter making art while I am making art this summer. That's had me think about I don't have to sit there like a vulture waiting to clean up, I can paint sometimes too. This experience might change how I interact with her while she is making or creating.*



FIGURE 58. VERONICA'S MANDALA



FIGURE 59. PIA'S MANDALA

Pia: *I think about product versus process. It's been nice to get in that role to understand my kids better. I can understand them better if I can embrace that.*

CJ: *For me, it has been about slowing down a little bit and doing more of the process. Slowing down and being ok with pausing in front of a blank piece of paper and waiting to see what happens.*

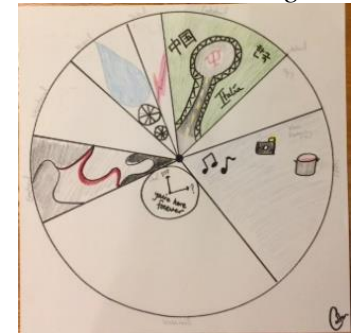


FIGURE 60. CJ'S MANDALA



FIGURE 61. ELIZABETH'S MANDALA

Elizabeth: *Mine is a little funky in the middle, like my soul. There is something about this reflective process of the art you've been talking about. Thinking about something while you are painting, or art having a spiritual or an emotional component. I didn't really think about that before. I don't sit down and meditate. But that is kind of what I do when I make something for someone and I'm talking to them the whole time. That*

interaction means a lot to me and now I will think about that more carefully and closely.

My reflection

I did not expect such a strong push back against a project as structured as this. I could understand, once they started talking, how they might feel judged by the perfectly balanced structure of the mandala. I thought this would be the perfect end to the workshops, but I believe now it was the least successful because it was the most structured, the antithesis of my intentions for this activity. They fought against the very thing I thought they might appreciate. There was also the continued struggle of ability versus want. Many times, I heard comments of not being able to portray the images they want to out of lack of ability, skill, or confidence. Letting go of perfectionism was particularly difficult on this last day.

Cleaning up and saying goodbye this time provided a kind of closure not only to the workshops but to the summer as well. It was both an unhappy and fulfilling experience to have completed this series of workshops with these extraordinary participants.

Concluding Remarks

Through reflection, in a collective group, participants began to experience the way perceptions can change and multiply. They grew increasingly comfortable and could interpret their artwork with humor, trust, and care. There was a thoughtful reflection and wonder with empathetic laughter in between. They began to see and experience commonalities in the group. By the final workshop, they were comfortable enough with me and each other to be open about how they felt about this final project, calling it a *wheel of judgment* and pushing back against limitations they perceived. I valued their honesty and realized I had given them a final project that was too controlled, playing into the very thing I fought against.

In this chapter, I described the six workshops in detail including many of the experiences

the participants had and the artwork they made. I used their voices as much as I could to be authentic to their voices. This chapter addressed the research question of what is the nature of blended art education/art therapeutic strategies in this context?

Earlier in the chapter, I wrote that workshop one was divided into two parts. The second part, an expressive portrait of what participants hide from the world, was shared in their individual interviews with me. These interviews were voluntary, but everyone chose to participate. In the next chapter, chapter seven, I used those portraits to describe some of what these participants shared with me in the interviews. In the first section of the chapter, I shared the expressive portraits these participants made through their images and words, and in the second section of the chapter, I share briefly my findings from this part of the research.

Chapter Seven: Findings From the Workshops

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I shared data from the six workshops, reflections I had about these experiences and a gentle analysis of this data. This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I completed the data gathering from the workshops and from the interviews. In the second section, I introduce my findings from the workshops and the interviews and share a brief reflection and analysis of them.

In chapter eight, I present expressive portraiture as an analysis of my perception of each participants' experience in the workshops. I chose the method of expressive portraiture because it aligns with this research and my work as an artist. This method of reflective painting practice allowed me to make sense of everything I heard and saw and further enabled me to respond to the complexity of feelings and emotions these participants experienced.

In chapter Nine, I will close out the research project by diving deeper into an analysis of the project as a whole and making connections to art education, education in general, and the possibility of future research.

The 'other' side of the bag from workshop one

I want to begin this chapter by sharing the other side of the bags from the first workshop assignment described in the previous chapter. This is the part of themselves participants described that they do not show the outside world. This is the part they shared with me in our individual interviews. I included both sides of Abby's project because she could not attend the workshops and was not in the description of workshop one. I will let these participants speak for themselves through their own found creative voices.

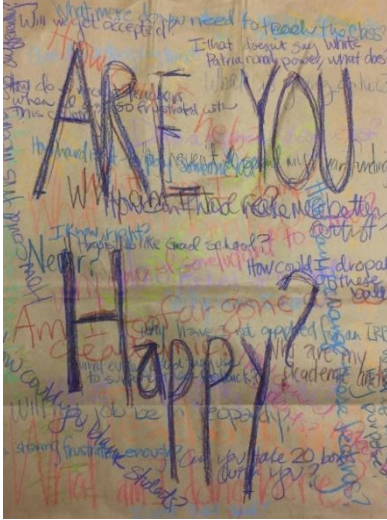


FIGURE 62. ANNE'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

Anne: *I just started writing out some of these questions. Like, what does belonging look like? What is wrong with me? Do I belong here? How can this happen so soon? Is that what that is? What the FUCK? In the back of my mind, I go back to my advisor. She was like, are you happy? And it's like, well, does happiness exist? I don't really know, but I think that those words keep haunting me. So, I tried to put questions over and over again, like, are you fucking kidding me? Is one of them teachers and guns, how are we supposed to get people into our*

program if teachers are supposed to carry guns? How do we do this? Those are the kinds of questions that I have on the bag. And I tried at first to distinguish with color and the warmer colors the burning questions and the cooler colors for the things that were there, but they weren't going to set me on fire. But then I noticed the dark colors were showing a lot more. So, I chose to do "Are you happy?" really big. I tried to use scale to talk about which questions became refrains. Like what am I doing here? What am I doing? How can I help? So, they may see me as a little bit different, but they might not see all the frustrations and insecurities and dissonance that happened in the first year. I just went through and pulled out questions from my journal and put them on that bag because they spoke to so much of what I wouldn't share with people. And you can write about this obviously. I think something that is constantly on my mind and not because I'm questioning my happiness necessarily. But I just hear her, I hear her little whisper, but are you happy? No? Maybe? Like it changes every second. I think it's that refrain every time I sit down, every time I come in at six or seven and work until six or seven or last night I worked until 10. It's a metaphor and the actual thing. I love it here. I love so much about this place. I

don't know how to continue.

Sylvia: The golden white tissue paper symbolizes the sweetness and sort of glowing treasure of treasures, but it's undercover because it's hard for me to treasure myself because I recently, in the past year, discovered I was an addict and it's in my family. I taped down with masking tape across the white and gold tissue paper, and it just says love me, please. It's really a message to others. If you knew who I really was, would you still love me? And I've tested that, and I've told some dear friends about my addiction and they still love me. So, it's under the flaps because it's like I don't. It's also vulnerable to show I need your love, and would you please love me. And so, for me, I love me is my self-care, which is so much healthier than it's been right now. I've been a year and a month sober from my addictive behavior. So, making this brought me back to the secret shame part, but I'm putting it out there. So, that makes me feel also like I'm trusting you. I'm trusting the universe that I'm writing the word addict on something that's physical. I liked doing it because it was sort of fun, like tearing up masking tape and making something kind of ugly. But I was like, this is part of who I am. I've done some ugly things and people have done ugly things to me and I'm owning it and I'm not going to hide it anymore. Making it into art or figuring out, okay, I've got to tear up some things up. I started by accident tearing the paper when it was coloring and it was like, yes, I want to tear things up because that's how I feel. I've felt torn up and I've torn up other people's lives. I've hurt people's lives. So, tearing the paper around on purpose, was like putting into substance what I've done in my life. And so, I kind of liked all the tearing things. I think one thing that's

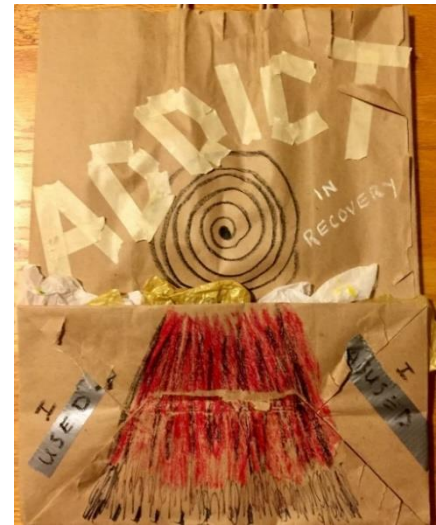


FIGURE 63. SYLVIA'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

also hidden is that I'm such a perfectionist and I make mistakes, you know. I'm down on myself when I make mistakes, just the idea of errors and mistakes. So, having things get messed up is good for me. Let it get messed up, like it's just okay. So, it feels honest. My rawness and my journey and my struggle and my patterns and my joy. I can feel it, see it much more like clearly now. From these experiences, I feel less fear of being vulnerable and expressing myself, especially since it's not like visual arts is something that I'm familiar with. And it fed us like each person's vulnerability and message. I think it fed us back.

Pia: Immediately what thoughts came to my mind is I don't really let people see the tears



FIGURE 64. PIA'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

that, you know, we all have worries, concerns, the hard stuff.

And I think I tried to hide that more and a lot of it is probably that old teaching of if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. So, hiding because it feels like failure, it feels like shortcomings. The other part I don't show are the questions that might come up, the flip side of am I happy, am I sad, what are both sides of the story? I might not always show that I'm questioning both sides of things. But don't we all? And, I think that was the questioning, to have stuff where you just go, gosh,

did I do it right? What did I mess up on? What could I have done better? And then, on the other hand, my flip side is we do the best we can with what we have. It's hard getting through those hard things, but that is the thing, you know, would we do it differently? Probably. But would we have known to do it differently?

Cameron: *I really liked my mandala so much that I wanted to put it on the back of the bag. I took a picture of it with the intention of shrinking it down so that it would fit on the back, like printing it to fit. I haven't done that yet because life got in the way. I think it says something about me that I didn't put anything on the back and instead wanted to do this for two reasons. I think one, this gave me a way to think about myself, but also because of my issues with art and wanting it to be perfect it was just easier, and I hate to admit that.*



FIGURE 65. IMAGE FOR CAMERON'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

But I think when I was doing it in that moment, I was like, oh, I want this to be the back of my bag because I think it's a lot about who I think I am to myself. I mean, I think it's stuff that people see about me as well, but at the same time, it's stuff that people don't know. I think even the front of the bag speaks more about who I think I am on the inside than I meant. I mean the fact that I'm neurotic as hell. So, the front of my bag ended up being a little bit about how I see myself too. I think the front spoke so much to me that and this spoke so much to me that I didn't want to put something else if that makes sense.

CJ: *I went kind of minimalist on the back. I took some of those oil pastels and I started off in the corner and I just kind of flung a lot of them up there. But then I wanted to do less and less as I moved down and across the bag, because it's supposed to represent who we are inside, you know, and I think that there are still levels inside that I allow to show. There are the parts that are kind of, maybe more populated that more people get to see, you know, there's the external kind of everyday kind of professional colleagues and things like that. But then, more and more*

people can move through deeper and deeper into who I am as a person. But it gets more sparse

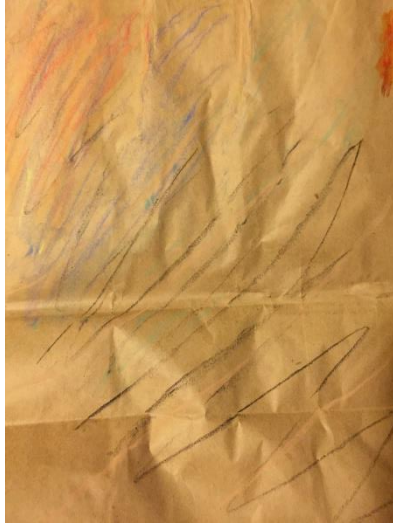


FIGURE 66. CJ'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

the deeper in we go. I didn't want to make an image. I don't feel like I can make a singular representation of who I am on the inside because there are parts of me that I share with lots of people. There are parts of me that I share with maybe a few close friends and then there are parts of me that I have never shared with anybody and I couldn't think of a way that I could do that idea justice with my limited artistic ability. I couldn't think of a way that didn't seem cliché. You know, there's more that I keep to myself because I would consider myself to be

somewhat introverted. Like I can go about my day being very extroverted and being outgoing and everything. But then when I go home, I really value that time where I can do my own thing and I can be on my own and I don't have to talk, and I don't have to listen, and I can just kind of do my thing. I don't know if there's more stuff up here because that's the kind of stuff that I keep to myself and you know, that I kind of hoard for myself in that kind of introversion or if that's more of the stuff that I do let people see that is kind of the outgoing, extroverted kind of stuff that like is kind of, you know, that's what I am inside that I don't always show. But what is down there sometimes gets out. It explodes out even when you don't want it to.

Lauren: *Okay so this was going to be the backside of my grocery bag. Then I didn't have the heart to cut it after I did it. And then I thought well I would ask you if I should photograph it and shrink it and then put it on the back. So, there was writing underneath. For most of the ones that I did at home, I did an underlay, that's typically what I do.*

I'll do an underlayer of words or phrases or something like that underneath before I start painting. And then that kind of gets me past the blankness...The blank space. So, on that one I was thinking about, I think it's the real me. The me I want to protect. I have all this chaos inside of me and this chaos in my life, just the unknown of everything that is, I feel, trapped within me. And then I'm trying to move it out of me all the time. But I don't.

People don't like to see that when I show it. They don't like to see that. I need to be the stable person, you know, or something,

but more and more it becomes harder, especially everything that's happened in the last couple of years. To me, it's harder for this not to be seen. For a long time, I could mask it really well.

There's a lot of things historically about my life that I don't let people know, things that have happened to me. And I think sometimes it's hard for people to understand why I'm the way I am, but most people, I don't share with them things about my past. And I know it comes out in some weird way. So, I had words underneath of that part I don't like people to see and then, I started painting and working. I really loved doing it. I really loved it after it was finished, but I don't really love this me. I've been working through that this summer and this helped so much. Oh my gosh, it was like finding a part of me that I forgot that I even had.

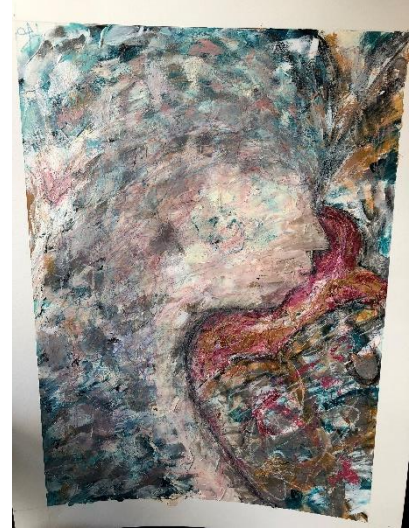


FIGURE 67. IMAGE FOR LAUREN'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

Laurel: *I don't think of myself as extroverted. It's so funny. I'm a teacher but half of the reason why I can do this and be so outgoing is that I spend four hours a day sitting by myself doing art. I hate social situations and parenty stuff. But I mean not with my kids but like social parenty play dates. I don't take my kids to the bus stop. I have no interest in talking to the neighbors. Facebook works for me because it's like saying, hey, I don't need to be all in your do. I will not send birthday cards. I definitely feel like an introvert who just is extroverted at times, but I also don't feel like a lot of that is unnatural or hidden. They aren't like deep dark secrets that I have. I feel like I'm pretty boring and I like to connect my experiences with other people, but I don't think that's strange either. I think I'm not just gonna sit here spewing my life story to just anybody who walks by, but should the need arise, I will try to create a bond. I could give you a line and tell you that that's what the dark shadows on the side mean. But it really, it's just what it is. I'm not going to give you a line for that. I could. I've been in art school. I sat in front of my mirror. I do not love doing self-portraits, but I have done a lot of them. And I thought about the medium and what we're going to use. Charcoal, we're just going to keep it simple.*



FIGURE 68. LAUREL'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

And I did charcoal because I don't think of myself as an extravagant individual. Whereas the other side, you know, I, my intention was lots of bright colors. So, it's also kind of iconic and cartoonish and I think that when I'm at school or when I'm putting on my face for art shows, then I become these characters. And a lot of time that's very happy, very outgoing, very enthusiastic. But I can't do that without the reserved focused time for me either. And it's not that they're separate or I don't like being this person because I do and I want to be helpful and cheerful and,

and all of these things. But you know, the other side is boring. But I'm like, no, it's quiet. And introspective. This one is totally inward. This one is totally outward.

People who are not artists have this misconception about what exactly process is about and what that means. There's this tension between what they see in their heads and not having the ability to put down exactly what they see. We can't do that either. They don't see all the sketches, all the things that were thrown away. The whole process that got us to something that kind of almost looks like what was in our heads. Or that it led in a completely new direction, which was okay too, which is the process of allowing it to be whatever it is. They don't see any of that because we're all about product, product, product, product. I think the workshop was very much about process. I mean it was very much about process and so I really did feel like, okay, I'm not holding back. I had no intention of going, okay, I'm going to play, like I can't do this for people to feel better. No, I did not do that. Just so, you know. I also challenged myself a lot of ways to try to, okay, I know the struggles that they're going through, I understand those struggles. I really do. And I need to be as committed to this as they are because that's scary. I know it's scary and something that's going to come easier to me. I don't have that stress that a lot of the other participants had. So, I did push myself to think differently or not just think differently, but to go deeper with the things.

Abby: *I did these on vacation with my husband. I have different faces. This is my inner*



FIGURE 69. THE
FRONT OF ABBY'S
PAPER BAG
PORTRAIT

self that I really don't want to talk to people at all. It's not, I'm ashamed of this is my life and this crafted me the person I am now. But I had a hard life, really hard one. And to me, it explains everything. This is a common thing and you might see this on the Internet a lot, but this reflects that I am two people. And when you said to show what you are in front of others, I couldn't remember anything. This is the best at times. There are some best paintings in your mind. This is one of my best painting. I always adored that. So, I'll start with my inner self. And what is this telling? My mother and father didn't get well along. But I'm from a culture where you can't leave your husband and especially when you have two daughters. It was

me and my sister. My mother was with my father throughout her life just because she had two daughters and she was afraid that because there was no other support, so the top one reflects the home where I started seeing all the fights of my parents when I was just seven years old and this one at the top. This was the corner where I used to go when they were fighting, and I used to hide myself. I'm so shameful because I feel like I had such a life, I don't want to tell people, but I feel if I'm not revealing my truth for myself, I'm not contributing anything for you. I have to be brave enough.

I used to ride this bicycle to school, and I used to come back. I might see my parents fighting. I'd go up...And hide in the corner and this was the terrible phase of my life and my childhood was there because until the age of five or six I don't remember anything. I've never seen my parents sharing a special, romantic bond or anything. It was just a formality because they are married. So, when I grew up, we moved to another home. They are still together even though we both are married. My sister and I, they are still together. So, this is a room where whenever my father used to abuse me. This is my bed. This is my dressing table. This is the door to my bathroom, and this is my computer table here. So, these are my two faces that I really don't want to tell anyone.



FIGURE 70. THE BACK OF ABBY'S PAPER BAG PORTRAIT

But I can't forget because they shaped me. The person I am. This was my youth until the age of 26 and then I try to deduce what's in there. It was me who was afraid, and I don't know if you understand, shhh means don't tell anyone. Oh, me and my sister were not supposed to go out with our friends and say my parents don't get well along. We were supposed to portray we are good, we are happy, and my mother gave us a good portrayal thing. Books. She said books are your friends. Just because of my mother's encouragement that you can express your anger in books, do study, do anything, but that is the only way. I tried not to ever reveal my emotions, my life, so I try to smile. But internally, even if I'm talking with you, there are some things that might hurt me inside. I feel just because of my upbringing in that situation, not letting people know and other stuff, I am a fearful person. I can tell you that. Don't say this to me, I don't like it. I'll just smile and move away. But if you're saying anything daunting, tormenting that hurts me a lot, a lot. I have severe migraine problems and other issues and I know the reasons people ask me,

what are the reasons why do you feel so... I know the reasons. This is inner me who is not confident enough to stand up for herself. I'm still not confident, but I try to be as pleasing for people as possible.

Thank you. Thank you. I feel relieved. Now I feel like something is gone. I feel relieved. Continue with this type of work, especially with teacher educators who are so stressed, and I think that's good therapy, but also for yourself, this might be something wrong, but for the last few months, I'm developing this idea that everybody has their own set of struggles. You belong here. You are from states. So, you know, you are familiar with the struggles here. We are coming from a new environment; we have different types of struggles. So, I was thinking people from different countries will have different ways of expression and it's good for teacher educators to show their journey. Like, this is how I started, this is how I'm ending. It's really good. Yeah. But it's powerful for sure. For anyone, for anyone. Yeah. Thank you for letting me do this because it gave me some time to reflect on my past.

Brief Findings Discussion

Trust

Many participants were willing to put aside fear and anxiety to lean into discomfort and uncertainty and make art with me. I wondered why? I wondered what they thought might happen or what they expected to receive in return. I found they trusted me to keep them safe through the vulnerability and risk taking that art making requires, particularly from those who are not artists and do not work in the arts. The trust relationship I previously built with them and the trust I continued to build in the workshop environment was essential to being open to these experiences and pushing through the fear that accompanies creative activity.

Process over product to conquer fear

I found that valuing process over product contributed to this sense of safety during the art making experiences by fostering collaboration and contribution. It was a relief for many to not stress and worry over a perfect final product, but it was also difficult to let that go. We had many conversations about process versus product and how valuable it was to be able to focus just on the process of making art without the fear of a ‘perfect’ product. It was raised that many times we only make art as gifts for others or for a specific result. Never as a form of self-care or restoration because everyone felt the need to constantly be productive. This meant that self-care alone wasn’t viewed as a worthwhile goal.

Self-care and restoration

I found these participants committed themselves to the workshops because it gave them a legitimate reason to make art and play in community with peers and friends. They needed permission to take a break from the stress of their everyday lives to creatively care for and express themselves in the white space we provided. White space is a design principle that gives the viewer a place to rest and take a breath before moving on to the next element in the picture or advertisement. White space is not an empty or blank space but an integral part of the design that improves comprehension and gives the space structure. It can guide the viewer through the design elements, giving organization to chaos and breathing room, a place to rest. Just as an aesthetic design needs white space, we need a place to breathe and rest before we move on to the next thing. There is a real possibility that these workshops provided white space for these participants. Not an empty space to nap but a place for renewal and connection to fight the loneliness of isolation and loneliness that often occurs in our busy lives. I worried that I added one more thing to their already busy lives, but it seems I was providing a place for rest, play, and

renewal through art making and creativity.

Vulnerability

Once I realized that the establishment of trustworthiness was important to inviting vulnerability, I checked in with my participants to see how they viewed vulnerability so I would know what I was looking for. I asked each of them: What does vulnerability mean to you? How does vulnerability make you feel?

Anne: Vulnerability is the willingness to linger in emotional, social, intellectual, and physical ambiguous spaces; it requires an openness to expose and share yourself and to take risks. How does vulnerability feel? Courageous, enlightened, terrified, and authentic--- it seems to encompass all the feelings. I think vulnerability is required to wake up and be present and it is intimately linked to the aesthetic experience. In today's world, we often strive to be anesthetic-- to shut down feelings because we fear it will show weakness. As a woman, I have been told I need a thicker skin and don't need to be so emotional. I think vulnerability allows emotions to be a source of strength rather than a source of shame. It is scary.

Everette: Vulnerability is an openness with yourself and others that allows your life to be shared and to welcome others' lives into your own. The best place I have ever seen this is in my relationship with my wife and my daughter. My wife and my relationship are not perfectly vulnerable, but she is the person I have been most open to and in return has been most open with me. My daughter is completely vulnerable with us. At her age, she hides nothing. She gives herself to us because it is natural, and in return, I have learned/am learning to give myself to her and my wife better. I think kids get this better than adults do. Being a parent and then being a husband have probably been the best life lessons I have been given. It feels like freedom, like skiing down a mountain with a blue sky above and the green of trees mixed with the white of

snow. Like the first rain after a dry season. Like building or growing or producing something with your own hands. Like watching shooting stars or seeing the Milky Way on a dark night while camping. The grandeur and silence in each of these spaces seems to open oneself up to a deeper meaning about life. It feels like a calm silence and yet a filled space.

Agnes: Anytime we write or create something visual, we are putting a part of ourselves out there for others, or even ourselves to see, which in turn makes us vulnerable to external and internal critique. I think it is part of any process of making one's self vulnerable to also be attentive to ways in which we can restore ourselves through methods of self-care, which, interestingly, was also a part of the process (creating) that made us vulnerable in the first place! Vulnerability is allowing others or ourselves to see beyond our performative artifice. Vulnerability feels raw.

Laurel: Vulnerability is the sharing and entrusting of sensitive truths or self-defined truths like shame, inadequacy, and regret. Vulnerability feels a little scary and a little bit hopeful. It is a risk but also brings about the potential for closer relationships.

Pia: Vulnerability is opening yourself up to possibilities that are outside of your control and/or comfort zone. It involves risk and possibility. It feels uncomfortable at times, also like a great step forward.

CJ: Vulnerability is a chore. Vulnerability feels EXHAUSTING. I am horrible at self-care and self-reflection, though I've been trying hard to work at it since I did your workshops. Vulnerability is not something that comes naturally to me, and so it requires effort and mental dedication. It's emotionally exhausting for me to have to be reflective on my well-being, largely because I have gotten bitten in the ass when I've opened myself up and made myself vulnerable

to the people who I really care about. So, it's something that I'm naturally disinclined to do, and thus requires a lot of time and energy to get myself there.

Martha: Vulnerability is a state in which someone or something might be harmed (physically, emotionally, socially, financially, etc.). Vulnerability feels exposed, scary, frustrating, isolating, anxious.

Sylvia: I allowed myself to be vulnerable not knowing what might come of the process of creating, which is a loving and courageous act of self-care, a way to grow inwardly and share outwardly, which then is RESTORATIVE, seeing myself/ourselves in new ways through the art. Vulnerability is walking into the unknown with a raw and open spirit. Vulnerability feels scary and soft.

Jade: Most of the time, I think of vulnerability as the state of being open to attack and associate it with anxiety and fear. However, I can also think of vulnerability as like tenderness, a sort of softening or opening to intimacy. How it feels to be vulnerable depends on the situation.

Cameron: Vulnerability is allowing people to see inside your thoughts and emotions; it's having your guard down. For me, vulnerability feels awkward. When I'm feeling vulnerable, I tend to get very emotional, often to the point that I'll tear up.

Empress: Vulnerability is allowing oneself to break down the wall of guarding one's real and genuine emotions and to come out from hiding in illustrating the height of their emotional strength and showing their weaknesses; their strings that pull on their heart and soul the most. Vulnerability feels like a flood of peace and joy, a release of weight on your conscience; it can also feel like an intense punch to the stomach in letting go of that ghost who pretends to be you to show who you really are and why.

Lauren: *Vulnerability is "Authenticity" - Owning who you are, your hopes and fears, and then admitting this to yourself, and then allowing others a glimpse of your authentic self. (Answering these questions is an act of vulnerability!) Vulnerability can be quite frightening, sad. It leaves me feeling "wide open," oftentimes regretful, but in the past and in its most positive sense it has allowed me to connect with others on a deeper level and let go.*

Abby: *To me vulnerable means being in a space where I can express myself, my true self to someone from whom I don't have a feeling of being judged. Honestly, there are not a lot of people who gave you this type of safe space, as you can hear back people mocking at you, even though in the moment you were vulnerable they mentioned that they will keep your secrets. Based on some bitter experiences with a lot of people, I started to regard vulnerable as a test of my personal relationship with someone with whom I can open up my heart with a notion that he/she is never going to repeat those things in my good/bad days in the future, with a pursuit to mock at me. I personally feel being vulnerable is important for my mental well-being. I feel lucky to have a mother who provides me that sheltered space where I can just burst out everything, whether those are my emotional traumas or a sense of being ridiculed/disregarded by some others. It's a different feeling, in my country. We used to call it "trustworthiness", but now I can see a strong connection between vulnerable and trust. So, I feel this depicts a person's self of "being human" where you are not lending someone "your time" when you listen, but also an empathetic attitude assuring that they are there for you, no matter if this is for present or even in the coming future life.*

Veronica: *Vulnerability feels scary and overwhelming. Yet it also makes me feel like I'm on the verge of something - like change is coming, and it could be good. It's scary because whatever the change is could be bad, or what you're attempting could fail. But the best, biggest*

changes don't happen without risk. I talked to you on Sunday about how vulnerability, especially where I am now, not just in the workshops, makes me feel a bit like a hermit crab. I have outgrown my shell. I can't stay in the shell I was in, because it will keep me from growing, and it will eventually crush me. But in order to find a new shell, I'm going to have to leave my old one behind and venture out naked and vulnerable. When I do find that new shell, it will be worth it. But there will be danger and risk to get through before I can make it happen.

Elizabeth: Vulnerability is part of being human but not a part I have to enjoy. Vulnerability feels mostly not good to me, but I can intellectually see that it's probably not all bad and that I should stop being weird about it. I don't see self-care as a vulnerability thing – almost a preventative. If I don't take care of me, I might get to a point or stage where I'm uncomfortably vulnerable.

Antonia: At times being vulnerable is liberating, I am used to being the person who directs traffic and has the answers most of the time, and sometimes it feels good to not fill that role. Sometimes being vulnerable is frightening, the loss of control that comes with being open and accepting can be really, scary. And when being vulnerable lets in the bad feelings it is terrible and I hate every minute of it, but then it usually comes with the need to reach out and ask for help or ask questions of those who have what I need.

Agnes, Sylvia, CJ, and Elizabeth explicitly connected the ability to be vulnerable to being able to care for yourself. Being vulnerable gave them opportunities to experience personal growth and care for themselves and others. Laurel, Everette, and Abby recognized that trust was vital to a willingness to be vulnerable. Abby defined vulnerability in her life as trustworthiness. Lauren wrote that she needs to be vulnerable to elicit a greater connection to others. In reading these statements and finding instances of vulnerability in the data, I learned that trust is a vital

component of the classroom if you want students to be vulnerable. And vulnerability must be there for them to take risks into realms of uncertainty.

What I heard was that vulnerability is emotional, open, courageous, sharing, caring for self and others, authentic, trusting, risky, scary, and uncomfortable. Vulnerability feels frightening, scary, dangerous, fearful, and anxious. Some thought or viewed vulnerability as weakness, but others noted it requires courage. Dictionary.com defines vulnerability as “capable of or susceptible to being wounded”. Weakness, on the other hand, is defined as the inability to withstand attack so you might say that weakness comes from a lack of being vulnerable. Establishing a relationship of trust enabled vulnerability to weave through and inform all our experiences in the studio art workshops.

I found that in order to have holistic art education and the nurturing of the essential self, heart, and spirit (Carroll, 2006) vulnerability must be at the table. While looking for instances of vulnerability in the data I utilized Brené Brown’s definition from the literature review. She said vulnerability is a sign of courage and a willingness to take emotional and creative risks into realms of uncertainty and it is “the core, the heart, the center of meaningful human experiences” (Brown, 2012, p. 12). It is not eliminating risks but opening a space for true wholehearted engagement despite the possibility of failure.

What is next?

To begin this chapter, I employed transparency by discussing and describing the final project from workshop one that participants shared in our interview by utilizing their voices, inspired by the images they made. I concluded the chapter with a brief introduction to findings I perceive to have emerged from the data.

In the next chapter, I will provide depth to this textual and visual work by introducing each participant through expressive visual portraiture and briefly uncover ways their experiences inspired these paintings. Recognizing and exploring what is essential to understanding these participants' experiences in this studio art curriculum model will, I hope, bring understanding to contributions a therapeutic view of art education can make to future students and educators alike.

Chapter Eight: Expressive Portraiture

Introduction

In this chapter, I deepen my analysis of the experience of each participant through the ethnographic method of expressive portraiture. I chose this method because it most closely aligns with this research and my work as an artist because it reflected the creative process participants experienced in the workshops and that I experience in my studio as a painter. This kind of reflective painting practice embodies empathy for the implicit experience of others allowing me to make sense of everything I heard and saw. This creative process of analysis enabled me to respond to the complexity of feelings and emotions I perceived in these participants experience. Throughout the process of painting these portraits, I had unexpected feelings of intimacy between myself and my participants which deepened the relationship of researcher/participant.

This relationship between artist, viewer, and artwork triangulated the analysis with understanding/empathy at the center. My perceptions were altered by the act of making, the paintings were informed by the creative process, and viewers were able to find the metaphorical meaning of their experiences when they were asked, through member checking, what they could see or feel in the artwork. This experience showed that implicit knowledge can become known and then symbolically expressed through an art medium when the artist is engaged in an experiential inquiry such as this (Jongeward, 1997). However, the art making process resides in the ambiguity that rests in one's interpretation of the experience of another which makes access for the viewer difficult. Being transparent about my process will be beneficial.

The first thing I did was select an individual and then read all their responses in the transcriptions of the workshops and our individual interview. Through the process of crystallization, I immersed myself in all genre of data, to blend these multiple types of

representation and analysis into a clear artistic form. I began with those who did not attend the workshops or who attended the least and worked toward those who were the most present in the experiences. I looked at the artwork they made and thought about everything I knew and learned about them throughout the research. I utilized Jongeward's (1997) process of artistic inquiry: I work on the painting, the painting works in me; It comes into being and through this form, I come to know; This knowing becomes visual and I see myself.

Once an image began to form, it became my guiding thought and I started to paint. This process varied each time as I layered and painted, allowing the artwork to guide me until I understood which direction to go. I did not sketch first or create a plan, to reflect the spontaneous process of the projects in the workshops. I used an encaustic painting method to further place myself in unfamiliar territory that also reflected the art making experience of most participants. I was always asking them to do what they had never done before and make without sketching or planning. I wanted to reside in this same place of uncertainty and risk-taking.

While making the portraits I continually questioned how to visualize the complexity of each participants' experience. As I painted, my understanding deepened, and my awareness of using images to make meaning increased. I used texture, color, objects, and form to intuitively express what I felt to be true. Sometimes the paintings took on a life of their own, moving toward unexpected places, and other times the form reflected my original thought or idea. I always worked with ideas I felt most characterized the individual I was representing. What follows are the portraits, combined with my thoughts and practice while I worked to visually convey the perspectives and responses of the individuals they represent. I will share them in the order I made them to show the progression of my learning and growth as an artist and a researcher.

The portraits

Everette



FIGURE 71. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF EVERETTE BY RESEARCHER

of the letter and made it the foundation on which I worked. He told me that he writes her letters all the time and plans to give them to her when she turns eighteen. Through his artwork and our interview, I perceived him to be a complex individual whose intelligence and spirituality is grounded in nature and working with his hands. To represent this idea, I embedded leaves and seeds in the layers along with a piece of rusty fence I picked up on a nature walk.

Everette is a graduate student and an associate instructor in curriculum and instruction at a local university. He completed his artworks at home in collaboration with his two-year-old daughter. When searching for paper to paint on, he discovered a drawing his daughter made hidden inside one of his notebooks. He was inspired by this drawing to write a letter to her instead of painting. A letter in which that drawing was the center. With his permission, I made a copy

Everette described himself as a brick wall, saying that *a brick wall is strong, things bounce off, but it is also absorbent allowing things to pass through*. Art making allowed him to visualize and then share with me aspects of himself he usually keeps hidden. He imagined his inner self speaking to his public self while he was working. It gave him a sense of wholeness and connection to the spirit of nature. As an artist who works closely with nature, this representation came easily for me. He shared this response saying that, to him, this painting represents *a calm silence in a filled space. It is beautiful. I think the painting reminds me of creation (I attached a picture from the St. John's Bible that your painting reminded me of). I love the layers of it. It took me a while to find the letter on my screen, but I love how it is in the background of the whole picture. It is almost like the painting frames the letter. That is cool. I like the blues and greens. Green is my favorite color, but blue is the color I wear the most. I was always taught green signifies growth. Blue seems to be about the infinite. It makes me think of an ocean or sky. I also love the earthy colors. Those seem to get left out of a lot of people's imaginations...The toughest part to see is the fence/wall. It is almost like it is covered by the other things, which in many ways is true about my life. Yet, the letter stands behind it, supporting it...I keep coming back to creation and I love that imagery.*



FIGURE 72. DONALD JACKSON WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CHRIS TOMLIN. GENESIS FRONTISPIECE: CREATION. (GENESIS 1:1-2:3)

Elizabeth



FIGURE 73. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH BY RESEARCHER

short interaction as she is making their piece. She only attended the final workshop, doing most of her projects at home in what little spare time she has. Yellow overwhelms me when I think of her and I embedded beadwork and metal jewelry pieces into the painting to represent the way she creates. She said she is *a little funky in the middle* so, with her permission, I placed the cow/bull face, which emerged from her ink blot project, toward the center to represent her funkiness and

As I worked on her painting, I was thinking about Elizabeth's experience and what she does. She is a maker of steampunk jewelry, a graduate student in art education, and she works full time at a university. Jewelry making is how she defines herself as an artist. Her art making reflects her extroverted personality as she is usually interacting with clients while she is creating. She listens to their stories and tries to represent what she learns about them in that

brave vulnerability in the making of her art. I paid homage to a childhood memory that emerged in the process of making these projects on paper plates by including pieces of the plates she used. In the workshop she attended she shared a story of making art on paper plates when she was growing up. When she spoke to her mother about that memory, she told her that she gave them paper plates to create on, that their grandmother had provided, because they were poor. Elizabeth had no idea that was the reason. Elizabeth used them for these projects for the same reason, she could not afford art supplies. She loved them because they naturally framed the art she made. During our interview, she said *cut them up, put them in the painting, do whatever you want with them.*

The reflective process of the workshop she attended, and the projects she made, had a powerful influence. She said she had never really thought about the emotional, spiritual, or mental components of making before, but now she considers those aspects of what she does more deeply. I represented this reflective aspect by using the inkblot where one side reflects the other and mirroring certain elements on each side of the work. Elizabeth is a busy person. She works full time, is a graduate student, and hawks her handmade jewelry at Comicon conventions, medieval events, and art shows. When I shared this painting with her, she simply said *I love it* and then shared a personal video of little wood bee butts to describe the vulnerability everyone was feeling in the workshop she attended. Her comments in that workshop inspired my search for vulnerability in the data.

CJ



FIGURE 74. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF CJ BY RESEARCHER

connection. Tension as the four parts of the painting never quite meet and the pull is off center. The countless roads interconnect but you cannot tell where they lead. CJ displayed a great deal of vulnerability in the workshops by diving into work that made him feel uncomfortable. He spent a great deal of time feeling alone and out of place, while he was traveling in this summer. He said that although art making is outside of his comfort zone, making it helped him when everything was uncomfortable. While he was in China, he felt lost and alone and nothing was

CJ is a graduate student and a higher education associate instructor. His focus is religious studies and much of his art reflects his travels and the many roads he has taken. He attended the first and the final workshop and made the bulk of the projects while he was traveling through Asia. I began this painting by placing a map of Asia as the foundation for the work, although it is obscured by the many layers. This work represents tension and

working out as he planned. He lamented that he did not even know how to get a good meal. One particularly bad day, he decided to do the flow project, which was letting go and painting to music. He taped the paper to the window, the rain was pounding against the glass, put on music and painted what he saw and felt. He told me that making it helped him to *get out of his own head when everything was uncomfortable*. He also reflected that working on his own enabled him to create something that was more personally meaningful. He did not have the pressure of peers and he could *view it as taking a*



FIGURE 75. CJ'S PAINTING TO MUSIC

mental health day. As a response to my image he wrote, *So, at first, my eyes are drawn to the main "road" that divides the painting into quadrants...at first glance, it looked like a topographic map to me. There are these four distinct regions with their own colors and topography, and there is something that connects them in this liminal space. Upon further examination, the "road" almost looks like a river as well. It reads like a journey, to me. Whether it's a road or a river, and however it separates these four distinctive areas, there's something about navigating through and across the space...Originally, when I did my own artwork and talked with you in the interview, the journeys were all supposed to be about growth in the context of being in a relationship...growing with and for the other person...figuring out how we could continue our journey together. But now, I look at it and I see the journey in the painting as something more solitary, more somber. But there's still growth there. It's individual growth, growth for myself, starting a new journey being who I am and being independent. There are these red, coppery areas at the bottom that the road/river is emerging from, and to me, that feels like it represents the heartache and the suffering that I endured during this process of trying to*

dedicate myself to a stronger relationship and not having that effort be reciprocated. The red extends for a good long while along this longest branch of the road, and I feel that is reflective of the long, drawn out process of everything that's been happening since July. But then the red ends. And a short while later, the road splits into different directions. One of them ends in the green area, while the other two go off into the "distance"...one widens, and the other narrows as it maybe branches again into the larger green area. It represents all these different paths that I could take, now that I've left the negativity of the red space behind. The other areas are brighter, more positive colors. Whites and yellows and greens. There's promise there...opportunity...a fresh start. But there are also still the spots of red in all these areas, symbolizing that no matter what path I take, there's still going to be pain and darkness and confusion. But that's okay because they're isolated spots, surrounded by brighter and better things.

I love this painting so much, and I am just in awe that you've been able to capture so much of what has been going on in my life, even though we haven't directly talked about it.

Martha and George



FIGURE 76. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF MARTHA AND GEORGE BY RESEARCHER

Martha and George occupied a space of transition during the summer of the workshops. Martha had just earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and received a job offer that would move her several states away. George has an advisory position at a university and during this time, it was undecided as to whether he would move with his wife right away or if he should stay behind until he could find employment in the new place. It was a vulnerable and uncertain time

for them both. They had been tentatively walking around each other and commented that making the artwork gave them space to say things that they hadn't been able to say. The transition seemed so big that making the projects helped put it in perspective. In this piece, they are between two worlds. The bird figures are intrinsically connected, but one is ready to fly into the future while the other might feel a little left behind or unsure of what that future holds. They are

in a tentative dance, flitting around uncomfortable issues, represented as orbs, but at the same time deeply caring for one another. George and Martha sent a recording of the conversation they had about this painting.

Martha: *I like the two birds. I like that the bird on the right is taking flight but also protecting.*

George: *I get what you are saying, sort of shielding the other one with its wings. And the other bird, is he just staying there or is he getting ready to take off too?*

Martha: *I like that they are friends.*

George: *Friends.*

Martha: *And whatever it is they're doing; they are doing it together.*

George: *I like the colors, the yellow, and the red but especially the yellow and I know that yellow isn't usually one of our favorite colors. I like how they are sunrise and sunset colors.*

Martha: *It's like a glowing color.*

George: *It's one of those liminal times of day.*

Martha: *The shapes across the bottom remind me of an abdomen and the orbs above are very breast like. It makes me feel like I'm the bird that has landed and I'm planting my flag. I'm feeling good and confident and like this is my domain. And I like the orb on the top right that seems outlined in white. It's almost like a crystal ball.*

George: *Yeah, there is a lot going on in there.*

Martha: *Things are smaller and there's that very dark spot that's almost like a silhouette. I almost see a little picture there of someone on a street looking into a storefront that has an open door, so the light is shining out.*

George: Oh yeah, yeah. I can see that a little bit. There is a cool effect there. It's like one of those magnifying glass paperweights. And just in general I like all the round full images because they are all filled with something. They all have promise.

Pia



FIGURE 77. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF PIA BY RESEARCHER

During the workshops, it was important to Pia to pay close attention to the process of art making. She is a graduate student and an associate instructor in early childhood at a university. She told me that she valued these processes for *getting into the heads of the children*. To get into her experience, I painted with my fingers using primary colors in an unconscious manner that attempted to be playful and childlike. She has kinesthetic energy, rarely sitting down or being still, so I stood and moved

as I painted. She describes herself as optimistic but sometimes it was a fragile optimism that she displayed in her vulnerable risk-taking and play in the workshops. Several times she had to push through her inability to create the images she wanted due to her perceived lack of artistic ability.

I collaged images that I thought reflected her childlike play, her connection to family through music, her love for the children she works with, and the way she closely examined herself through these experiences. The large image represents her attachment to a Reggio Emilia

curriculum that is experiential, student-centered, and based on principles of respect, responsibility, and community.

Pia replied, *I love the bubble idea and the fact that the bubble with words also looks like an ornament--which makes me think of the magic of Christmas wonder. Although the words are hard to see, when I read them, I like that they are words of wonder and discovery. "Look, I found..." I also wonder about the use of black and white for the bubbles vs. colored background. On the one hand, of course, aesthetically, it makes it much easier to see the contrast and the pictures pop out that way (ACK! if it was all color or no contrast) and yet the bubbles seem to be the more colorful piece of discovery--the kids, the musical instruments. And yet, is it that what we see is the black and white and what is going on inside their heads and with all the other elements of their discovery is the colorful, bubbly, mixture of colors that is the background? Where something looks a bit like a bird or sunshine or handprints? Like when you pop the bubble of the black and white what you get is the color and possibility? Yeah, that...I like that...and yet, as one who sees children as all that color as well, I am sad they're limited within their bubbles to just black and white.*

Abby

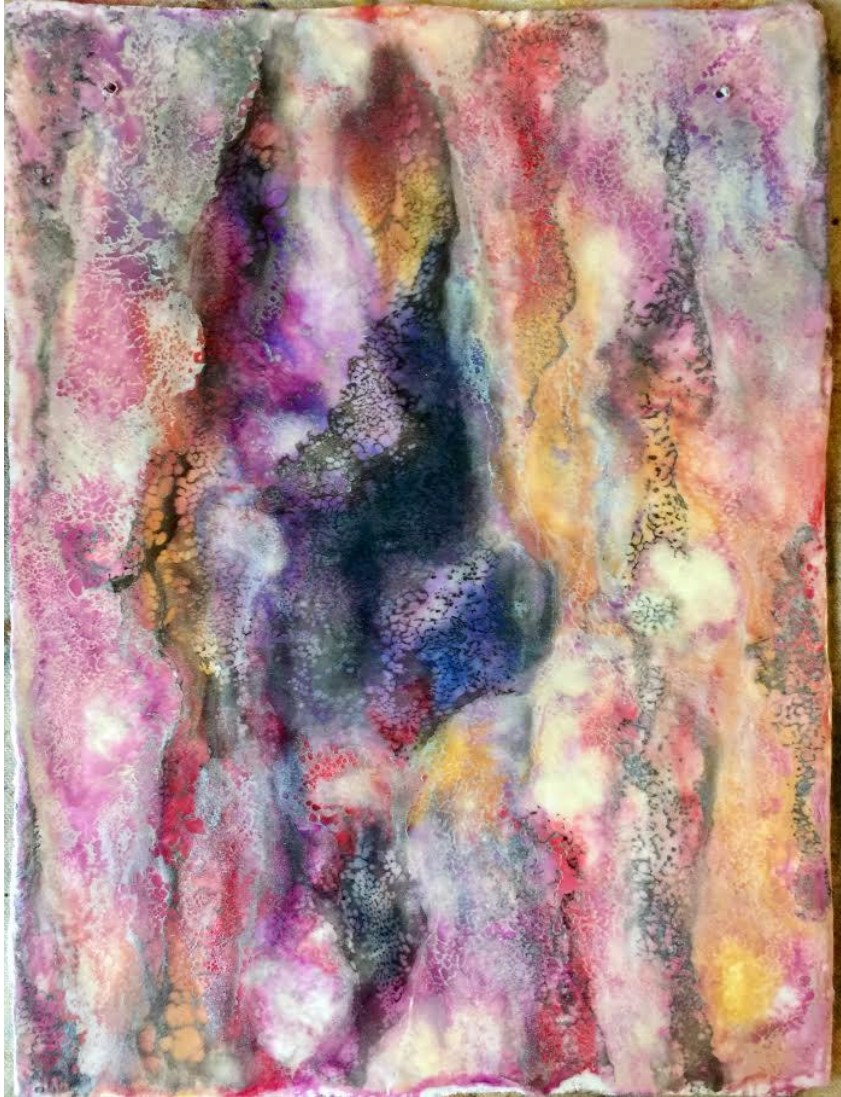


FIGURE 78. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF ABBY BY RESEARCHER

Abby could not attend the workshops but made all the projects either at home or on vacation with her husband. Our interview was powerful and emotionally charged. She was nervous and shaking at first, afraid to share such personal things with me but determined to be open and honest. Every project she completed had a deep and personal, sometimes painful, meaning for her. She shared things with me she said she had never told anyone. It

was one of the most vulnerable interviews I have ever experienced, and I felt privileged with the trust she gave me to hear her story prompted by the images she made. She told me that in her country vulnerability was synonymous with trustworthiness and being human meant to be empathetic. Her mother taught her these principles and is the center of her world, along with her sister and her husband. With every artwork she made, she was like, *I'm glad I did that. It changed me.* She said because of the open way the projects were written she felt she could freely

express herself. She said, *I feel like something is gone. Relieved.* I kept her experiences, artwork, and words in my heart as I painted this image. I wanted to express her vulnerability and courage as she shared her art making experiences with me. Her heart and family are at the center of this work, strong and black, surrounded by pink love of her mother and sister. They are intertwined and supportive, holding space for each other, for the strength to thrive in a world that does not always honor the humanity of femaleness. She wrote, *I personally feel being vulnerable is important for my mental well-being. I feel lucky to have a mother who provides me that sheltered space where I can just burst out everything, whether those are my emotional traumas or a sense of being ridiculed/disregarded by some others. That painting looks perfect and I even noticed there are interesting woman patterns in this picture (in black) as if mother and daughter are sitting together for a chit chat session. LOVED IT.*

Sylvia



FIGURE 79. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF SYLVIA BY RESEARCHER

Sylvia is a music therapist who works with children and adults with addiction and trauma. Her presence in the workshops was valuable because of her generous spirit and the unique perspective she gave us on ways music and art can work together for healing in the classroom. She is a valued friend who shared her own addiction story with me in our interview through art she made. She came to visit me one day after the workshops

and interviews were over and we had tea together. I gave her a canvas to play on and some art materials, and while we worked together, I created this image. She did not know I was working on the painting of her experience, and I did not plan to do that, but I felt moved to have the experience of making this while she was with me. This image represents the way she puts herself musically out there for her patients, clients, and friends. She is an extremely present person; you know she is with you when you are together. She gives outwardly and it comes back to her in an

endless circular fashion that is healing and grounded. She is rooted in the earth but also spiritually connected to the universe. I remember her saying that yellow is spirit and I imagined her surrounded and lifted by yellow light. Here she is grounded, portraying the boundary work she constantly reinforces in herself and simultaneously setting birds free, one by one, as they emerge from the earth. She was moved by emotion in almost every workshop, willingly being open and vulnerable with us. When we reflected on our artwork each week, she observed that hers always looked so busy. This busyness caused an emotional reaction that bubbled up because it mirrored a part of her life she was not happy with. In this busy image, there is a never-ending number of bird-like shapes who need saving. The image also appears musical to me as that is how she makes art and healing in the world. When I told her what I did and shared the image with her she simply replied, *No words. Tears. Perfect. I can't believe that piece was for me all along, and I got to watch it happen.*

Anne



FIGURE 80. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF ANNE BY RESEARCHER

with. She is the art education educator in a department of studio art educators and she deeply feels the difference that makes in her feelings of not belonging. She said, *there are the artists and then there is me*. In our interview, she described the stuff she is surrounded by to me as if that is what defines her as not an artist but an art educator. *And so, I have my weirdo sketchbook which I talk about, my list of questions which I'll talk about in just a second. But, they're what keep following me around right now, art supplies that are also school supplies that I can just*

Anne was able to attend three workshops even though she works and lives in a distant state. She is a professor of art education at a small public university. As I read through the transcripts of her experiences and looked at the artwork she made, I could not forget the nomadic way she described and felt about the way she walks through life. She bravely pulls the stuff she takes with her, the stuff she says sets her apart from the other art teachers she works

take from one bag to another because I have a bag similar to this with an owl on it that I carry to class every day and I just grab this and my sketchbook and then my folder for it. And weird note cards with all my to-do lists. Most of the things that I carry with me right now are the things to try to keep me on track because my brain's not here, which will go into both sides of the bag. And you have that image, but... She spoke often of wanting to make more and having a strong desire to get back to making art. She used the workshop experiences as validity to make art. The question of are you happy haunts her. She felt at peace and accepted in the space of the workshops saying that, *I was in a place that I love surrounded by people I love.* I was thinking of the way she willingly unpacked and painted her emotions as we worked, her one-second videos that show the stuff she is surrounded with, and the way she bravely digs through these layers always asking questions and searching for answers. All this stuff she carries are also the layers through which she is looking for answers. They follow her everywhere.

Her response to the painting was, *I don't know if it is because I didn't run this morning, or if it is because I have been listening to the cast album of Hamilton but looking at this piece caused the strongest aesthetic experience I've had in a long time. I was moved to tears when I saw the representation of everything I was feeling and am working through. It appears you were able to capture the beautiful chaos of my world and my hope to make a difference. Carrying it/ pulling it with me into a calmer space...*

Veronica



FIGURE 81. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF VERONICA BY RESEARCHER

Veronica is a graduate student and an associate instructor of math educators. She was able to attend the final two workshops but did the rest of the projects with her six-year-old daughter while they spent part of their summer at her parents' home. Her experience was intertwined with family and that was in my thoughts as I created this piece. She was in a space of personal and professional transition while always keeping thoughts of

making a home for herself and her daughter close to her heart. Home, childhood memories, her daughter, her identities of mother, daughter, wife, student, professor were entangled in the art she made and the experiences she had while making it. A nest or nesting embodied my perception of Veronica's experience. She told me that this experience was *cathartic*, and it changed the way she will make art with her daughter in the future. She described it perfectly. *It is so cool to see this. I really love it. It looks like a nest to me, with a couple of eggs in it. It makes me feel*

hopeful. And the imagery is kind of working for me on multiple levels, some that are the opposite of each other. It feels sheltering - like I'm in the nest, maybe one of the eggs, and the sticks around me are protecting me, helping me feel safe and protected. Like the sticks could be my parents and my friends, supporting me and providing me the safety/shelter that I need. But I also get a sense of building something. Like maybe I built the nest - like I'm building my new life and my dissertation and myself as a mother. One side of nest looks sturdier/stronger, and the other less so, like it's got an opening in it. And there are some tendrils coming up out of the nest, too, like it's not done being built yet, or like it has potential to become something new. Another level is that it feels like rebirth - this year has very much been about deciding what I can no longer tolerate and taking steps to remake my life. So, the idea of a nest, of new life, of spring and change - it feels very poignant and real and hopeful and exciting. But there's also risk - and that's another thing I'm feeling, too - like the idea of "leaving the nest" - meaning I am leaving my comfort zone - leaving those things behind and taking flight into the great unknown. That less sturdy side also feels like an opening for taking flight - like I've been growing and changing and getting stronger, and now it's time to stop putting it off and leap out of the nest. And then, finally, the nest and the eggs make me think of motherhood - about how it's completely impossible for me to separate who I am as a mother from who I am as a scholar and a friend and a person. And the two eggs - like it could be me and my daughter in there, together, growing through life and the change it brings.

Cameron



FIGURE 82. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF CAMERON BY RESEARCHER

Cameron was able to attend most of the workshops. She is a graduate student and an associate instructor in Curriculum and Instruction.

She struggled with perfectionism and fear in her art making, sometimes to the point she could not work on it.

When she made her ink blot, it was so perfect that she was afraid that if she drew into it, she would ruin it. She said, *it was kind of made for me*

(meaning that the ink blot made itself, she did not have to draw or portray anything) *and I just*

enjoyed looking at it and coming up with stuff from it. In one project she portrayed herself as both black and white which she said is normal and *neutral* but then she also used bright colors because she is *neurotic as hell*. I was thinking of those two halves of her as I was painting this.

The circle represents a blending of those halves because we are never just one thing or another,

there are many overlapping layers. In our interview she said, *I shared in one of the sessions that I*

had done writing, a state writing project, shortly after my mom had passed and I did it before and then also after and I found that to be a good outlet for like my emotions. And so that's why I was excited about your project because I thought it would be a similar kind of, you know, a way to talk about things through art making instead of just laying it all out there. And it was, I mean because I, I ended up finding things to talk about that really connected to my mom through all of what I did. As well as other baggage.

Cameron's response to the image, When I look at the painting, I feel as though I see two entities coming together. At first, I wanted to say two entities clashing, but I don't feel as that is the case as they are somewhat blending into one in the middle. Even though the colors feel very warm, the image is quite calming for me. I'm not really sure why. The strokes and movement of the colors seem very forceful and I can almost hear things moving about and hitting, but it's not a bad thing. I'm very curious about the giant orb that somewhat serves as a focal point. I want to know more about what it represents and why it's there, as it seems so important—being fully formed compared to the rest of the painting which seems like flowing pieces (on the left) and thrashes of color (on the right). The left, which has no color, keeps making me think of the ocean. I think it's because it looks like the froth of the water.

Lauren



FIGURE 83. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF LAUREN BY RESEARCHER

Lauren is an early childhood professor at a university in a nearby city. She is the only participant I had not met before the workshops began. Lauren's experience embodied her grief over the recent loss of her father, and her desire to discover her creative art making self again. She felt lost but found friends, new and old, in the workshops that allowed her to be open and raw. I chose to center this work around a copy of a photo of her father taking her for a ride on his

beloved Schwinn bicycle. This bicycle symbolized the close relationship they had and the experiences they shared throughout their life together. The spiral represents the way this experience moves from the past into the future for her. I felt this relationship defined her experience and she was able to express and release emotions that spiraled out into her art making. The art she made represented her loss and grief and became so precious to her that she took it home every week and would not allow me to keep it for this research process. Instead, she

took photos and sent them to me. She told me she often fills the canvas up with words before she paints so I began that way as well so I could create a thread between her and I. Mimicking her process, once I filled this canvas with her words from her experiences in the workshops, I began to paint. I had hoped the words would show through in places but that did not happen. Although, for me, her words, emotions, and experiences informed and grounded this piece.

When I showed her the image she said, my initial impression is that it makes sense for the image to be central to the piece. That is where my mind, heart, and being was throughout the workshop. I see multiple meanings in the spiral. If I look too long at the spiral thinking about it, I will start to cry. It represents my whole life past, present, and future spiraling from within and outward. Its where I came from, what I was, the love and care I felt, and what I will never be or experience again. I think I see silver on the sides. Is that the silver lining in all of this? The silver lining is on the other side of grief. The silver lining is the art making I did over the summer., it helped me keep riding forward. While looking at the image just now I felt a strange overwhelming sense that he is peddling hard, trying to ride me over to the other side of my grief. He held on for so long because he knew I would have such a hard time and he wouldn't be here to help me. I'm not sure if there are silver sparkles on the side but that is what I see. I glimpse what might spark or sparkle in my future. Hope. Potential. We keep peddling separate but together.

Jade



FIGURE 84. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF JADE BY RESEARCHER

Jade is a graduate student and an associate instructor in art education and museum studies at a local university.

While I was working, I thought about the armor I perceive her to wear and wondered what kind of armor is protective but also makes space for the strength and the depth of spirit she projected in the workshops. A forest I thought, a tree particularly described the way she is strong, yet her vulnerability shows through. In the

workshops, she often worked quietly, didn't always share, and moved away from the group.

In my vision, the white orbs are Kodama (tree spirits), a representation of the faces she often sees in everything combined with the Japanese art that inspires the work she does. They represent healing and the promise of new life, just like a tree in winter. The forest is her armor, but the tree splits open at the top and allows the vulnerability she guards to spill out. Here is her inspiring analysis. *It's beautiful! My mom is looking at it over my shoulder, so my response is*

influenced by her thoughts. She says that the tree is a good representation of me because I'm like a tree that can hold up a lot of snow -- I can handle a lot of pressure. She thinks the little snowflakes with faces are like all my worries that I hide in public. That interpretation makes sense to me. For my own part, I would say winter is a good metaphor for my personality. Winter is clean and clear. You can see the farthest when the leaves are off the trees. I feel a kinship with Smilla in "Smilla's Sense of Snow," too. (Smilla's sense of snow is a 1997 German-Danish-Swedish mystery thriller film). Regarding what we see, my mom and I were struck by the bark on the tree. The encaustic works well to create the texture. My mom wanted to know how you made the black dots on the snowflake/faces. I guessed that you poked through to the background color with the back end of the brush.

Antonia



FIGURE 85. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF ANTONIA BY RESEARCHER

Antonia is a graduate student and the head of programs and education at a local museum. When I worked on Antonia's image, I was thinking of how her experience was defined by her family. Most of what she made and reflected on was about family and struggles she was going through with them at the time of the workshops. Having a family is a communal experience to which you are inextricably bound.

Sometimes these are bonds of love and mutual respect and understanding. Other times you are lost and seeking for direction and answers. But in the end, with heavy doses of love and patience, family is about growth and renewal. Her collage in the workshops perfectly illustrated how she was feeling about family and gave her the method to express it. I do not know if it was cathartic for her, but she did say she felt a relief being able to talk to me about it at our interview. She was able to open up and ask for

advice from someone who had been through her specific experience before. I do not know if that would have happened without the reflective process of our art making.

Antonia wrote, it is beautiful! I see so many things here and I'll do a kind of stream of consciousness response, so I don't over think it. I see connection and separation, family, rebirth, darkness and light, confusion and clarity, and that blue to me says peace. It makes me feel intrigued. I always wonder what the artist was thinking when they make a piece. And I feel like there are a lot of dichotomies represented here, but that people going in many directions all at once are being held together by the boundaries of the frame, which is perhaps what family is— something that holds you all together.

Laurel



FIGURE 86. VISUAL PORTRAIT 1 OF LAUREL BY RESEARCHER

Laurel is a high school art teacher and artist.

As I was making her portrait, I kept thinking about the way she was open to the experiences and the way she described being an artist. She was determined to challenge herself and represent the artist she is even though she was tempted to hold herself back because so many of the others were not artists. I also thought about her paper bag portraits, which made me think of her as bright and

colorful and extroverted, but she has introverted parts as well. The multiplicity of the human spirit having many layers that are hidden until the circumstances are right to let them show. Her response to this image included a warning.

Trigger WARNING. Do not proceed until you are absolutely aware - in your heart of hearts - that I love you. I believe the act of making is more important than any comments or opinions I have. I will not hold back on my comments so please be in an emotional and mental place where

you are ready. Preparing myself, I read, Okay - I don't see myself in this but maybe that's not important. I think that's related to the colors. Too much red - I'm not red. It makes me itchy. I first wonder about the size because this could have a very different voice if it is the size of a Jackson Pollock's work or a postcard size. As a whole, I think of vain-y cheese and seafoam and cancer and secondarily I think of mycelium and fatty tissue. It's organic but not in a natural organized way. Slightly chaotic or maybe random. I don't know if this is the nature of the medium or techniques you use or part of the message. I wonder about its luminosity and translucency. I'm drawn to the upper left-hand corner and lower right. I feel irritated with the black spots. It's as if the large black was a focal point, was a figure but now it's smoky, spread thin and disjointed. It no longer holds the power of a focal point but doesn't support other aspects of the composition either. This is not a happy image, but it pretends to be, or it wants to pretend to be. I think I pretend way better than this. I pretend so well that I can convince myself. I also feel I should say something more or highlight the need I have for organization - not exactly control. The work's lack of organization - in color, form or something is distracting. Maybe it's too many things or It's trying to be too many things and the message got lost.

For me, this was about her bravery to show up as an artist and to expose her introverted side. It was about Gumbo Ya Ya, the multiplicity of self. At one point, I thought I was done because it was bright and colorful with a loud presence, like how I think of her. But that did not go deep enough and as she said, it was trying to be too many things. I was unable to connect in a positive way with Lauren about this image. That had not happened in the others and I was concerned. Did I get it wrong? Can I get it wrong when it is my interpretation through my own artistic lens? Being in this vulnerable position, of course, I wanted to rework the painting using new information she just shared with me. I scraped down a few layers and the scrapings began to

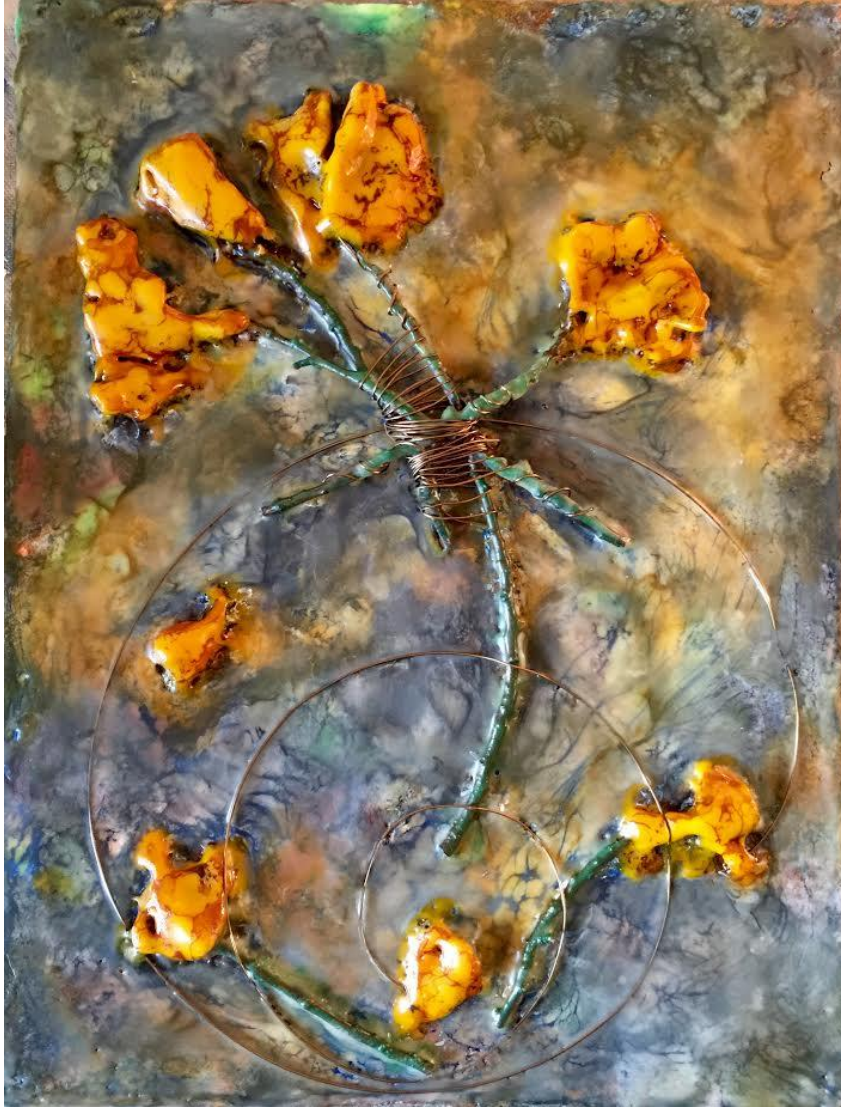


FIGURE 87. VISUAL PORTRAIT 2 OF LAUREL BY RESEARCHER

form flowers which reminded me of new beginnings, family, and friendships. I utilized wire to tie it all together, in much the same way we are tied to and connected in relationship with each other. My initial analysis is still there, under the layers, but it is now tempered and changed by our relational interaction. An empathetic blending of artist, artwork, and viewer. Her response, *I like the swirl and the wire is an exciting*

addition. It makes me think of flowers tossed into ocean waves. There is a lovely amount of movement and it makes me think of currents that move us all - our lives, our communities, and our attachments. The expectations that bind us. Limitation that both block us and help us grow. The flowers kind of glow but also have a solid- fatty tissue quality to them. I'm drawn to the lines created possibly from the cracks of color in lower layers. The area near the stems with the blue veins are interesting.

Agnes



FIGURE 88. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF AGNES BY RESEARCHER

herself in each activity believing she would benefit from it somehow. I also thought about her engagement as a way of holding herself together, through art making, during a difficult personal and professional time. I felt the urge to cut into the canvas and open it up, but then also to hold it together. She replied, *When I first opened the image, it took me back. My eyes first traveled to the two 'wounds' in the top section of the portrait. They were both beautiful and troubling. The marbling reminded me of muscle tissue. It was as if I was cut open. But in this cutting or literal*

Agnes is a graduate student and an associate instructor in educational policy at a university. As I was making her portrait, I kept thinking about the way she was open and vulnerable to the art making experiences. She often talked about opening her chest to life and the universe. In this way, she was also open to the benefits of artistic expression. She wholeheartedly immersed

opening up, one gets to also see something that others might not see. I think this is the beauty and pain that can be affiliated with vulnerability. We learn so much about one another, but with it comes great risk and the potential for pain. To see the open 'wounds' and spaces made me reflect on this vulnerability.

I was also reminded of the Yellowstone hot springs and the juxtaposition between absolute beauty and potential for death and pain - because of their acidity and heat. The pools of bright blue and yellow just open unexpectedly on a dry and arid landscape.

I also saw the multiple layers that you incorporated into the piece. Building on top of one another. And each of them seems to be linked in their layered but also through the wire connectors in the middle, held together by the branch--another 'wound' or opening that reveals something possibly, otherwise, hidden.

Overall, the portrait showed me pain and hope. The pain of wounds and of opening. But hope in that through this opening up and recognition of ourselves and others, we also have the possibility of making those connections and the 'holding' together of different pieces of ourselves.

Empress



FIGURE 89. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF EMPRESS BY RESEARCHER

When I first saw the encaustic piece meant to represent who I am and my experiences in the workshop, I was baffled. I replied, after taking it all in, saying, "How did you know that I love the moon?" I assumed we had talked about it at some point or another since she has known me since August of 2017. She replied, "I did not know that." From my time working with this researcher, creating and responding to my art in the workshop she has known my love for nature, mountains, oceans, and traveling. Growing up on the eastern coast, my childhood was

I was thinking of deep water and the way the tides are affected by the moon when I painted this for Empress.

Empress is a graduate student majoring in art education with a minor in art therapy. She was my research assistant who, for the first time in years, was willing to express unconscious feelings and emotion in her painting. She returned to the therapeutic side of the arts much the same way the Moon comes full circle each month. She wrote,

spent hiking, kayaking, skiing, running, snowboarding and activities that always involved being outside. From moving here and not knowing a single soul as well as being without the beach or mountains, I felt trapped and lost. But art, education, and art therapy were the reasons for my move. Some of my favorite experiences are being here, discussing art, teaching, various paths in life, transformations and moving forward with our careers in art education.

Randy



FIGURE 90. VISUAL PORTRAIT OF RANDY BY RESEARCHER

were making. When I shared this image with him, he replied,

The image has a beautiful ebb and flow, creating a visual movement that is peaceful yet chaotic simultaneously. A wonderful representation of the kind of work I do. The colors I find to be very peaceful and grounding. The layers created by the medium feels like the layers of working with a person and slowly working on guiding, healing and improving each aspect of their understanding, there will be marks i.e. the bubbles of the image that lay vacant like scars

When I painted my perception of Randy, the art therapist, I was thinking of the way I observed him digging into the layers of emotions his young patients were experiencing. I think of him as a gentle excavator, working deeply but lightly. His presence in the workshops also brought layers of depth to our experience. He worked quietly, but when asked, he helped us uncover the complexity of the images we

from wounds of life. The piece is a beautiful reflection of me as human...the many layers under constant change yet marks of living forever imbedded creating a change of direction of nature's energetic flow.

My reflection

Painting expressive portraiture as analysis, and then sharing them with participants through member checking felt risky to the extreme. These were my friends and peers, and by this time I had established a close relationship with each of them. I cared what they thought. I didn't know what each would see in their painting or if they would make connections and find themselves in them. As an artist, I create from my perception and experience with my own meaning and intention, and then I must release that intention. The viewer looks from their unique experiences and sees what they will, unencumbered by the meaning the artist intends. In research, this is even riskier because I want to get it right. My intention must meet up with their experience in some way. You can see that there were times that my interpretation varied widely from the meanings they found. Which was an interesting, scary, and vulnerable experience. I learned new things about them and about myself through what they saw in the paintings.

I found this process so deeply meaningful and rich. If I had simply written an analysis, I could have shared it and they would have an opportunity to say, "Yes this is right on" or "No, that isn't my experience." These paintings, however, were rich in metaphor and opened a wide range of interpretation allowing me to crawl deeper into their experience as I perceived it. Eisner (1993) wrote, "As sensibility is refined, our ability to construct meaning in a particular domain is refined." I refined my own artistic practice by increasing my ability to make meaning through observation, reflection, and then creating. "Through valuing different ways of knowing, perceiving, and making meaning, an artist/researcher contributes holistic and intimate perspectives to educational research" (Jongeward, 1997, p. 9).

Jongeward's (1997) process gave me a method that grounded and organized the way I thought about my experience. I worked on the paintings and, in the process, they worked on me.

My thinking deepened and changed as I was receptive to the experience. The painting emerged congruent with its meaning. I learned through the image I created. Then I shared the images with others making visible my interpretation of their experience. I saw myself through their response.

Conclusion

It was always my intention to do arts-informed research and make art as part of this research process. It seemed like a natural process to creatively shape and inform the research through my experience as an artist and I feel like the research, the participants and I benefited from the process of inquiry through paint. I was able to stay true to myself as an artist and connect my intuition to the many ways of knowing that art making affords. An intimate connection was forged between me and my participants. I cannot look at the paintings without knowing and feeling the individual each of them represents. Each portrait was significant for the way it communicated information to each person and the way they were able to respond back. A conversation between image and viewer occurred that further illuminated their experience to themselves and then to me. A triangulation transpired between image, viewer, and artist with understanding in the center offering a larger picture of what happened.

In the final chapter, I attempt to complete the rhizomatic journey of this dissertation that cannot be made linear or finished. I will provide a broader discussion of my research findings, what I explored, what was the point, and what it offered. I will initiate a conversation about the way this research informed my research questions. Finally, I will offer ways these findings might contribute to art education, arts-informed research, and education in general.

Chapter Nine: The Extraordinary Expressions of Art

Introduction

I originally titled this dissertation the Extraordinary Expressions of Ordinary People. This title emerged after the first few workshops as a result of the awe I felt when I saw the artwork everyone made and the courage they demonstrated while making it. Later, when the workshops were over and I was sifting through the data to analyze their experiences, a more appropriate title arose. Vulnerability was a consistent theme in the data, resting under the bravery of their art making. Amid deeper investigations of what was required to be vulnerable in the art room, I found trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in the teacher and each other grounded these participants, making them feel safe enough to be vulnerable and take risks they might otherwise have been unable to take.

These participants trusted me, felt safe in the space, and traveled through unfamiliar territory with wholehearted vulnerability believing they would neither be harmed nor destroyed in the process. They could be vulnerable and brave because we had developed trust through our personal and peer relationships, and through the egalitarian quality of the workshops which emulated the way Friedl Dicker Brandeis fostered this balance in her curriculum and the way Randy enacted his role as art therapist in the art room at the hospital. As such, I could establish a safe haven in the classroom because, together, we had constructed a familiar and democratic relationship of trust. This new title, Extraordinary Expressions of Trust and Vulnerability better captures the spirit of the workshops, the courage of these participants, and the trust they willingly gave me every Saturday morning.

What did I explore?

My purpose in the second part of this research was to explore and understand how these

participants experienced a studio art curriculum that blended values of art education with tenets from art therapy. I sought to understand if or how such a curriculum might be perceived by these participants as well as holding implications for education. My hope was to use the whole of my experience in this research to create a more holistic view of what art education could look like in our schools.

What was the point?

Art therapy emerged from art education but utilizes the arts in a way that art education does not value or recognize. Both fields have struggled for validation and this has kept them moving in different directions, holding tightly to techniques exclusive to each, instead of working together in a spirit of collaboration. My goal was to disrupt this trend and show that it is possible for a blended version of the arts to exist in schools. That self-care and therapeutic pedagogies have value among the current skills based cognitive approach of art education. That students and teachers may benefit cognitively and emotionally from more open access to the healing properties of creative activity. As illustrated in the literature, Lowenfeld (1957) believed a more holistic balanced approach to the arts was essential for the development of emotional, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic areas of growth and that these areas are interrelated. Meaning that Lowenfeld's pedagogy embraced the whole person, focusing on a curriculum that balanced all areas of human development without privileging one over the other. These workshops attempted to provide balance through a reimagined view of an art education curriculum and the role of the art teacher as artist/educator/therapist.

What did it offer?

We blended art education and art therapy in these ways. We emphasized a safe environment from which we could express and explore by sitting and working together in a

collaborative egalitarian atmosphere that emphasized listening and caring, placing students at the center. Randy provided a safe environment by listening and then honoring his patients' voices without judgment. Through his example and my experience, we knew that communication and relationship building is the heart of the classroom. Through meaningful dialogue, in relationship with others, we modeled transparency about our own teaching, experiences, and artistic ability or inability. We also gave participants choice the of materials they were comfortable with that contributed to a safe environment and honored all levels of individual creative exploration.

We promoted learning, relaxation, introspection, and creativity through mindfulness techniques by beginning each class with a visual meditation or exploration. This helped bring the class into the present and gave them easier access to implicit feelings or emotions. The meditations and meditative exercises served as imaginative prompts to inspire participants to envision their work differently.

We moved the focus from the product and raised the value of process to reduce the fear of creativity that sometimes restricts the uninitiated. In the art therapy classroom, the focus on process gave space for experimentation and play. We hoped this would help to remove fears of creativity and perfectionism. In the literature, I noted from Brown (2018) that comparison and perfectionism are obstacles, attributed to the current educational focus of testing and measurable achievement, to engaging students in creative activities.

Finally, we made reflection a vital empowering element of the class so that makers could not only share what they made but why they made it. Sometimes this only came to light through sharing and dialogue. Reflection is both an art therapy tenet of contribution and sharing and an art education value of learning to think through and discuss artistic processes.

Participants navigated through a variety of art making and dialogic processes within the

workshops. Any of these points of entry enabled the discovery of new meanings and connections that opened previously uncovered ways to perceive, experiment with, and imagine the essential core of their lived experiences. This approach of awareness through reflective and logical thinking has been encouraged in the classroom by Maxine Greene (1988) who asserted that “the point of cognitive development is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible, lived experience, the ways there are of being in the world” (p.120). A holistic blended curriculum model such as this opens space for failure, empathy, self-care, and creative dialogue that reflects life outside of school (Barone, 2008; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995; Wilcox, 2017).

Did it matter?

My research questions evolved from an ardent interest in ways a more therapeutic art making space can become meaningful to the individuals participating. I asked again: What value did these blended art education/art therapeutic strategies bring to the educational or emotional journey of these participants in this context? I believe these creative processes embedded in therapeutic mindful art engagement provided a broader means to produce learning and meaning making by opening space for visual, sensory, and emotional experiences. In this way, the arts disrupted what we take for granted and revealed the beauty of extraordinary possibilities often obscured by the commonplace (Dewey, 1934). In our work with images, we moved aside the cognitive mind, to expose deeper unspoken lived experiences where we could access creativity and imagination.

Imagination, encouraged by experimentation through the symbolic power of art making, allowed participants to perceive old perspectives differently and appreciate new viewpoints. As with the process of making visual portraits, the art making in the workshops was key to understanding participants’ meaning making. The process and resulting artifacts gave us

opportunities to contemplate new perspectives and prompted a framework for cognition. In other words, the images made tangible what we previously did not have words for. Dewey (1934) recognized the expressiveness of art as a language saying that “each art medium says something that cannot be uttered as well or as completely in any other tongue” (p. 110). Greene (1988) supported his assertion saying "For those who are authentically concerned about the birth of meaning, about breaking through the surfaces, about teaching others to read their own world, art forms must be conceived as an ever-present possibility. If transformative learning is our concern, the arts ought to be a central part of curriculum" (p.131).

The various steps these participants took in creating, sharing, and reflecting in community with each other and with the images they made brought meaning into focus. These various art processes (painting, collage, and drawing) made their experiences concrete, accessible, and available to themselves and each other. They experienced and witnessed increasing layers of understanding through affective, sensory, relational, visual, and cognitive ways of knowing. Through art we can experience being in multiple places, feeling our emotions, and hold conflicting thoughts (Springgay et al, 2008). The therapeutic curriculum and the studio experiences of these participants engaged them in multiple levels of self-exploration and gave them a framework to observe and respond to their lived experiences and to the larger community.

Discussion of Findings

Research question: How do these educators perceive their experience in these workshops with each other, and with expressive art making processes and materials that blend art therapeutic strategies with art education in this context?

Trustworthiness

Students do not just come in the room ready to lay vulnerability down on the table. I learned that not only did I have to set up circumstances for that to happen, but I had to develop a trust relationship with them from the beginning. These participants already knew me as a trusted friend and peer, so I needed to build on and deepen that relationship. One way I did that, as the facilitator of these art making experiences, was to model being vulnerable myself. Anne, in our interview, described the way she viewed my instruction, *You model vulnerability in a way that is so courageous for everybody around you. So, there's this idea that if we're here and we're going to ask our students to be vulnerable, we want to be, but few of us can be that and you, you are vulnerable. You'll sit down with us, you'll talk to us like people, which I think we should do. You courageously share your insecurities in a way that makes you human. And when we see people who are vulnerable and human, you want to connect with it and somebody who's passionate and that's the other realm of it is that you're passionate, you do that. And so that's you specifically, but you also have the form that really takes place. So even just walking into the room where the board is covered with this idea of like, be like kind of linger in this uncertainty, that is a huge invite that nobody else does. People haven't done it in my education, in a long, long time. People are like, okay, come be prepared, let's go for it. That almost pushes vulnerability out the door, but coming into a room where the board isn't about what you're going to do, but really about ways that you could approach something or you could be, you invite us, you invite vulnerability, but you also invite people to take the prompt, to change it, to change the perspective, to think like artists and practice like artists. And that's huge.*

Establishing a safe haven of trust opened space to engage with others in difficult conversations who knew similar experiences. For example, when Cameron shared during workshop two, *But also, my Mom kind of popped in and out. Not being there but in my mind. I*

thought it was interesting that purple is right here because that was her favorite color. She passed away two years ago. I see her entering the wolf. (Cameron is moved to tears.) This opened space for Agnes to say, I had a similar experience. I lost my father three years ago and I also saw a wolf in the cave. Participants were able to find affirmation of their feelings in others in the safe space of the classroom by reflecting on the art they made. Within the same workshop, Martha was able to think through a difficult transition her and George were about to face. She could illustrate these complex feelings as a place, saying, It's a very exciting, scary, but also generative place, which gave her insight into feelings she previously couldn't find words for.

When I was open and modeled vulnerability with wholeheartedness, failure and risk-taking became learning opportunities that encouraged self-expression and discovery. Taking on this role, I provided a safe environment to express and explore teaching, learning, and individual experiences in relation to each other. A disruption of the mechanical text laden routines of education through visual exploration. I found that building a trusting relationship in a safe non-threatening environment was vital to everything I wanted them to explore, feel, learn, or accomplish.

The role of the art teacher

This impacts the role of the art teacher. Packard and Anderson (1976) stressed the value of a cooperative relationship amongst “art education and art therapy” claiming “that clearer delineation between the two fields need not thwart the beneficial relationship between them” (p. 23). However, a variance of art therapy and art education is art therapy uses art processes to help identify and resolve emotional conflicts while art education teaches how to engage in the production, evaluation, and reflection of art. This study required that I integrate both roles into my research practice. I expected to find some overlap between art education and art therapy

because we speak the same language. In creating this curriculum in collaboration with Randy and Empress, I was able to find a balance between the roles of artist, teacher, and therapist. This balance did not seem uncomfortable, inappropriate or out of place in the art education classroom. Art teachers perform multiple roles in the classroom in many of the same ways Randy does in his art therapy practice. Both facilitate personal expression and meaningful artmaking, act as mediators, address issues of trauma and stress, listen to the concerns of students/patients, and create nurturing, supportive safe environments by setting firm boundaries and expectations. My observations and analysis indicated this blending of roles was valuable to these participants and felt appropriate in this setting.

Randy wrote to me after his experiences in this research, *This summer's experience was an amazing and enlightened venture. It was wonderful working with you and getting to help you along your journey. The ability to observe you and learn about your profession and how it correlates with Art Therapy and the important impact it may have on all people (in patient) or not. The workshops were designed with a clear understanding of what was being asked, the purpose, and demonstrates a high level of empathetic care. I am honored to have been allowed to participate, experience the workshop with other like-minded individuals, and see things from more of a participant perspective. The sessions were inviting and non-threatening, and the way they were carried out was very professional regarding processing and keeping from becoming too (non-therapeutically) emotionally charged. Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity and experience!* As the art therapist I observed and collaborated with, his opinion mattered to me in important ways. I hoped I was folding his role authentically into that of artist/teacher/therapist and that I was not inappropriately overstepping my role as an art educator. In a research study, Brené Brown (2018) found examples of the significance of the role of the art

teacher.

Brown, a university researcher of social work, is a grounded theorist and has conducted extensive research on shame and vulnerability. In her research, she defined “shame as the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging – something we’ve experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection” (Brown, 2007). Using theoretical sampling she interviewed 750 female participants finding that 85% could recall occurrences Brown (2018) referred to as “creativity scars. The research participants could point to a specific incident in which they were told or shown that they weren’t good writers, artists, musicians, dancers, or something else creative” (p. 132). This demonstrates that teachers have enormous power to impact the way students feel about themselves and the risks they have the courage to take or not take in the future.

Vulnerability

Brown (2012) defined vulnerability as “not knowing victory or defeat, it’s understanding the necessity of both; it’s engaging. It’s being all in” (p. 2). She believes our willingness to be vulnerable is a question of engagement and is not a sign of weakness but rather a badge of courage and a willingness to risk emotional exposure. It is living with uncertainty and risk taking as a path to creativity, empathy, joy, and belonging. Brown (2017) wrote that we cannot always ask our students to risk emotional exposure and remove their armor at home, or even on their way to school because their safety may require self-protection. But what we can do is create a space of trust in our classrooms where all students can walk in and for that day or that hour, take off their armor and open their hearts to really being seen.

Classroom teachers must also be able to take off their armor so they can lean into discomfort and uncertainty to fully grow and model what vulnerability looks like to students.

Engaging in meaningful art making in a safe space with a teacher who cultivates relationships through trust encourages vulnerability which may contribute to a restorative sense of self and place, community and connection, survival through self-expression, and the ability to sit with uncertainty. Embracing vulnerability in the context of learning provides safe open spaces to take these kinds of risks. To do this, if we require students to write, illustrate, or talk about times they have felt scared, lost, alone, and confused, we must be willing to do the same. According to Brown's (2012) Ted Talk vulnerability requires "emotional risk, exposure, and uncertainty."

Willcox (2017) wrote, "These moments of vulnerability need pedagogical and curricular attention from art educators to create a psychological safe environment where students can be creative" (p. 11). She explained that in constructing a safe atmosphere in the classroom, we do not remove risky possibilities, but we open space for failure and dialogue to become learning opportunities that model life outside of school. Brown (2018) wrote that vulnerability is a necessary ingredient of courage building. To be vulnerable in creativity is to occupy the space between the professional and the personal and teach with wholeheartedness allowing emotions to enter the room. Today's standardized curriculum models may repress self-expression and self-discovery, and may lead to exclusion, disinterest, insecurity, repetition, imposed curriculums, dictatorial teaching practices, fear of failure, unimaginativeness, and insensitivity (Lowenfeld, 1957).

Throughout the workshop experiences, instances of vulnerability appeared when participants openly shared feelings of loss, struggle, survival, and scarcity through their art making. This was sometimes tied to feelings of inadequacy as an art maker but taking the risk to do it anyway. When Antonia, in workshop three, felt free to say she was feeling *nervous* and *headachy* because she was *the only non artist in the room*. Also, in workshop two when Cameron

couldn't draw into her inkblot because *I didn't want to mess it up. I worry about screwing things up*. Twelve of the seventeen participants were not artists, art makers, or in a field where they teach art making. Volunteering to participate in a study where this kind of creative risk taking was required was a step into uncertainty. Being in uncertainty makes us vulnerable to judgment, criticism, self-doubt, and failure. These participants trusted me much like Randy's young patients trusted him. They trusted that I would care for them and keep them safe through uncertainty. This is tied directly to Abby's definition of vulnerability as *trustworthiness*. When students trust their teacher, they are willing to be vulnerable and engage in risk taking.

When I checked in with participants about vulnerability, Agnes wrote *I think it is part of any process of making one's self vulnerable to also be attentive to ways in which we can restore ourselves through methods of self-care, which, interestingly, was also a part of the process (creating) that made us vulnerable in the first place!* She experienced the creativity in our workshops as a circular process of being vulnerable, leading to acts of creativity, resulting in feelings of self-care. All these elements must be there to be effective and they are dependent upon each other. Laurel also described vulnerability as a risk but one that *also brings about the potential for closer relationships*.

Art making in the community of our workshops was a social and visual way of working things



FIGURE 91. SECTION OF MARTHA'S INKBLOT

out and working things through. When participants were creating the lost and found collages and the ink blots, there were examples of working things out in life as well as the classroom. In workshop two, Martha's work on her inkblot helped her realize that even though an impending move made it difficult for her and George to stay together and they seemed turned away

from each other, they were still tethered to each other and thinking about new possibilities that were arising for them. She was able to see that they were in a *scary but also generative place*.

The art making elicited conversations that demonstrated a willingness to be vulnerable through these trusted relationships. Randy found this to be true in his practice. His young patients often do not trust adults, feeling like they never measure up and adults in their lives do not believe in them. In his practice, he models what a caring trustworthy adult looks like in a safe non-judgmental space because he wants them to experience something different.

Pushing past fear

With the establishment of trust, vulnerability showed up at the table and participants were able to push past fears and take the risk required to creatively express themselves. It was vital that participants felt safe enough to openly acknowledge fears of creativity so that it didn't sabotage their art making process. A critical voice was present in everyone, so much so, they were unsure of their abilities to visually describe their feelings, and perhaps had been so dismissive or suppressive of their feelings that they did not know what or how to begin expressing through art. However, the strategies I used opened them to allow the liminal self to play freely, laying their own images out before them so they could visualize them, reflect on, and decipher heretofore uncritically examined meanings in them. Thus, the ability to acknowledge the presence of obstacles to creativity prevented unintended ways it might disrupt the imaginative process.

In workshop two, George said, *I have a lot of anxiety about this because I am not an artist at all*. He had reached a point where he

knew what he wanted to represent but felt he didn't have the artistic skills to do it. I said, *Why don't you write on top of your image?* Later he reflected, *I felt much better about it once I knew I*

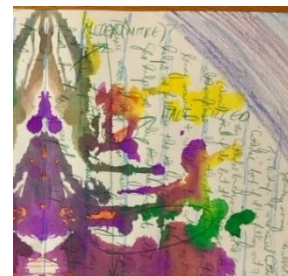


FIGURE 92. SECTION OF GEORGE'S INKBLOT

could do something I felt comfortable with. Once they felt safe enough to bring fears or hindrances to the surface, they were able to move past them and keep going, potentially developing a resource for personal growth.

One fear that was predominantly discussed was judgment when the focus of creativity is on a final product rather than the process of making. This fear can be paralyzing as Agnes explained when she said in workshop three, *One time I bought a journal, but then I was so into collecting them that I couldn't write in them. I was afraid of ruining them, so I just kept a lot of empty journals.* And again, in workshop two, when Cameron could not work on her inkblot because she was afraid of ruining it. There may be fear of an inability to create a finalized project, because our educational system has reinforced notions of correct and incorrect results and art expects have embraced particular art styles, forms, and expressive products as worthy or unworthy of acclaim. This suggests that simply viewing an unintentional or unexpected work of art might open the door to unexpected revelations (Manifold, 2006). The implication is that even in situations where students cannot make art, viewing images could elicit powerful transformative experiences (Green, 1995). Because some of the participants could see one another's work, all of them shared their work with me and I shared my work with them, resulting in interactions that occurred between a viewer and a viewed piece, as well as between art processes and the inner selves of the participants.

Multiple times participants expressed appreciation for our focus on art making processes rather than product saying it was freeing. Albert (2010) wrote that a blended curriculum can support instruction by placing value on the process and still have genuine respect for the products students create. In other words, an emphasis on process did not diminish the value of the products these participants made or the pride they felt in making them. This is an important

distinction. These artifacts were not just products of art making but were windows into the soul of the makers that gave proof of meaning making and authentic engagement, just as Dicker Brandeis believed.

A critical skill of creating art is the capacity to recognize and explore our own visual accomplishments through reflection and critical thinking. To do this, one must “set aside prejudice and judgment, perceive with clarity, discover what works and does not work, celebrate the process, and bounce ahead” (Booth, 1999). Participants trusted and then learned to move past exposure and potential shame. When we explored each other’s artworks through reflection, uncertainty and discomfort expanded to curiosity, compassion, and empathy. Doing this kind of work in the presence of others was invaluable for the sense of community and wholehearted connectedness that grew from the art making and then sharing their experiences. Engaging in reflective self-expressive art making, invited empathic openings and enabled learning opportunities in ways that provided restoration and self-care.

Comparison and perfectionism are several obstacles from the workshops that teachers also face when it comes to engaging students in creative activities. These barriers to individual artistic development in an education environment could reasonably be attributed to the current educational focus on testing scores and measurable achievement. Reflection about the artifacts students create could be beneficial. The art they make could give them an opportunity to voice their fears, frustrations, challenges, thought process through dialogue with others.

Permission for self-care and restoration

My original assumption was that a therapeutic arts-based curriculum might provoke transformation and change. I concluded, as I worked with the data, that the workshop experience did not have the longevity required to provide deep and meaningful change. That was not going

to happen, or may rarely happen, in the short six-week span of these workshops. What I did find, however, was that participants needed a place to rest. Not an empty quiet space, or a nest in which to nap, but a safe place to express, create, and share in a community of others who have similar needs, desires, and experiences. In chapter seven I called this 'white space'. White space is a design principle that provides rest, structure, and breathing room within a design for the viewer. I believe the white space of art making these workshops provided gave participants permission for rest and self-care.

They needed permission to play and find themselves again away from the stress and business of their everyday lives. They required permission for self-care and renewal without the guilt that accompanies professional people when they choose to fill their own cup. Committing to my research project assuaged this guilt, giving purpose to their play. With more time and a longitudinal study, this restoration may transform into a more permanent change, but that will be for future study. Here, I found that inviting fellow educators and peers into an intentionally constructed safe environment made openings for creativity, reflection, and sharing. These visual and verbal openings provided space for authentic sharing, understanding, and the vulnerability required to move past comfort and enter previously unknown or unrealized areas of lived experience.

Reflection, prompted by the artifacts they made, encouraged restoration and self-care by permitting participants to share their view of the world through their own experiences. In workshop two, George and Martha were dancing around each other through their impending transition and did not have words for what they were feeling. The creative activity of the workshop gave them the means to say what they could not find words for. It provided an opening to have a difficult discussion by making their feelings visual and heard. Sharing also brought us

together as a community by illuminating commonalities such as fear of making, loss, anxiety, and the difficult journeys of teaching and being a graduate student. Lauren, Cameron, Sylvia, and Agnes found common ground in the loss of a parent. This model placed significance on the affective realm of the arts in a spirit of contribution rather than competition. Noncompetitive sharing through reflection can be a process for restoration and positive self-esteem.

The affective power of creativity is often fostered in art therapy and neglected in art education standards. Holistic therapeutic methods that honor affective qualities of the arts (Andrus, 2006; Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000; Kramer, 1980; Rubin, 1999) could meet the emotional needs of students in much the same way as they fulfilled the need for rest and restoration in these participants.

Contributions to Art Education

Research question: What conversations for education open because of this research?

A consistent theme I found in the literature was the value of praxis; in other words, acting and reflecting on our practice is vital in order to further change. Our fundamental task in the construction of a democratic process of arts education research is to apply what we have learned in relation to self, others, and community (Dewey, 1934; Freire, 1970; Springgay et al., 2008). Through a re-imagining of art education, we integrated art education values of artistic process, and studio thinking and habits of mind, with art therapy tenets of generating a safe environment so students could express themselves without fear of judgment, a focus on process rather than product, and a reflective atmosphere of contribution, connection, and sharing.

We also reconceptualized the role of the teacher as artist, teacher, and therapist. This balance recognized the overlap between these roles and freed the teacher to facilitate a safe space

in the classroom for personal expression and meaningful artmaking, blending roles in an appropriate and valuable way. These findings resist traditional art education models and roles showing that therapeutic creative activity nurtured the self, heart, and spirit of these participants in expected and unexpected ways. My objective was to gain information about the possibility of adding therapeutic creative activity in schools and would these integrated opportunities benefit teachers and students in positive and restorative ways.

Foremost, this study suggests that teachers must develop stable trusting relationships with students in their classrooms for vulnerability and risk taking to show up. Dewey (1934) wrote that this is where real learning happens. The literature did not explicitly connect trust as a vital concept to facilitating an art classroom with therapeutic ends but looking back it seems obvious. The trusting relationship we had and continued to build in the workshops honored and recognized each other as people with feelings opening a safe space for vulnerability and risk taking. However, because students may awaken to and/or express deeply disturbing aspects of self, teachers need to be prepared to consult with or refer students to sources of help. As art teachers, we are more likely than teachers of other subjects to, even if accidentally, peel open deep wounds that we are not qualified to address. For example: physical/sexual abuse, drug addiction, mental illness, hunger etc. As a result, art teachers may need to have a host of resource people to whom students may be referred. In the end, art educators, have an important role in introducing students to their own expressivity and teaching them how to express profound emotions and ideas in powerful ways through contexts or self-exploration and through formal & technical instruction. But always remembering that we are not art therapists. There is still a line we must acknowledge and respect.

Engaging in a studio art process of self-exploration in a community with others was risky because it made us vulnerable to judgment. However, creating a democratic atmosphere of trust illuminated commonalities, and inspired collaboration and contribution.

Second, our focus on process assuaged fears of creativity and made a dialogue about our forays into the uncertainty of exploring unexamined emotions possible. Viewing the artist/teacher/therapist as facilitator of an egalitarian curriculum places students at the center giving everyone opportunities to give voice to emotional experiences and listen empathetically to the expressions of others. I learned from them and they learned from me. My experience as artist/researcher/teacher allowed me to share my passion and deep appreciation for the value of the process of art making that lies within experience over outcomes-based education that is the norm in education today. Self-exploration through therapeutic studio art processes created a means of living inquiry that became more than a contemporary studio art class. These processes provided a way of being mindful and aware of how the fragments of our lives can fit together. The focus on a therapeutic art making process provided room to respond to personal experiences through artful expression which was a surprising experience for everyone.

Third, reflection at the end of each workshop, not only on what we made but why we made it, was revealing and often cathartic. The products they made were not valued for skills or technique, but for personal meaning and the stories they could tell. This telling and sharing was a learning experience that revealed previously unknown meanings and created a community with others who could empathize and share similar experiences. Just like reflection is vital to the learning and growth of the practicing teacher, it is also necessary to provoke change in students.

Finally, building a culture of introspection through mindfulness techniques and reflection in the classroom gave space to make our thoughts and feelings visible, promoting learning and

growth. This allows students and teachers to take off their daily armor and rest and restore in the white space of the classroom where emotional and mental growth is valued, made visible, and protected. The mindfulness techniques prompted an imaginative journey that allowed us to peel away layers of stress and tension to reveal an intuitive voice and a vulnerable center of creativity. We were able to be present with more focused attention, open and relaxed.

Andrus (2006) described a philosophy of therapeutic art education that would enable teachers to access and facilitate therapeutic ends in art making, with students at the center. This holistic view of art education could make positive contributions because there is a greater need today for teachers who are trained to meet students where they are, cognitively and emotionally, and who can work with vulnerable and diverse populations of students. Thus, I hope this research will contribute to art education by providing a bridge between art education and art therapy, making art therapeutic strategies more accessible to students in need and more acceptable in the system of education.

Contributions to Art Education Research

Expressive portraiture

I found, through the visual ethnography process of expressive portraiture, that I could speak both symbolically and soulfully. This nurtured an unfolding artist/researcher/teacher curiosity about the influence and power of visual inquiry. Through these forms, I could facilitate my own learning through a transformed perspective which placed me squarely in uncertainty as I worked through the tension of portraying these experiences through the liminal quality of painting. As I stated in chapter three, artistic communication can be ambiguous and unclear, as the intentions of the artist may not be immediately discernable to the viewer. My predicament of

just how to understand and then embody that understanding through my own artistic process was compounded by the difficulty of explicitly representing the implicit experiences of these participants. The multiple perspectives of situating myself as a/r/tographer multiplied these methodological tensions. Despite this, I wanted to know if, through their artwork and conversation, I could get a glimpse or direction of their implicit experiences.

The crystallization process, afforded by immersing myself in multiple data types to create these visual expressive portraits, offered unique insight into the heart of the experiences of these participants and I found I could give form to some of their implicit thoughts and feelings. Even when I got it wrong, I learned more about them than a textual analysis would have offered. Their experience was more multidimensional and rhizomatic than linear which perfectly fit an arts-based response but my challenge of analyzing through art making was concurrently seeing and obscuring the impact and relationships of multiple ways of knowing. In parsing these many threads, I secured a glimpse of one way of knowing while obscuring others because I disconnected them from an integrated context.

Pursuant to the nature of arts-informed research, I highlighted the visual while signifying how other ways interacted with or influenced the process. My analytic approach, as an artist, aligned with the role of the bricoleur, one who brings together images to make something whole that another can see or read and that in some way is evocative of the participants' lived experiences. Utilizing a rhizomatic conception of a/r/tography (Irwin et al, 2006), my approach honored all ingresses to their work without attempting to ascribe positional value to a singular way of knowing.

Contribution to Education at Large

Research question: How did participants view the implications for future related fields of study?

Since the completion of this research, several participants have been professionally inspired by the projects we experienced. Two professors, one art education, one teacher educator have used concepts from the workshops. One asked her 600-level class of teacher candidates to engage in a mindfulness technique and the collage art activity with her. She altered the prompt by asking them to create a product that captured an aspect of feeling lost in their professional lives. She wrote to me and said that one student used the piece to explain his uncertainty about education as a career and his fluctuating excitement and ambivalence. It was very forthright and illuminated conflicts he held. Would education be a career that could sustain and engage him over the duration of his working life? He was using the program like a net, catching parts of the profession that truly excited him. The net was also a symbol of the profession itself. Would teaching "catch" him? Would the long hours and hard work he had committed to the program be worth it in the end? It was a vulnerable and honest response to the project and gave him a way to say what he couldn't say before.

An art education professor was inspired by the value of self-care through making art. She used this idea to make a collaborative artwork with the art teachers in her community. Most participants in this research found it personally meaningful to connect with others, share stories and used art making to work through issues of loss, anxiety, and stress, providing space for rest, self-care, and restoration. Others observed that they do not value creative activity enough to make time for it and some said they used these workshops for permission to play and make art just for themselves. They said *it felt good to do this; I'm so glad I did this; it changed me; the*

artwork captured things I could not say; It helped me to slow down and get out of my own head.

The combination of these strategies has seemed personally and professionally valuable to these educators. It did not matter if they were artists, art educators or teacher educators, the value was not diminished.

Direction for Future Research

I can imagine three avenues to pursue that are inspired by the conversations we had within the community of the workshops, and from findings that emerged as a result of this study. These possibilities include a methodological arts-informed exploration, teacher preparation or professional development opportunities, and a longitudinal study to explore ways a blended curriculum, such as this, affects participants into the future.

First, I would like to continue to investigate the use of expressive portraiture as inquiry or analysis and ways it weaves and connects with phenomenological research about the lived experiences of participants. I hope to contribute to Carolyn Jongeward's (1997) exploration of visual portraits, and further explore ways to deepen meaningful research through the dual voices of lexical exploration and the visual language of painted expressive portraits. My practice as artist/teacher/researcher made exploration through studio methods and art making processes possible as a means of living inquiry. In this research, art making for all of us became a valuable way of understanding, of restoring and reflecting, of waking up to the way threads of life can be represented, deconstructed, reconnected, yet still be a part of the rhizomatic whole.

Second, in an earlier goal I stated that I wanted to investigate ways a blended version of the arts could exist in schools and that self-care and therapeutic pedagogies have value to art educators or educators in general. Findings of this research implied that a blended art

education/art therapy curriculum was of value to these educators personally and professionally. I would like to further investigate ways workshops, such as these, may be beneficial to art educators and educators as a form of professional development. An exploration into ways educators or future educators perceive and experience this curriculum may move toward improving teacher preparedness for the greater number of students in their classrooms who have experienced trauma of some kind. Teachers may not be as prepared as they could be and the addition of this curriculum in teacher preparation could be beneficial. Creating a learning community with teachers and future teachers that utilizes a curriculum that blends art education with art therapy holds possibilities for future research that could inform art teacher education and professional development. Education is increasingly valued as a competitive and market driven commodity and, as an outcomes-based product, is moving continually toward quantifiable standards of measurement. These are challenges to the processes of learning and recognizing students as people with feelings within educational experiences. In this research, it became apparent that there is a need for restorative work in academia.

A third direction could be a longitudinal study to determine if the care and restoration these participants experienced was a brief or enduring change to perspective and meaning making. Assumptions and thought patterns are learned over long periods of time and are not easily disassembled or reconstructed. Change is an accumulation of experiences over time. We cannot know what experience, idea, relationship, or context is going to elicit change or restoration. Further study may benefit those who advocate for a blended curriculum in the context of art education and support safe conditions that grant freedom for experimentation, imagination, self-exploration, and creativity because the human self is always being created and recreated (Greene, 1988). Today, some methods of artistic expression are more recognized or

accepted than others. This is apparent in the way art education dismisses the affective healing nature of the arts and emphasizes cognitive skills, product production, measurable assessment, and technical acumen.

I am excited to have had the opportunity to learn so much from this dissertation journey. I learned that in art education, as in art therapy, relationships are central to progress. Together we wove values of art education with tenets from art therapy to provoke holistic art making experiences that renewed and restored us in unexpected ways. As an educator, I saw my passion come alive as accessible learning opportunities that encouraged self-expression and discovery in a safe environment of our own making. As an a/r/tographer I was honored to be able to portray the experiences of these participants through paint in a way that moved and sometimes enlightened them. But most of all, I am the one who learned the greatest lessons.

Conclusion

What did I learn?

As I reflected on this work, I thought about the way the arts-informed practice of this research reformed my thinking into a reimagining of a more therapeutic art education curriculum and a reconceptualized role of the art teacher as artist/teacher/therapist. Throughout this entire process I wondered how I was going to take my incomplete vision and make it whole and understandable to others when I did not know what it looked like myself. My thinking was half-formed and idealistic. Many times, I agonized over the arrangement of words on the page and



FIGURE 93. GENERATIVITY BY RESEARCHER

struggled to express these thoughts in written form. During a meeting with my advisor, she suggested that I simply put what is in my head on the paper. My conflict was that art is the way I think things through and the way I express those thoughts. My page is canvas and my words are images I create with a paintbrush. In response to these feelings and because this work is grounded in the heart and soul of creative activity I

reengaged, reexamined, rearranged, reexplored, and reconnected with the data and one word emerged for me. Generative. I imagine this word as the integration of something new, new life, a new start, a new look, something ever changing and growing for the benefit of others, and something generous and positive. To finalize this dissertation project, I responded to that word in paint, which is the most generative way I know as an artist/researcher/teacher.

Generative. Unified as a community, in this research, my participants and I constructed an environment in which we respectfully cared for our own and each other's imaginations, experimentations, and uncertain expressions. As an educator, I learned that if I held space for respect, trust, and safety, our studio became a generative place of creative exploration and growth. When participants were invited to self-explore through these various creative mediums, they entered murky, forgotten places within themselves. It was a time sensitive invitation to uncertainty made safer with the internalized concept of trust and relationship already in place. I needed to be able and willing to engage in not knowing while also holding space for them to do this. After the second workshop, remembering George's comment that he *didn't expect this to be so meaningful*, and thinking of the tears shed by several during final reflections, I wrote in my journal:

They created deep, authentic expressions, which was emotionally raw for them. They remarked that this art making experience was unexpectedly meaningful in a school of higher education classroom. When I expressed surprise over their exceptionally personal expressions, their honest sharing, and deep trust, they responded, you gave us the permission we needed. I underestimated how powerful permission to rest and make would be or how much it was needed.

Restoration. This was a surprising and unanticipated experience for many of these participants. Dicker Brandeis, Lowenfeld (1957), and Greene (1995) demonstrated that exercising the imagination through expressive art making can illuminate meanings of perplexing past experiences and promote integration with present experiences that can lift us above current circumstances. These encounters with expressive imagination through creative art making were unfamiliar experiences for most of these participants. However, through risk taking in a safe

trusting environment within a likeminded community, they were able to discover their own capacity to create and have a place to explore and express themselves in multiple ways.

Sharing in our small art making community was authentic, transparent, and sometimes heartbreakingly honest. But they frequently referred to their experience as beneficial, therapeutic, soothing, caring, and restorative; along with stories of expressive insecurities and inabilities. They expressed relief and joy of rest and found community. Lauren described it as finding a part of herself she thought she had lost. It was an opportunity for discovery, community, and generative growth before the stressful busy life of the semester began.

Community. Within this research were, finally, the benefits of these experiences for community and human functioning within the community. Not only did the workshop activities and engagements perform as tools of self-discovery, but we came together as an empathetic, supportive, caring community. In this day and age of deep divisions, we could use a lot more of this. The art room is often a place of learning that allows art and creativity to perform in ways that have sustained communities throughout the history of humankind, from cave to social media. We are social beings and need to be able to connect with and empathize with one another. Other disciplines teach us about the things in the outer world, math, languages, science etc. The arts teach us about the inner world of self and inter-world of us together. Art teaches how to regulate our internal emotions and how to relate to and with our fellow humans. Sometimes we misunderstand or mis-interpret others, as I did with Laurel's expressive portrait, but that should bring us around to re-listen and re-consider. To come to a collaborative or cooperative understanding and appreciation of one another. In the words of Lowenfeld (1957),

To live cooperatively as well-adjusted human beings in this society and to contribute to it creatively have become most important objectives for education. It is impossible to live cooperatively and understand the needs of our neighbors without self-identification. As the child identifies himself with his own work, as

he learns to appreciate and understand his environment by subordinating the self to it, he grows up in a spirit which necessarily will contribute to the understanding of the needs of his neighbors. As he creates in the spirit of incorporating the self into the problems of others, he learns to use his imagination in such a way that it will not be difficult for him to visualize the needs of others as if they were his own (p. 36).

I saw this happening in the interactions between these participants and myself, and between me and each participant. This has implications for our society, with art as an important means of bringing empathy and healing to broken human connections.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix B

The IRB protocol number 1801786795, Principal Investigator Lackey, Lara M has had the action "Expedited Approval" performed on it.

The action was executed by Neel, Andrew Preston. Additional information and further actions can be accessed through the Quali Coeus system.

IRB forms for site one: The psychiatric hospital

IRB STUDY #1801786795

Adult participants

INDIANA UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FOR:

Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

You are invited to participate in a research study as part of my dissertation requirements for a PhD in art education. I am an artist, a former high school art teacher, and a PhD Candidate in the Arts Education Program in the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. I am doing a research study to learn about the experiences adolescents have in an art therapy class. I would like to invite you to be part of this research study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You have been asked to participate because you work with or around adolescents who are challenged by events or trauma that have led to their participation in an art therapy class.

This research is being done by Linda Helmick, a doctoral candidate at IU. Ms. Helmick is a practicing artist and was a high school art teacher before she became a researcher.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to listen to and understand your experience as you are involved or work with adolescents who are challenged by events or trauma that have led to their participation in art therapy. I want to understand what you believe therapeutic creative art experience means to the youth you work with and the environment you work in.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

During the study, if you volunteer to participate, I will ask you for a 45 minute interview. I will take written or drawn notes during this interview so that I can accurately represent your words. I will also audio record the interview if you agree. I will only ask questions like:

Can you share an experience you've had with the youth that may be related to their work in the art classroom?

How do you feel about your art therapy practice in this environment?

What have you experienced that make you feel that way?

Can you share a story that is related to this experience?

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The risks of participating in this research are you may feel vulnerable sharing stories with me about your work environment. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. There is also a risk of loss of confidentiality. I will take every precaution to not let this happen by using pseudonyms (codes) for your name and by not describing you in any way. I will also anonymize the setting. There is no direct benefit to participating in this research but we hope that you benefit in some way from having someone listen to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which findings may be stored. Only the researcher will have access to notes, recordings, and thick records. Reports, notes, and art work will be kept in a locked office at Indiana University and will be destroyed five years after the research ends.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the investigator and his/her associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OF PROBLEMS

For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Linda Helmick at _____.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (812) 856-4242 or (800) 696-2949. You may also email irb@iu.edu.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with your employer or with Indiana University.

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study.

I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Printed Name:_____

Participant's Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent:_____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:_____ **Date:**__

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH FOR:

Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

I am doing a research study as part of my dissertation requirements for a PhD in art education. A research study is a special way to learn about the experiences people have. The purpose of this study is to listen to and observe your experience with making art during an art therapy class. I would like to invite you to be part of this research study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You have been asked to participate because you are an adolescent challenged by events or trauma that have led to your participation in an art therapy class.

This research is being done by Linda Helmick, a doctoral candidate at IU. Ms. Helmick is a practicing artist and was a high school art teacher before she became a researcher.

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this research study because you are an adolescent who currently participates in art therapy.

What will happen during this research study?

I want to tell you some things that will happen if you are in the study. I will sit in the back of the art therapy class and take written and drawn notes about everything that I notice during the class. This will include observations about my experience in the class, the art therapist's actions and experience while teaching the class, and observations about your experience in the class. I may also assist the art therapist in the classroom by helping you in your creative efforts, giving art instruction when needed, and handing out/cleaning up art materials.

If you have volunteered to participate, I may photograph the artwork you have created during class. I will ask that you sign the back of your work, or I will blacken out your name so that the photographs do not show any identifying information. I will use your art work to talk about your ideas, experiences, and inspirations during the art class.

Are there any bad things that might happen during the research study?

Sometimes bad things happen to people who are in research studies. These bad things are called "risks." The only risk in this study is that other people may find out that you are participating in the study but steps are being taken to make sure this does not happen.

Are there any good things that might happen during the research study?

Sometimes good things happen to people who are in research studies. These good things are called “benefits”. I do not know for sure if you will benefit from the study. I hope to learn from you so we can make the experience of being creative and making art better for others in the future. Therefore, by participating in this study, you may be indirectly helping other students.

Will I get money or payment for being in this research study?

You will not get money or payment of any kind for being in this research study.

Who can I ask if I have questions?

If you have any questions about this study, you can ask your parents or guardians, your therapist or art therapist, or Ms. Helmick. Also, if you have any questions that you didn’t think of now, you can ask your therapist or your parents/guardians later. If your therapist or your parents/guardians don’t know the answers, they will be able to contact the researcher to ask your questions.

What if I don’t want to be in the study?

If you don’t want to be in this study, you don’t have to. It’s up to you. If you say you want to be in it and then change your mind, that’s OK. All you have to do is tell us that you don’t want to be in it anymore. No one will be mad at you or upset with you if you don’t want to be in it.

My choice:

If I write my name on the line below, it means that I agree to be in this research study. I know that my parents will also need to agree for me to be in this study.

Your Printed Name: _____

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Researcher: Linda Helmick

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Parental consent form

INDIANA UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FOR:

Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Linda Helmick and I am conducting a research study at _____ as part of my PhD dissertation requirement. I am an artist, former high school art teacher and PhD candidate in the Arts Education Program in the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. I am inviting your child to participate in a research study because they are currently enrolled in art therapy classes. Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not you agree to your child's participation. Your child has been asked to participate because s/he is an adolescent challenged by certain events or trauma and is participating in an art therapy class.

STUDY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to listen to and observe your child's experience with making art during an art therapy class. Their participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to grant permission for your child to participate. Your child has been asked to participate because they are an adolescent challenged by events or trauma that have led to participation in an art therapy class.

I wish to know how adolescents understand and experience the purpose, value and impact of art making while in an art therapy class.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you provide consent for your child to be in the study, s/he and I will do the following things:

Your child will participate in the class just the same as if research was not happening. I will sit in the back of the art therapy classroom and take written and drawn notes about everything that I notice during the class. This will include observations about my experience in the class, the art therapist's actions and experience while teaching the class, and observations about your child's experience in the class. I may also assist the art therapist in the classroom by helping your child in their creative efforts, giving art instruction when needed, and handing out/cleaning up art materials

Your child will always be treated with support and care maintaining a therapeutic environment. I may photograph the artwork your child creates during class. Your child's name will never appear anywhere in the notes, reports, photos of art work, or research. I will use this art work to talk about ideas, experiences, and inspirations they have during the art class.

The above procedures will take place during spring semester, starting no earlier than March, 2018 and ending no later than May 30th, 2018.

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

There are no foreseen physical or legal risks to your child as a result of participating in this study.

There is the potential risk of loss of confidentiality. Your child's participation or non-participation in this study will have no impact on his or her experience in the art therapy class. There is no direct benefit to participation in this research.

ALTERNATIVE TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY

You may choose not to consent to your child's participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your child's personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your child's personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published. Written and drawn notes, thick record, photos of art work, will be stored indefinitely by the researcher in locked offices and will only be used for analysis and educational purposes. This information will remain the sole property of the researcher.

Pseudonyms (codes) will be used during data analysis and in any publications.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), who may need to access your research records.

PAYMENT

There is no payment connected to participating in this study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Linda Helmick, at _____. If you cannot reach the researcher, please call the IU Human Subjects Office at (812) 856-4242 or (800) 696-2949.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (812) 856-4242 or (800) 696-2949.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Your child may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which s/he is entitled. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the investigator.

PARENTAL CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent for my child to participate in this research study. I understand that my child will only participate if he or she has also assented.

I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree for my child to take part in this study.

Child's Printed Name: _____

Parent's Printed Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:

_____ **Date:** _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

If you are receiving this letter, this means that your child would like to be part of a research study. The purpose of this study is to listen to and observe your child's experience with making art during an art therapy class. Their participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child has been asked to participate because they are an adolescent challenged by events or trauma that have led to participation in an art therapy class. I wish to know how adolescents understand and experience the purpose, value and impact of art making while in an art therapy class.

This research will take place during spring semester, starting no earlier than March, 2018 and ending no later than May 30th, 2018.

If you provide consent for your child to be in the study, s/he and I will do the following things: Your child will participate in the class just the same as if research was not happening. I will sit in the back of the art therapy classroom and take written and drawn notes about everything that I notice during the class. This will include observations about my experience in the class, the art therapist's actions and experience while teaching the class, and observations about your child's experience in the class. I may also assist the art therapist in the classroom by helping your child in their creative efforts, giving art instruction when needed, and handing out/cleaning up art materials

Your child will always be treated with support and care maintaining a therapeutic environment. I may photograph the artwork your child creates during class. Your child's name will never appear anywhere in the notes, reports, photos of art work, or research. I will use this art work to talk about ideas, experiences, and inspirations they have during the art class.

The only risk may be a loss of confidentiality. No guarantee of confidentiality can be made, but every effort will be taken to maintain your child's confidentiality. Your child may benefit in this study because their experience may help others understand how to make the art making experience in schools and in the community better, for them and for others in the future. I do not know for sure if they will benefit from the study. I hope to learn from them so we can make the experience of being creative and making art better in the future.

There is a HIPAA authorization attached in addition to the consent form. Authorization is needed in order to observe your child in this class because it is part of therapy. No medical records will be accessed for this study. The authorization form is only permission to observe your child in the class.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Your child may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which s/he is entitled.

Please read the attached consent and authorization forms, sign and return them with your child if permission is granted. Thank you for your consideration.

Verbal script for adolescent recruitment (If needed).

Hello everyone. My name is Linda Helmick and I teach art education at IU. I also conduct research about ways that people experience art.

I have given everyone a form describing a research project I would like to conduct with you. Lets read it together and after every section I will ask someone to summarize it back for us all. This way I can make sure that you understand what this is all about.

You are also free to ask questions or interrupt for clarification at any time. Are there any questions before we start? Ok, let's begin.

We have gone over everything now, are there any more questions?

Now you may either say yes by signing the form and giving it back to me. In exchange, I will give you a letter for your parents or guardians to read. They must give consent as well for you to participate.

Or you can decide you don't want to do this and just give the form back to me.

Or you can take the form with you and think about it. You don't have to decide right now.

Are there any questions about that?

Ok good. I will let your instructor begin class. Please feel free to ask me any questions as they come up for you. Thank you for giving me your attention.

Appendix C

The IRB protocol number 1801705334A001, Principal Investigator Lackey, Lara M has had the action "Protocol Exempt" performed on it.

The action was executed by Neel, Andrew Preston. Additional information and further actions can be accessed through the Quali Coeus system.

IRB forms for site two: Education classroom

For the participant instructor

IRB STUDY #1801705334

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR

Extraordinary Expressions of Trust and Vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

You are invited to participate in a research study that is a six week studio art class in a classroom on the campus of _____. I am an artist, a former high school art teacher, and a PhD Candidate in the Arts Education Program in the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. I am doing a research study to learn about the experiences people have in an art class that blends art education and art therapy. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a master's student in art education who has a minor in art therapy and you attend the education department at _____. You were selected as a volunteer to help construct the curriculum and assist in teaching/participating in the class.

The study is being conducted by Linda Helmick and Lara Lackey, Curriculum and Instruction, Art Education at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to listen to and understand your experience as you are involved in a studio art class that focuses on a joining of art education and art therapy. I want to understand what this creative art experience means to you and what effect you think it might have on your future teaching practice, interactions with students, and the culture in which you work.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

I will construct and teach the class with the help and advice of an art education/art therapy student and an art therapist. I will take written and drawn notes about everything I notice during the class. This will include observations about my experience in the class, and observations about your experience in the class and your assistance with the class. The class will be audio and video recorded for research purposes. The class will occur six times during the summer of 2018, dates and times we can decide together. The class will last one and a half to two hours. I may ask for an audio recorded interview from those of you who volunteer to participate in the class. If you volunteer to participate, I will also photograph the artwork you have created during class. I will use your art work to talk about your ideas, experiences, and inspirations during the art class. All of this will be anonymous. Your name will never appear anywhere and your privacy will be respected.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The risks of participating in this research are you may feel vulnerable making art and assisting with the teaching of adults in a classroom setting. There is also a risk of loss of confidentiality. The risk is that someone might recognize you from my description of your experience of/with the art class. This might or might not happen to you. I will take every precaution to not let this happen by using pseudonyms for your name and by not describing you in any way. I will also anonymize the setting. There is no direct benefit to participating in this research but we hope that you benefit in some way from the creative experience in the art classroom.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which findings may be stored. Only the researcher will have access to videotapes and tape recordings. Reports, videotapes, and recordings will be kept in a locked office at Indiana University and will be destroyed five years after the research ends.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the investigator and his/her associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OF PROBLEMS

For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Linda Helmick at _____.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (317) 278-3458 or [for Indianapolis] or (812) 856-4242 [for Bloomington] or (800) 696-2949.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University or its department of Education.

For adult participants

IRB STUDY #1801705334

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR

Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy

You are invited to participate in a research study that is a six week studio art class in a classroom on the campus of _____. I am an artist, a former high school art teacher, and a PhD Candidate in the Arts Education Program in the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. I am doing a research study to learn about the experiences people have in an art class that blends art education and art therapy. You were selected as a possible subject because you are an associate instructor or educator who is attending/working or has attended/worked in the education department at _____.

The study is being conducted by Linda Helmick and Lara Lackey, Curriculum and Instruction, Art Education at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to listen to and understand your experience as you are involved in a studio art class that focuses on a joining of art education and art therapy. I want to understand what this creative art experience means to you and what effect you think it might have on your future teaching practice, interactions with students, and the culture in which you work.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

I will teach the class with the help and advice of an art education/art therapy student and take written and drawn notes about everything I notice during the class. This will include observations about my experience in the class, and observations about your experience in the class. The class will occur six times during the summer of 2018. We will decide on the times and dates as a group. The classes will last one and a half to two hours. I may ask for a 45 minute audio recorded interview from those of you who volunteer to participate in the class. If you volunteer to participate, I will also photograph the artwork you have created during class. I will use your art work to talk about your ideas, experiences, and inspirations during the art class. All of this will be anonymous. Your name will never appear anywhere and your privacy will be respected.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The risks of participating in this research are you may feel vulnerable making art in a classroom setting. You are not artists and making art can sometimes feel like a risk taking experience. There is also a risk of loss of confidentiality. The risk is that someone might recognize you from

my description of your experience of/with the art class. This might or might not happen to you. I will take every precaution to not let this happen by using pseudonyms for your name and by not describing you in any way. I will also anonymize the setting. There is no direct benefit to participating in this research but we hope that you benefit in some way from the creative experience in the art classroom.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which findings may be stored. Only the researcher will have access to videotapes and tape recordings. Reports, videotapes, and recordings will be kept in a locked office at Indiana University and will be destroyed five years after the research ends.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the investigator and his/her associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OF PROBLEMS

For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Linda Helmick at _____.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IU Human Subjects Office at (317) 278-3458 or [for Indianapolis] or (812) 856-4242 [for Bloomington] or (800) 696-2949.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University or its department of Education.

Verbal script for adult recruitment

Hello. Thank you for speaking with me. My name is Linda Helmick and I teach art education at IU. I also conduct research about ways that people experience art. I'm conducting a research study like that here and I would like to invite you to participate by giving me an interview. If you are interested, I have a consent form describing the research I would like to go over with you.

Let's go over it together and after every section I will ask you to summarize it back for me. This way I can make sure that you understand what this is all about.

You are also free to ask questions or interrupt for clarification at any time. Are there any questions before we start? Ok, let's begin.

We have gone over everything now, are there any more questions?

Now you may either say yes by signing the form and giving it back to me and we can set up an interview date. Or you can decide you don't want to do this and just give the form back to me.

Or you can take the form with you and think about it. You don't have to decide right now.

Are there any questions about that?

Ok good. Please feel free to ask me any questions as they come up for you. Thank you for giving me your time and attention.

Appendix D

Possible interview questions

Site one: The psychiatric hospital

Possible Interview questions for the art therapist at the hospital.

These interviews will last no longer than 45 minutes and interview questions will be similar to:
Would you share an experience you've had with the youth that may be related to their work in the art classroom?

How do you feel about or perceive art therapy practices in this environment?

What have you experienced that makes you feel that way?

Can you share a story that is related to this experience or to your practice?

Can you share an experience that prepared you for this work?

Can you share a story about why you continue to do this work?

Have you had any creative experiences or art teachers who have inspired you?

Site two: The education classroom

Possible interview questions for studio art workshop participants

To lead off the group conversation interview during the final workshop

Would anyone like to share a particularly memorable experience you had during these workshops?

Can you share some feelings that came up for you during the art making?

Would anyone like to share a story or experience around a work that you made?

What did it mean to you? What does it mean to you now?

Could you share something you are walking away from this experience with?

Can anyone talk about what this experience was like for you?

LINDA J. HELMICK

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction, Art Education
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN (June, 2019)
Lara Lackey (chair), Mary McMullen, Marjorie Manifold, Barbara Dennis
Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability: An arts-informed transdisciplinary journey
through blended landscapes of art education and art therapy
Major in Curriculum & Instruction (Art Education)
Minor in Teacher Education

M.A., Fine Arts Painting
University of Indianapolis, IN (2014)
Jim Viewegh, (chair)

M.A., Teaching
University of Indianapolis, IN (2009)
Angela Ridgway (chair), Gordon Mendenhall

B.F.A. Painting
Herron School of Art and Design at IUPUI, IN (2000)
Additional coursework completed at Changsha University, China (1997)
Minor in Art History
Museum Studies concentration
Graduated with Highest Distinction

AWARDS AND HONORS

2019 Associate Instructor Outstanding Teaching Award, Indiana University
2019 Daisy M. and Vivian L. Jones Fellowship, Indiana University
2019 M. R. Lowell Fellowship, Indiana University
2018 M. R. Lowell Fellowship, Indiana University
2018 Department of Curriculum and Instruction Travel Award, Indiana University
2017 Daisy M. and Vivian L. Jones Fellowship, Indiana University
2017 NAEA Indiana Art Educator of the Year
2017 Department of Curriculum and Instruction Travel Award, Indiana University
2016 AEAI Outstanding Indiana Art Educator of the Year
2016 AEAI Higher Ed Educator of the Year
2016 M. R. Lowell Fellowship, Indiana University
2016 Department of Curriculum and Instruction Travel Award, Indiana University
2015 M. R. Lowell Fellowship, Indiana University
2015 Department of Curriculum and Instruction Travel Award, Indiana University
1997 Reverend Frazier Overseas Study Grant, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.

RESEARCH

Current and Past Projects

Women we love: The life stories of women of different generations and cultures (2018 in progress).

This is a collaborative lifestorying project that we (a feminist research collective) are presenting on an online space with the innovative help of modern technology.

Drawing art education: Exploring children's perceptions about the arts in school (2018 pending)

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore elementary school children's perceptions about the purposes and value of arts experiences and arts education in a school working toward an arts magnet model.

A collective happening (2017)

I designed an arts-based qualitative research project that confronted violence, hate, and loss through the experience of a Happening. I implemented an arts-based experience through which to present the results.

An insider perspective (2016-2017)

This ethnographic qualitative research project investigated community-based art education from an emic versus etic perspective. I was invited to present this research paper at the Ethnoarts conference in Porto, Portugal

An artistic investigation of life in a doc program (2015-2017)

Engaged in a collaborative art making game, with peers, we explored our collective experiences in a doctoral program. We grounded our investigation on feminist epistemology and arts-based ways of knowing. We interpreted and analyzed the data collaboratively and presented the research at a local conference (CIRCAS) and a national conference (NAEA). The artwork we created was accepted in a national juried art show (NAEA).

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Helmick, L. J. (2018). Beyond Perceptions: A school-community partnership focusing on homelessness. *Art Education*, 71:4, 14-20.

Conference Abstract Publication

Helmick, L. J. (2017). "An Insider Perspective Abstract". *Ethnoarts: ethnographic explorations of the arts and education*. Porto, Portugal.

Manuscripts under review

Helmick, L. J. An Emic vs. Etic Perspective in Community-based Art Education. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Helmick, L. J. Let Them Eat Cake: Exploring Elitism in the Domestic Arts through Performance.

Helmick, L. J. & Weltsek, G. Queering the curriculum one strategy at a time: Gender roles, sexuality, and pedagogy of accomplices.

Huxhold, D., Wilcox, L., Graves, J., Helmick, L. J. An artistic investigation of life in a doctoral program.

Presentations

International

Helmick, L. J. (2018). Let them eat cake: Exploring elitism in the domestic arts. Presented in Feeding the resistance: The politics of food at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Champaign, IL.

Helmick, L. J. (2017). An insider perspective. The Ethnoarts Conference Organization, Porto, Portugal.

Huxhold, D., Wilcox, L., Graves, J., Helmick, L. (2017) An artistic investigation of life in a doctoral program. Presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Champaign, IL.

National

Helmick, L. J. (2018). A collective happening as a call to action against hate and violence. NAEA Conference, Seattle, WA.

Helmick, L. J. (2018). A transformative aesthetic experience that empowers and supports non-heterosexual children to develop their own identities. Truths, Lies, Fictions, Southern Humanities Council Conference, Savannah, GA.

Manifold, M., De, Mousumi, Helmick, L., Jones, H. (2017). From atelier to E'telier: studio art learning online. Presented at NAEA Conference, New York, NY.

Helmick, L. J. (2016). Changing students' perceptions of homelessness through imagery, advocacy, and community. Presented at NAEA Conference, Chicago, IL.

Local

Helmick, L. J. (2019). Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability. Presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Action

Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. & Weltsek, G. (2018). Queering the curriculum one strategy at a time: Gender roles, sexuality, and pedagogy of accomplices. Tea talk presented at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. & Hollett, A. (2018). Preparing the doctoral portfolio: A fireside chat. Presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Action Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Borowski, R., Harris-Hassan, A., Helmick, L., Jones, R., Lamichhane, R. (2017). Graduate school takes a village: Finding and nurturing systems of support. Presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2017). A collective happening as a call to action against violence, grief, loss, and trauma. Paper presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2016). Changing students' perceptions of homelessness through imagery, advocacy, and community. Paper presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Huxhold, D., Wilcox, L., Graves, J., Helmick, L. (2016). An artistic investigation of life in a doctoral program. Paper presented at the Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Speaking Engagements

Guest lecture. (2018). Intersections of art education and art therapy at Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA.

Broadcast Interview. (2018). Weltsek, G., Cardona, J., Helmick, L., and Hollett, A. Queering the social imagination through the arts. Interviewed by Vanover, T. at WFHB BloomingOut Radio.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Higher Education (current position)

Associate Instructor
Indiana University, IN

EDUC-M135 Individual Instruction in Art (2014-2019)

The class meets on-line through Adobe Connect Software.

Provided individual and group instruction using a blended model of online and peer collaborative feedback teaching.

EDUC-M401 Foundations of Art Education & Methods (2015-2019)

Supervised and provided instruction of laboratory and field experience.

Provided individual instruction in classroom management, lesson planning, and pedagogical skills.

Observed future teachers in the field and provided instructive feedback.

EDUC-M333 Art Experience for the Elementary Teacher (2015-2019)

This course explores and reflects on the nature and value of being a visual learner and what it means to be a visual pedagogue or a teacher who incorporates 'the visual' within his/her day-to-day instruction. Assignments and in-class activities are designed to help investigate as well as to gain knowledge, experience and confidence related to visual art education for elementary generalist classrooms.

Activities include hands-on work with art materials as well as practical experiences that emphasize the integration of art with general classroom content and themes. Other topics include children's graphic development; accessing and evaluating teaching resources for art education; using images and artifacts to engage children in ideas and discussion; planning for integrated instruction; standards in visual art education; and issues of diversity and inclusion.

EDUC-S508 Problems in Secondary Education

EDUC-S303 Topics in Secondary Education (2017-2019)

In this graduate course, these sections are taught together and address classroom management in the middle school and high school art classrooms. This class considers a variety of contexts and situations through the lens of classroom management.

Adjunct Faculty

University of Indianapolis, IN School of Education

EDUC-495 Supervised Teaching (2015)

Supervised student teaching experience in art for high school and elementary school experience.

Facilitated student teachers' professional growth and accurate self-reflection. Aided in the communication between cooperating teacher, school personnel, student teacher, and university.

Provided in depth evaluations through online program tk20. Assisted in the preparation and assessment of program exit portfolio

K -12 Teaching Experience

Bishop Chatard High School

Archdiocese of Indianapolis, IN

Fine Arts Teacher (2008-2014)

Drawing (Dual Credit instruction through Ivy Tech Community College), Computer Graphic Design, 3-D Design (Dual Credit instruction through Ivy Tech Community College), Ceramics, Adv. Ceramics, A.P. Art History, Painting, Intro to 2-D for students in grades 9 through 12.

Planned and implemented engaging, differentiated lessons with an emphasis on creativity and craft.

Enhanced students' reading, writing, and creative making skills with historical and contemporary cultural knowledge.

Provided and lead opportunities for students to experience other cultures through travel to Europe by mentoring and leading spring break trips to Italy, France, Spain, and England.

Community Outreach

Assistant Director, Summer Center Day Camp (Summer 2014-2016)

Boys and Girls Clubs of Bloomington (Bloomington, IN)

Assisted in long-range planning for and day-to-day management of a traditional indoor/outdoor day camp serving approximately 200/400 campers each summer.

Designed and implemented training in program design, individual and group behavior, management, safety, and child development.

Indianapolis Art Center Indianapolis, IN

Lead Artist/Teacher (2007-2014)

Teaching outreach through the Artvan program to provide art lessons to underserved neighborhoods in Indianapolis.

Additional Related Experience

Supervisor of the art supply room, Indiana University (2016-2019)

Curator of the Matrix Gallery, Indiana University (2016-2019)

Professional Development

2018 International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Champaign, Illinois.

2018 Southern Humanities Council Conference, Savannah, GA.

2017 Attended Ethnoarts Conference Organization in Porto, Portugal.

2017 International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Champaign, Illinois.

2017 Attended NAEA National Conference in New York, NY.

2017 Attended AEAI Indiana Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

2016 Attended NAEA National Conference in Chicago, IL.

2015 Attended NAEA National Conference in New Orleans.

2011 Attended AEAI Indiana Conference.

2010 Attended AEAI Indiana Conference.

Professional Organizations

Graduate and Professional Student Government

National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity

Indiana University Alumni Association

University of Indianapolis Alumni Association

Irvington Artist Guild

National Art Education Association
American Educational Research Association
Art Education Association of Indiana
Golden Key International Honor Society chapter at Indiana University
Honor Society

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2017-18 Graduate and Professional Student Government member and representative.
2018 Speaker and community activist work with Indiana University LGBTQ+ culture center, Bloomington, IN.
2018 Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Advertising and design committee, Bloomington, IN.
2017 Curriculum and Instruction Research and Creative Activity Symposium at Indiana University, Proposal reviewer, Bloomington, IN.
2016-19 Member of a peer writing, mentorship group.
2016-19 Member of the LGBTQ caucus in NAEA.
2015-16 Assessor of EDTPA teacher portfolios.
2015-16 Collaborated in a writing and art-making project with peers for future conference submission and publication Life in a Doctoral Program.
2014-19 Assisted Indiana University Saturday School.
2015 Member of Curriculum and Instruction (Magic) Critical Friends Forever.
2011-14 Sponsored and lead oversea educational trips with students to Italy, London, Paris, and Barcelona.
2009-14 BCHS Art club mentor
2009-14 BCHS Anime club mentor
2010-12 BCHS Honor Society mentor.
2011-14 Christian Leadership and service on student senior retreat.
2012-14 Christian leadership and service sophomore girls' retreat.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

2018 Volunteer at Bloomington Meadows Psychiatric Hospital in art therapy with adolescents, Bloomington, IN.
2017 Volunteer at Marian County Jail, Indianapolis, IN.
2015-17 Director and volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club, Bloomington, IN.
2016-18 Guest speaker at PRISM, Bloomington's LGBTQ youth organization.
2015 Created, directed, and raised funds for a Cookies and Canvas event free for parents and children, members of the Boys and Girls Club, to create and play together in a low stress atmosphere, Bloomington, IN.
2012-16 Serve meals with students at Cathedral soup kitchen.
2015-17 Middleway House for the homeless volunteer.
2012-14 Scarf and clothing collection group leader for Wheeler Mission and Coburn Place for domestic abuse survivors.

ARTIST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publications

Helmick, L. J. Rock Detail, (2018). Charcoal on canvas, 3' x 5'. In Manifold, M. C. (in press). Art Themes: Choices in art learning and making, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. New Birth, (2018). Graphite on paper, 20" x 30". In Manifold, M. C. (in press). Art Themes: Choices in art learning and making, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. Rose in Black and White, (2018). Charcoal on canvas, 3' x 5'. In Manifold, M.C. (in press). Art Themes: Choices in art learning and making, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. Flower Spirit, (2018). Graphite on paper, 20" x 30". In Manifold, M. C. (in press). Art Themes: Choices in art learning and making, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. Maestro, (2018). Graphite on paper, 20" x 30". In Manifold, M. C. (in press). Art Themes: Choices in art learning and making, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Juried Shows

Huxhold, D., Wilcox, L., Graves, J., Helmick, L. J. (2016). Leading by visual voice: Women's caucus juried art exhibition, NAEA National Conference, Chicago, IL.

Helmick, L. J. (2010). Seeing the Land Chrystal Dehaan Gallery, U of I, Indianapolis, Oct.

Helmick, L. J. (2005). Zionsville Gallery Spring Fine Arts Show, Zionsville, Indiana, First Place Award.

Helmick, L. J. (2002). National Women's Music Festival Fine Arts Exhibit, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. People's Choice Award.

Group Exhibitions

Helmick, L. J. & Young, Cassidy. (2018). Where art meets beauty, two persons show at Rogers and Hollands, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2014). Nature: An unexpected journey, Graduate thesis show, University of Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2013). Underground Chic, Harrison Center of the Arts, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2010). First Come First Hung Show, Sullivan/Munce Gallery, Zionsville, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2003-2006). Walk in the Park Fine Arts Show, Irvington Artist Guild.

Helmick, L. J. (2003). Columbia Club Spring Show, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Helmick, L. J. (2002-2006). Irvington Fine Arts show, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Helmick, L. J. (2001). Herron Travel Show, GC Lucas Gallery, Indianapolis, Indiana

Helmick, L. J. (2001 & 2005). Alumni Show, Herron Gallery, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2000). Senior Show, Herron Gallery, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1996-1999). Herron Gallery Student Shows, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1999). Munce Art Center and Gallery Fall Show, Zionsville, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1998). Feminist Art Exhibit, Flora Ristorante', Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1998). Herron Gallery International Show, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1996). Farris Building Group Show, Indianapolis, IN.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

Helmick, L. J. (2019). Extraordinary expressions of trust and vulnerability. Wylie House Museum, Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2004). Borders Book Store, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2002). The Abbey, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2000). Flora Ristorante', Bloomington, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1999, 2000, 2001). Outward Bound Book Store, Indianapolis, IN.

Special Projects

Helmick, L. J. (2004). Mural, Sara and Frank Ernst: 1800's Paris Store Fronts, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (2000). Mural, Cavanaugh Hall, Indiana University/Purdue University

Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1999). Hyatt Regency Hotel, “An Evening in Paris”, Street Artist Performance, Indianapolis, IN.

Helmick, L. J. (1998). Cranks Creek, Kentucky, Mural for Children’s Home, (1998)

Helmick, L. J. (1998). Installation, Herron School of Art, Museum Building, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.