

THE TRIADIC TANGLE: THE INFLUENCE OF IMPLICIT BELIEFS AND EXPRESSIVE
OUTCOMES ON THE CREATIVE BECOMING OF THREE ART METHODS STUDENTS

by

TAMMY CATHERINE CLINE

(Under the Direction of Richard Siegesmund)

ABSTRACT

The Triadic Tangle describes the origins and nature of creativity barriers resulting from inaccurate implicit beliefs. The Triadic Tangle is comprised of three strands: perception, permission, and confidence. Entangled beliefs adversely affect attitudes and behaviors, which in turn distorts experiences in art-making and the understanding of personal creativity. Consequently, the implicit beliefs of pre-service general elementary teachers impact the extent that art is engaged in during the art methods course and, potentially, if they will incorporate it into their future elementary classrooms. The literature review shows a discrepancy between the *intent* of creativity in art and the *actualization* of creativity in art within the art methods courses and K12 education. Research questions asked are: How do implicit beliefs and past experiences impact expectations and present experience in an art methods course? What occurs when the art methods course focuses on expressive outcomes of personal creativity awareness instead of instructional objectives? And, what is the nature of the implicit beliefs that trouble preservice elementary teachers in the art methods course? The research presented here is approached through the theoretical lens of Dewey's (1934/1958) inquiry and knowing through experience, Eisner's (1996) artistry in curriculum and teaching, and the Deleuzian (1987) idea of becoming.

This study spanned four years and involved 69 participants at two different colleges. Narrative methodology and portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) is used to examine the full complexity of three students' journeys of creative becoming while also storying the navigation of their tangles. Proactively addressing issues of secondary ignorance (Eisner, 2002) is needed when teaching to tangles in implicit beliefs. Findings show open-ended, multi-modal art making assignments coupled with "expressive outcomes" (Eisner, 1994) are effective in coaching students towards a threshold of personal creativity.

INDEX WORDS: creativity, triadic tangle, preservice teachers, art methods course

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my students. Thank you for the privilege of sharing in your personal, artistic journeys. Always remember that you are creative.

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This dissertation was possible because of the sustained commitment, support, direction, and encouragement of many people.

Although words cannot adequately convey everything he has done for me, I want to attempt to express my enduring gratitude for my mentor, Dr. Richard Siegesmund. Over the last six years you have patiently guided my journey. You stood by me, as my major professor, even though we were in different states and countries. I recognize your steadfast dedication as a profoundly generous investment into my life and emerging scholarship. In the very beginning, you were the one who saw potential in my ideas, and continually challenged me to think more deeply about my work. Your wisdom and scholarly perspective continually expanded my mind and taught me what it means to explore the world through different lenses. You read countless papers, proposals, and presentations, and graciously offered your time and care during the revision processes. You supported my work, guided my research, and shaped my academic growth. Your unfailing encouragement has enriched my life, and without you I would not be where I am today. You set the bar high and I hope to always make you proud.

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CHAPTER 1



Figure 1. A student's visual-verbal journal page

CHAPTER 1 – CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS OF CREATIVE BECOMING

Within the context of the art methods course, implicit beliefs refer to a preservice general elementary teacher's overall understanding of the nature of creativity and art, and more specifically, how it is internalized and applied to their personal art-making. The essence of these beliefs is important. If tangled, they foster attitudes that distort experience. In turn, this affects if, and to what extent, a student engages in art-making. Additionally, the value of process within the act of creating goes unrecognized, and any resulting artifact is evaluated through a right-wrong binary. Finally, the internal conclusions formed during these experiences reinforce tangled beliefs.

The literature, fully discussed in Chapter 2, shows that a teacher's beliefs about art impact the degree to which they incorporate art into the elementary classroom. Studies reveal that many teachers misunderstand creativity, feel unqualified to teach art, and or question the value or purpose of art in the classroom. Consequently, scholars have tried to identify the problems, and some have questioned the effectiveness of the art methods course. Therefore, the literature regarding issues in the art methods course's curriculum and instructional approaches are also examined. There are relatively few research studies specifically investigating the art methods course. Of this, the scope is often limited to questionnaires, interviews, and some observations. Even so, it reveals a history of frustration for both instructors and students. Other concerns highlight the lack of a nationally cohesive curriculum.

This research study is positioned within the current resurgence of interest in creativity, along with the expectation for general elementary teachers to integrate art, and or teach it in the absence of an art specialist. This study shows that a lack of understanding of the art methods students' beliefs, inappropriate curriculum, and unrealistic expectations, lead to the frustrations of the students and diminished effectiveness of the course. To address these issues of belief, this research study examined preservice general elementary teacher attitudes, behaviors, ideas, and processes in the art methods course. The study lasted four years and involved 69 participants at two different colleges. All participants were art methods students. Following a narrative application of the methodology of Portraiture, the one semester creative journeys of three participants are described in depth. Through this study, I propose the *Triadic Tangle* as a way to recognize and understand the ramifications of uninformed implicit beliefs. The Triadic Tangle describes the origins, nature, and manifestations of barriers to creativity. It consists of the following three strands: perception, permission, and confidence. Each portrait explains the nature of the student's individual tangles, and the navigation of these tangles, during the course.

Research Questions:

Question 1: What occurs when the art methods course focuses on expressive outcomes of personal creativity awareness instead of instructional objectives?

Question 2: What is the nature of the implicit beliefs that trouble preservice elementary teachers in the art methods course?

Question 3: How do implicit beliefs and past experiences impact expectations and present experience in an art methods course?

These were not my original research questions. When first designing the study, I was interested in finding a way to improve the art methods course.

The first research question asked, “Can a curriculum that emphasizes visual problem solving and creative thinking increase creative confidence in preservice teachers in such a way that they are better able to transfer and facilitate those same attributes in their students?” As the study progressed, I realized this was an outward focus that placed the teacher in the role of holder and giver of creativity. I began to recognize that the issues involved more than teaching the “right” curriculum. Consequently, my research evolved and the new question asked, “What are the foundational issues of art and creativity in the preservice elementary teacher art methods course?” However, while writing the dissertation, I began to understand that the experiences I had documented were too complex. The research question did not provide the space for deeper analysis. Therefore I moved the focus to the inner journeys of my students. This opened up the investigation on the origin and nature of my students’ implicit beliefs, which led to the development of the Triadic Tangle. It also underscored the importance of “expressive outcomes” in teaching personal creativity (Eisner, 1994). The next section of this chapter will present and interpret four different stories where a tangle was created or manifested. Following that, I give an overview of the Triadic Tangle, which will then be fully explained in Chapter 2. Next, I review the importance of implicit beliefs. Finally, I share the motivations behind my research, and the portrait of my own, somewhat bumpy, journey from teacher to researcher. Chapter 1 concludes with my concern for people who feel excluded from art, and my belief that art is for everyone.

Tangled Scenarios

The following four brief, storied scenarios are offered as examples of tangles and their effect on implicit beliefs. As you read them, I invite you to ponder the messages within the experiences. What is said? What is heard? What is internalized?

Scenario 1: A Natural

At art camp, the little girl sat completely absorbed in her work, not wanting to stop even though it was the end of the day. Her hands and apron were dusted with drying clay.

At the sound of her mother's voice, she looked up from her bird sculpture in time to see the teacher and her mother pointing at her.

"She's a natural artist, Mrs. Smith. I'd like to get your written permission to photograph her and her sculpture tomorrow for our local paper."

"Can I see yours?" asked another girl at a nearby table.

Scenario 2: At The End of The Row

Outside of his first grade classroom, Clay, pulling on his mother's hand, smiled up at her, "Come see my picture, mom."

The teacher looked at the little boy's mother. "Ma'am, Clay's picture is over there. I didn't want him to feel bad, so I hung it at the end of the row."

The mother, sensitive to any disparaging treatment of her disabled son, asked, "Why?"

"He wasn't able to really draw the scarecrow and the apple-trees right, so I thought it wouldn't be as obvious if I put down there."

The mother stood there silently looking from picture to picture at the neat line of identical art.

Uncomfortable with the silence, the teacher added, “But he worked really hard and seemed to enjoy himself. I’m so proud of his effort!”

Scenario 3: One of The Roses

Walking along the middle-school hallway, the mother looked for her daughter’s artwork. There among the drawings of roses, she found the one at the center. Her daughter’s aptitude was obvious. The petals were well proportioned, the light and shadow gave realistic depth, and the pencil strokes were seamless. It stood out as the best in the grouping, ergo the central placement. It also highlighted the other students’ less skilled attempts.

“Hi Mom,” chirped Danny as she approached with another friend.

“Hi, sweetie.” Then looking at the other girl, “Is your art up there too?”

“No way,” sighed Jenna with a self-deprecating laugh, “I don’t have that kind of talent.”

Scenario 4: Drawing or Dropping

As the first day of the art for elementary teachers’ class ended, one of the students asked to speak privately with the teacher.

Dropping her voice confidentially, Heather confessed, “I can’t draw at all. I need to know how important this is to passing the class. ‘Cause I can drop it if I need to.”

Interpreting the Scenarios

Each of the previous scenarios are told from one person’s perspective, mine. In *The Natural*, I was the little girl who grew up with crayons and brushes in my hand. Art-making was integrated into my identity from a very early age. And, my mother did indeed sign the letter of permission, and the picture of me with my sculpture was featured in the art section of the local paper.

But I wonder, in hindsight, while I heard the praise directed at my art, what did the other students hear? I believe the teacher was unaware that, within an art class, praise to one student can make another feel inferior. How did the girl feel when she came over to look at my sculpture? Did she wonder why hers was not chosen for the paper? Did she carefully compare the two to see what made hers ‘not good enough?’ While I will never know how the other little girl’s beliefs evolved, it is possible that this memory stuck in her head. If so, then it is probable that she began to doubt herself. That would initiate the tangle of confidence.

As a child, I was unaware of these things. It never occurred to me as I was growing up that art was anything other than a wonderful experience enjoyed by everyone. It wasn’t until motherhood that this changed. *At The End of The Row* is about my oldest son, who was born with cerebral palsy and epilepsy. He is an adult now, but his struggles growing up were many. Yet, from his perspective, art was not one of them. He enjoyed the process and displayed pride in his work. When my son was young and first confronted with these issues, my mind swirled with questions. Should my son, who tried his hardest, have his work hung at the end of the row? Did the teacher really think it was that bad? Was his creative attempt ‘less than’ the other children’s? However, throughout his elementary school years, I noticed this was a trend among his teachers: no matter how kind their intentions may have been, they judged student art based on how closely it matched their exemplar.

Unfortunately this is not isolated to my son’s school. Years later, I taught the art methods course at a small college. One of my pre-service teachers shared an example that occurred during her observation of a kindergarten classroom. The children were making jack-o-lantern faces on cans. When any child turned the triangles a different direction from the exemplar, the teacher tore them off and threw them away and made the child start over.

When questioned, my student told me that the jack-o-lantern cans were being made for a class party. There was no educational reason for the cans to be exactly the same. Another student shared that the first grade class she was observing had the option to do color sheets after finishing their math work. One student colored a cat purple. The teacher told the girl she colored it “wrong” and “there are no such things as purple cats.” Now I understand my son’s teachers in terms of *their* tangle of perspective (judging other’s art as good or bad). The stories in this dissertation will show examples of methods students who measure art in general with a good-bad binary. It will also reveal how it effects the evaluation of their own art-making.

The third scenario, *One of The Roses*, unfolded when my youngest daughter was in middle school, thirteen years after my son’s scenario. She excelled in art and it showed in her work. Nonetheless, as I stood there in the hallway with her, my heart hurt for her friend, Jenna. How tragic, to be only thirteen years old and already convinced that art is beyond your reach. Her conviction results from two tangles. The first is the idea of comparison, or relative failure, and it points to tangles in confidence. Jenna does not believe she can make art right (evaluating your own art with a right-wrong binary). The second is a tangle of permission. In Jenna’s mind, only qualified (talented) people can make art.

Three years after the incident at my daughter’s school, I was teaching the methods course at the local university. In *Drawing or Dropping*, Heather was one of my students. On the first day of the semester, she questioned her *ability* to take my class. Over the last six years, other students have asked me the same question. Their concern speaks to all three tangles. Heather’s perception of art is narrow, and equated directly with drawing. At some point in her life, someone, either directly or indirectly, devalued her art.

Since she believes talent is a prerequisite for participation in the arts, the strand of permission is tangled. Her need to avoid possible failure in art-making, adds the tangle of confidence.

Overview of The Triadic Tangle

As I re-searched my data and the journeys of my students, I needed a way to organize what I was seeing in a way that conveyed the complexities underpinning implicit beliefs. Other studies acknowledged teacher resistance but did not say exactly *what* students were resisting. Additionally, there were a preponderance of comments in the literature about students' lack of general art knowledge, but nothing about the nature of what students *thought* they understood. An even wider amount of evidence asserted that students did not believe they were creative, but the underlying reasons *why* were not explored. As a methods instructor, I was being asked to teach art and art-making to students who exhibited these types of issues. Traditional art education content and production were not connecting with the students. What I saw in my students, and what I came to understand that they needed, did not fit with the conceptions of learning that I was being asked to teach.

Within the context of education, the Triadic Tangle describes barriers to creativity and art-making. The Tangle is analogous to a knot in a braided rope. The rope is comprised of three strands, all of which stem from implicit beliefs. The strands are formed from fibers that represent the specific issues inside of each strand.

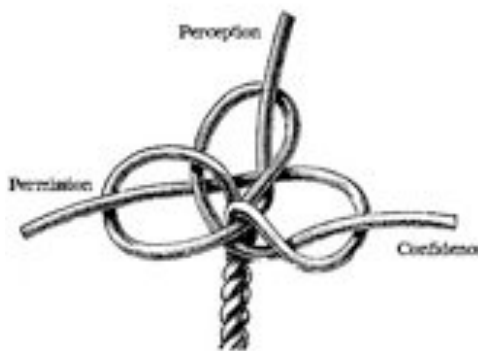


Figure 2. Triadic Tangle

The first strand is Perception. This addresses student knowledge and understanding around the broader concepts of art and creativity; i.e., what is it? And where is it? When tangled, art is restricted to forms of fine art. It is located in galleries and museums. Tangles of perception also inform the judgment of art made by someone other than the student; i.e., how is it valued? If this is tangled, art is measured against exemplars, often with a good or bad binary.

The second strand is Permission. It centers on how the student determines who is qualified to make art; i.e. art-making is limited to artists. When tangled, issues of talent arise, and the student refrains from art-making on the basis that they are ineligible (untalented).

The third strand is Confidence. It involves the validation of ideas that the student personally generates, and the assessment of their own art-making processes and products. When this is tangled, perfection becomes the priority. This is revealed in a right-wrong binary assessment of their efforts. The student's focus then shifts to avoiding mistakes. The result is a low tolerance to ambiguity, risk, and comparison. The details and revisions leading up to the final shaping of the Triadic Tangle are located in Chapter 2.

A Matter of Belief

The tangles are the results of what a student believes. What leads a student to these deeply held, conscious and subconscious beliefs about art and art making? Specifically, who can make art, and what is art? These questions, placed in the context of the arts methods course, will be unpacked in chapter two. The dictionary defines teaching as a means of giving information about a subject, or instruction in a skill. However, there is extensive literature stating that elementary teachers are unprepared and unqualified to meet the artistic needs of their students (Ballard, 1990; Galbraith, 1991; Jeffers, 1993; Thompson, 1997; Kowalchuk and Stone, 2000; Deniston-Trochta, 2001; Manifold and Zimmerman, 2011). When it comes to art and creativity, a teacher's beliefs, which answer the questions of who is an artist and what is art, determines if art takes place in their classroom. If a teacher does not believe s/he is creative or artistic, they are unlikely to support these types of opportunities in their own classrooms.

When I refer to beliefs, I am speaking specifically about *implicit* beliefs. These are a layperson's individual thoughts and ideas about a concept (Runco & Johnson, 2002). Therefore, a student's thoughts and ideas about creativity are what form their implicit beliefs. When I reviewed the studies listed in the previous paragraph, I understand how "unprepared and unqualified" is interpreted with regard to content knowledge and technical skill. Nonetheless, this research shows that there are underlying foundational issues that give rise to these descriptors. These issues are the catalyst for students' implicit beliefs.

I submit that there are two consequences that result from allowing students to remain unaware of their implicit beliefs. The first occurs in the methods class, and results in a hindered engagement in art-making processes. By art-making processes, I am referring to open-ended assignments and media investigations.

It is important to note that this occurs in low-risk activities designed for beginners. Behavioral manifestations include resistance, anxiety, or detachment. The second consequence looks to future elementary classrooms. When a teacher feels artistically and creatively inadequate, it can limit possibilities for elementary students to experience art (i.e. painting in class, constructing objects, and exploring a variety of expressive processes). This is especially significant in those schools that are unable to provide an accredited art specialist.

This dissertation examines the creative journeys of three students, Bailey, Anika, and Emily. These journeys are not categorized in terms of failure or success. Instead they are presented as individual stories framed around that student's understanding. As such, obstacles, and the extent to which they are navigated, are seen as relevant only to that student's unique starting point.

Motivations

To date, my journey has taken me from child artist, to mother, to elementary school art teacher, to teacher educator, and to researcher. In reflecting on this journey, I questioned the path I had taken. What makes all of this personally important to me? Its magnitude has driven twelve years of my teaching and four years of research. Why do I so fiercely need to speak proactively about creativity for everyone? Why is the emergent artist the one who pulls at my heart? Why do I want the "uncreative" and "non-artists" to come awake to the creative experience? I think the sensitivity began with my disabled son, the love he had for art-making, and the dynamics that swirled around him. My son taught me that the experience was more significant than the product. Added to this was my own joy in creating. When faced with any aged individual who asserts that they 'can't' make art, it goes right to my heart. Their belief prevents art experience. Picture a river.

On one side is “Making Art,” and on the other is “Not Making Art.” Belief is the bridge that gets you across to the river. I want everyone to know that they *can* make art, and their expression of it is just as important as any other.

Journey from Teacher to Researcher

Because my journey prepared me to facilitate theirs, it is important that I share my background in terms of this course. I worked as a jewelry designer and free-lance muralist for over a decade before going back and finishing my BA in photography. Following that, I began my teaching career as an elementary art teacher. Five years later, this led to an adjunct teaching position at a small college in north Georgia. The course was art methods for pre-service teachers.

In my development as an arts methods instructor, I encountered many stumbling blocks within the course content, particularly in terms of suitability for the students. For example, art history and aesthetics was beyond their frame of reference. Other difficulties involved coping with students as they floundered through the art and design processes. I had students who did not know how to mix colors, much less lay out a basic sketch for a simple painting. At the time, I did not understand what mistakes I was making.

Seven years ago, when I began teaching the methods course at the small college in North Georgia, I was told I could teach the students whatever I wanted as long as it educated them on teaching art to children. There was no clear definition of what the department head meant by art. It was just a term, tossed out casually in our initial conversation, as a catch-all phrase that included anything children could do artistically that would ‘go with’ a lesson. A few key incidents made me quickly realize that art was not valued on campus. The college had very little artwork on campus. Furthermore, the ‘art room’ was a small, poorly equipped space on the ground floor of the girls’ dormitory.

I was given neither curriculum nor an appropriately equipped space, just a small room outfitted with 20 single desks, no windows, no sinks, and no supplies. Even though I had no adult education experience, the dean of education told me I could decide on whatever lessons I thought were best. When I expressed doubts regarding my qualifications, she responded with, “It’s just art. How hard can it be?” She also left me with a cryptic comment about the previous instructor being intensely disliked by the students. While I did not know why the students had been so unhappy, I was not worried about doing a better job. I loved art: the process, the expression, and the opportunity to create things in any medium. And, I enjoyed teaching, specifically coaching the students in their own creative explorations. It was exciting to be able to move past my elementary school lessons and into the more advanced art I expected to do with adult students. I approached this course with enthusiasm for my subject and a genuine desire to see my students do well in the class.

The class met for three hours, once a week for one semester. Initially, I attempted to design a comprehensive curriculum complete with art appreciation (so students could understand and talk about art), art history (because it is important to know great artists and art movements), principles and elements (so students could identify them and use them), media techniques, classroom supply management, art room procedures, and information on working with children (based on my experience teaching elementary school). Added to this were art projects for my students, and art lessons they could use in their future classrooms. Counting on the fact that my students were adults, I took for granted their comprehension of my information blitz. Eyes glazed over during art history, quiz scores were low, and students questioned the relevance. Basic elements of art confused them.

Even though the school reimbursed my supply runs from the local Walmart, students struggled with painting and drawing, quickly going through paper as one attempt after another was thrown in the trash. I was immensely frustrated. Was it my teaching? Did the students not care?

For their first painting, I took them through a Van Gogh lesson that I taught my second graders. In this lesson, students learned about Van Gogh (art history) and his dramatic, choppy impasto brushwork (technique). Using *Wheat Field with Cypresses* as the exemplar, students painted their own landscape. The impressionistic, gestural application of paint made fine detail and realism less of an issue for the children, which limited comparison. The second graders love this lesson. My pre-service teachers did not. I erroneously thought that my adult students could easily make this elementary level project. I was unprepared for their level of anxiety coupled with their inability to lay out a simple sketch, mix colors, and adequately handle a brush. I watched as paint was turned into sloppy, brown puddles on canvas. It did not make any sense. The elementary students turned out beautiful work. How could adults do so badly?

Their final art lessons they designed were just as disheartening. . Each student created an art lesson integrated with a core subject of his or hers. One student, Barry, created a geology unit for first graders. The volcano did erupt, but there was no way *each* first grader could make their own. Never mind the prohibitive cost of his “kit,” it was so complicated, even Barry was unsure if it would work. Even more bewildering to me was the pride he had in his “original creation.” In hindsight, I think that the successful completion of this kit was, in his mind, a successful foray into the creative arts. The idea that creativity is a kit is reinforced in our society. Creativity is pushed as a commodity, and to sell it, results have to be promised and delivered. By these standards, a set of steps that culminates into a decent product provides evidence of ‘creative’ success.

Unfortunately this indicates a confusion between creating, as making or constructing, and creativity itself, which is the idea that drives the making. What is also concerning is that the National Art Standards support this idea of creativity as a kit. This is evidenced in their backwards design approach to art making, and is discussed in chapter two.

Another student, Joni, did a unit on arctic animals. Her art project was an igloo made of sugar cubes. It dissolved on the way to class. It did not occur to her that the glue would melt the sugar. Nor did she consider if igloos were a relevant connection to arctic animals. Then there was Carrie's cultural unit on holidays around the world which included a pre-packed gingerbread kit, Mark's science unit on trees, with leaves laminated onto colored paper, and finally Amanda's reading lesson which culminating with a Rainbow Fish template embellished with sequins. I thought their projects were trite and unimaginative, and furthermore, that I was a terrible teacher. As an elementary art teacher, my former principal evaluated my performance highly based on my lesson content, variety of media used, and classroom management. However the most personally significant feedback related to the opportunity I gave students to respond with individually interpretations, while remaining inside the lesson itself. It was my way of encouraging all students that they were creative. Yet in my mind, I was unsuccessful in translating any of that into the art methods course. My methods students did not want room to interpret, they wanted to know exactly what to do in order to make art 'right.' When left on their own, for the final projects, they reverted to 'kits' and away from creativity. How, after a semester of art class, could this be the best my students could do? I wanted them to generate and explore their own ideas. In spite of feeling like my first term was a disaster, the students' reviews were good. They told me they had fun and they liked the class. The department was happy, and I agreed to teach the course again.

Perhaps because carrying paint and water down the hall to the bathrooms was a bit messy, the college put us in a chemistry lab the following year. In spite of the chemistry professor's generous spirit, he was not thrilled with the telltale flecks of paint on his beakers, and the works-in-progress laying across the tops of his cabinets. For the third year, at my request, the college allowed us to use a large, multi-purpose room above the student center. We had sinks, windows, brightly colored walls, round tables, and lots of space. Unfortunately, the problems persisted. With each successive year, I simplified the content, always looking for new ways to present and related it to my students. With art-making, I hoped if I found the right approach and the right projects, the students would engage more successfully. By success, I am not referring to the caliber of their products. Namely, I was looking for attitudes within the experience, such as a willingness to participate, opening up to their own ideas, trying their hands in new media, and a shift from anxiety to self-confidence.

Still students struggled with issues of confidence, and often pointed out their lack of talent. They preferred explicit directions in lieu of open-ended assignments. For example, in one activity I asked them to think of something in their daily life that was a hassle and then come up with an invention to solve the problem. I just asked for a rough sketch on a journal page, not a finished work of art. The parameters were too open. Yet, when I switched to structured activities, it produced very similar outcomes that fed into comparisons and feelings of inadequacy. It was a challenging line to walk. Through it all I told them they were creative and encouraged them constantly, but only a few of them believed me. Things did get relatively better though. Their end of term evaluations and personal comments indicated that my students enjoyed the class. However, for me, enjoyment was not enough. My objective was for them to learn how to think, and not be afraid to explore the visual possibilities.

I believed if they could do this, then they could think about their classroom lessons and imagine ways to connect it in and through art. Otherwise, they would continue to depend on me, or templates, or lessons downloaded off the Internet. I needed to understand why this was so hard to teach and why the arts methods course in general was so problematic.

Knowing what I do now, I am ashamed of my reaction to their work, and for thinking that they had not tried very hard. In hindsight, I realize that they honestly did the best they could. Even after a comprehensive art course, they had reverted back to the safe and predictable. My next question was why? That following year I enrolled in the masters of art education degree program at a state university. When I learned about implicit beliefs, it helped me better understand my students. Additionally, it made me realized I needed to approach the curriculum differently. Under IRB approval, I documented my development of the course and student experiences within it.

After entering the art education doctoral program, I was given the opportunity as a graduate teaching assistant, to teach the same course at my university. This expanded my IRB to two different locations. In preparing for my doctoral research, my focus switched from the course to the students. Even though the curricular modifications improved their engagement, the persistence of the students' outlook and attitudes troubled me. Why were they so self-critical? Why were they so hesitant regardless of assurances and encouragement? How did they get that way? Could their beliefs be reshaped? These questions pointed my attention to the way implicit beliefs impact creativity and art at a foundational level. Again I restructured the curriculum. Now my objective for students to navigate their implicit beliefs was in tandem with my pedagogy and curriculum. That year I observed noticeable differences in the nature of my students' creative growth and art-making experiences.

The growth I observed in my students is not about an improvement in technical proficiency; it is a matter of burgeoning awareness. Specifically, it revolves around the students understanding what they have believed, why they believed it, and then choosing to replace those tangled implicit beliefs with new ones, arrive at through explicit education and experience.

While it is true that occasionally students drew well, at least one student each semester drew a sun in the corner of their paper. This places their visual-cognitive age at 7-9 years (Lowenfeld, 1947). I have to be sensitive when covering a child's stages of drawing (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964), where inevitable, my student looks at the sample and realizes they are still drawing like a child (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964). Before that moment, they had never thought about it like that. It is the same when they began to reexamine the "visual clichés," i.e. hearts and stars, with which they decorate their work (Deniston-Trochta, 2001, p. 100). In fact, when I first began teaching the course, in my ignorance of where my students were coming from, I teased them about 'not drawing anything that looks like it came out of a box of Lucky Charms cereal.' These graphic designs are stereotypical and not the result of individual interpretation or expression. Through a concerted effort to become informed and sensitive to my students, I began to identify the moments when they learned to see their own artistic efforts differently. When this occurs, it is important that they are led gently into this experience, so that it is an awakening not fraught with self-criticism.

Art for Everyone

The scenarios and student examples I shared in this chapter only touch the surface of incidents I observed over the years. Many people do not think they are creative or artistic. This can be extended to Siegesmund's (2014) description of "emotional centeredness [as] aesthetic relationship," and the way that "arts traffic in felt experience."

Although he speaks of it in terms of the experience between research participants, I am repositioning it into experience between the methods student and past art encounters. If these art encounters are detrimental in some way, then that felt experience taints future experience and beliefs, in essence uncentering them. This fractures the relationship between the student and aesthetic perceptions.

Based on observations of relational restoration between my students and their creative selves, I believe individuals can find their way back to art. When they do, their attitudes shift to one that is unintimidated by art. This happens because their minds are untangled. They have redefined art as being something that exists beyond galleries, something they have permission to do, and something that can be worthwhile in the midst of imperfections. Educationally, it is significant from two perspectives. One, the pre-service teachers are willing to try a variety of art-making approaches in the classroom. Two, the children benefit from not having to make identical art, and not having that art critiqued against an exemplar and each other. Within the academic system where student learning is assessed against the one right answer, artistic explorations offer space to grow and develop individually.

This view is underscored by my belief that everyone has a creative flame, and that some just need theirs to be relit. I am not alone in the belief that creativity is within us all. While nuances exist, other scholars have asserted creativity as being an intrinsic, if latent, quality present in all people (Runco, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Finke, 1996; Kowalski, 1997; Lowenfeld, 1947). However, for the last 40 years, art education has separated itself from creativity. The field has followed what it considered to be higher aims built around the philosophy, history, criticism, and production of art.

By advocating for creativity and creative experiences as the primary objective of arts education in elementary schools, I am arguing against what the discipline of art education has considered best practice for decades. Art in elementary school, and by extension the elementary art methods course, does not need to be focused on developing future artists per se. The responsibility for teachers is to facilitate art and creativity experiences that build confidence, and create a desire to continue artistic engagement. Lowenfeld (1947) states, “The child who feels frustrated develops inhibitions and, as a result, will feel restricted in his personality. The child who has developed freedom and flexibility in his expression will be able to face new situations without difficulties” (p. 7). Currently, interest in creativity is experiencing resurgence in art education. After six years of teaching and researching the arts methods course, it is my hope that this body of work can speak to the issues that other instructors might face, and offer insights on developing “flexibility in expression” that strengthens their students’ art engagement.

CHAPTER 2



Figure 3. A student's visual-verbal journal page

CHAPTER 2 – FRAMING A CREATIVE BECOMING

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first examines the theories, philosophies, and concepts that have informed this research. Then I position this study in the context of creativity. This begins with my definition of creativity and the development of new terms needed to more clearly describe aspects and phenomena in this study. Next is a brief historical overview of creativity. The second section examines the literature and research on implicit beliefs, creativity, and teacher beliefs. Following implicit beliefs, I present a full examination of the Triadic Tangle. This establishes perspective and situates the review and findings from seven research studies specifically addressing the implicit beliefs that teachers have for art and creativity. The third section connects the implications of these teacher beliefs to the art methods course, education, and the new art standards.

Section 1 - Theoretical Lens

As my research unfolded, I found myself identifying with three philosophical and educational ideas. They are Dewey's (1934/1958) inquiry and knowing through experience, Rosiek's (2013) ontology of the future, and Eisner's (1996) artistry in curriculum and teaching. Additionally, I will be weaving in the Deleuzian (1987) idea of *becoming*. Framed within teacher education, each theory in its own way prioritizes experience and the *ongoingness* of knowing and being. In tandem, they function as the lens through which I view my research. It is my position that a reflective understanding of creativity as process is best engendered within this arena of experiential inquiry.

Deleuze and Becoming

My research, within this context of personal creativity and art, asks what might pre-service teachers learn, what might they become, what might they continue becoming.

Furthermore, our co-inquiries, as teacher and student, seek what might arise from the outcomes of these inquiries. This aligns closely with Deleuze's (2014) ontology of becoming, which speaks to being as an ongoing state. Becoming is a complex concept with wide-ranging applications. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain becoming as: "neither a progression nor a regression; as producing nothing other than itself; it is a verb; and becoming is involutionary, involution is creative" (p. 238). Involution provides a pivotal link between *becoming* and *creative*, because involution involves entanglement and a folding in upon one's self.

Creative Becoming

This dynamic concept of becoming is a beautifully suited complement to creativity. Therefore, I have conceptualized and defined *Creative Becoming as an ongoing, both conscious and subconscious, emerging understanding of the self as a creative entity*. This functions as the bedrock of my research, and informs the way I perceive and operationalized creativity. However, for the creative self to emerge, the implicit beliefs making up the three strands of the Triadic Tangle must be purposefully navigated.

Becoming within a creative context takes on additional qualities when you add the element of Jerry Lee Rosiek's (2013) "possible consequences from our inquiries." This attention to reflexivity in emerging realities interlaces with Deleuzian theory. Rosiek (2013), a qualitative educational research methodologist whose research focuses on teacher learning through classroom experience as well as a former student of Elliot Eisner writes, "a new generation of pragmatist philosophers has been exploring the connection between pragmatism and late twentieth-century developments in continental philosophy (p. 693). Furthermore, these ideas of becoming, possibilities, and language, mesh with "transactional realism" (Eisner, 1988), which places our inquiries within our reality, and its conviction that inquiry defies boundaries (Dewey, 1916/1999). Yet, boundaries have preoccupied art education for the past four decades. The turn to standards resulted in an approach to acquisition of knowledge. In this light creative becoming problematizes National Art Standards that were approached via the Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) framework (NCCAS, p. 7). Within these standards teachers are supposed to "know" the outcomes their students are working towards. However, if the objective is predetermined, there is no space or incentive for students to explore what else might be learned. This constraint limits opportunities for emergent creative understandings.

Dewey and Experience

John Dewey, an American Philosopher and Educational Reformer, advocates for valuing art in the context of experience, not through formal principles (1934/2005) . As such, he is not in favor of using standards to judge art. Instead, he believes in employing criteria as a means of discovering the significance of an artistic experience. His criteria call for an analysis of the different parts of the artwork, and then a move to synthesize the parts back into a whole.

Unlike standards, which are stationary, Dewey's approach can flex within new art experiences and movements.

His philosophies on experience, knowledge, and education reject a spectator view of knowledge, appealing instead for an active knowing (Dewey, 1934/2005). Within this knowing there is no imitating, rather, Dewey challenges us to find a means to note our experiences in such a way that the richness of that experience is not distorted. This active knowing forms the structure of my approach to teaching, and by extension, my research. I challenge my students to participate in an understanding of creativity as something already residing within, something they are capable of generating through their art-making, regardless of the assignment or media. As Dewey points out, these experiences are full and multi-dimensional. Through active knowing, my students take part in the reality they investigate (1938/1963). It is not something I give them but something they encounter personally. Within this encounter, experience is met with: inquiry, in which they question and reflect on the physical (art-making) and mental (design, composition, meaning, communication) processes; critical thought, (reflect, connect, evaluate); and open-ended assessment (based on criteria applied within the context of that individual's art). In turn, the outcomes of inquiry affect continuing experience. Art does not happen as an *external* to who they are but as a result of who they are becoming through their artistic experience. "In such experiences, every successive part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks, into what ensues" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 206).

When qualifying experience, Dewey assessed it positively (educative) if it provided the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that fostered a desire for more interactions (Dewey, 1934/2005). In terms of my research into emergent creativity, I want to draw attention to disposition. It can be loosely defined as a temperament or inclination.

What I understand in Dewey's thought is that knowledge and skill alone do not prompt a desire to continue in, or seek new, experiences. It is the nature of that experience that determines the potential for future engagement. Students need a nurturing environment that supports them during their investigations; especially when obstacles are encountered. As examined in the Triadic Tangle, tangling occurs within unmediated negative experiences. If a teacher can explicitly convey all experience, both successes and perceived failures, as equally worthwhile, negative bias can be moderated. Paying attention to the way students feel within, and following, an experience is an aspect of care, and as such, demonstrates a teacher's responsibility for students' welfare (Dewey, 1916/1999). Care promotes feelings of safety and security, which provide an ideal setting for risk-taking. This framework encourages a disposition receptive to continued experience. For students who are risk-adverse, this offers a new path of inquiry, which in Dewey's ontology looks to inquiry as a means of generating new relationships between students and their environment.

Rosiek and Possibilities

Correspondingly, the pragmatist views ontology as practices informed in and by experience. Their conception of reality looks at the relationship between the parts and the whole, the inferences drawn from within the context of that experience, all of which lead to interpretations. Rosiek (2013) examines a revision of pragmatist philosophy referring to themes of reflexive realism and an ontology of the future (p. 692). This ontology of the future "inverts the temporal frame of social inquiry" thus placing the significance of research "on the horizon of possible inquiries that might follow from our inquiries" (p.693).

Philosopher Vincent Colapietro (2011) explains, “The future toward which we are driving is, in however an attenuated and inconspicuous form, always somewhat of a piece with the present through which we are moving” (p. 161).

How do pragmatists value ontological acts? Rosiek describes the merits as “the consequences [of the acts] – including their effects on our identity, affect, and most fundamental relations – that they precipitate in the ongoing stream of our experience” (p. 697). This idea is critical to my research and gives rise to the following questions: What are the consequences of my students’ experience? Do any of those consequences inform their implicit beliefs? How are their identities, as emerging artists, impacted?

Another important aspect of pragmatism is the view of language, which I extend into art. Rosiek writes, “For the pragmatist, language does not just hang out there like an abstract veil mediating between an inquiring subject and a reality. Language ... arises through the course of our experience. Most significantly ... it underwrites an embodied reflexivity, not just a linguistically mediated one” (p. 695). Recognizing that language is a form of communication through symbols, we can acknowledge art as a symbol system that conveys information and meaning. I submit that art, like language, does not “hang out there like an abstract veil mediating between” an inquiring student and the reality of art-making. Art “arises through the course of a student’s experience.” Rosiek, referring to Peirce (1935) writes, “Through abductive inference new relations are created within the stream of experience that did not exist before” (p. 699). Charles Sanders Peirce (1935), the founder of American pragmatism, explains abductive as an imaginative leap, or ontologically generative, phase of inquiry whose mode of inference, when going from observation to hypothesis, best evinces the pragmatists stance on experience.

Rosiek explains that these “novel relations are partly linked to judgment that intuitively anticipates future consequences but are also part of a sedimented past” (2013, p. 699). Therefore, reflection is necessary for moving students deeper into that experience. In regard to students who have minimal working knowledge of art-making, I seek to facilitate a new stream of experience. This type of experience is the outcome of my teaching, not the result of established art content or skill acquisition.

Eisner and Artistry

Art Educator Elliot Eisner (2002) believed, “the arts, when experienced in the fullness of our emotional life, are about becoming alive” (p. 84). To this end, he prescribed educational activities that are expressive in character. Such pursuits “are engaged in to court surprise, to cultivate discovery, to find new forms of experience” (Eisner, 1994, p. 120). Cultivating these types of activities in my classroom is an example of ‘artistry in teaching’ that enables students to personally understand how embodied inquiry feels when it happens. Eisner also writes:

Artistry is important because teachers who function artistically in the classroom not only provide children with important sources of artistic experience, they also proved a climate that welcomes exploration and risk-taking and cultivates the disposition to play. To be able to play with ideas is to feel free to throw them into new combinations, to experiment, and even to ‘fail’ (1994, p. 162).

This idea of artistry is incongruous with conventional curriculum that teaches students to avoid mistakes. In this mimetic mode of instruction, learning is strangled as students become preoccupied with getting *right* answers. This creates a cognitive reflex whereby students seek to avoid failure. Over time, as this goal generalizes within their minds to other areas including art, a tangle results.

From a curricular standpoint, when the primary learning outcome is “concerned with specificity and predictability,” Tanner and Tanner (1995) assert “the teaching-learning process [becomes] an established-convergent process” (p. 39). This is in contrast to “an emergent-generative process” which is “concerned with possibility” and “stimulates continued learning” (p. 39). Note the language Tanner and Tanner use: “convergent” and “emergent-generative.” Both of these terms refer to types of thinking, specifically *creative* thinking.

Whether you align with “curriculum as a mind-altering device” (Eisner, 2002, p. 148) or teaching as the primary agent for transformation, both are contingent on artistry. Artistry brings an emotionally nuanced connection to teaching. Pedagogically it promotes experiences that invite discovery, and then inquires how that discovery feels. As a curriculum, it insists on reflection, inviting students to interact on a personal level with their own learning.

Personally, I believe they are equally capable but more effective when unified. Another aspect of artistry relates to issues of complexity. Eisner (1996) writes, “Artistry has a tendency to increase complexity by recognizing subtlety and emphasizing individuality. It does not search for the one best method” (p. 18). The significance given to individuality, when put in context of emergent artists, steers students away from a potential tangle: confidence. When curriculum prioritizes individual interpretations, it decreases opportunities for comparison. As a result, space is opened for a personal sense of achievement, a disposition conducive to continued engagement. Although I am writing in a specific context, this arts-mediated perspective can be developed across educational disciplines.

Creativity in Context

Before I begin the review of the literature on implicit beliefs in general, and then teacher beliefs in particular, it is necessary to preface it with an introduction to creativity. This section begins with my definition of creativity and how it has been informed by the work of Cognitive Psychologist, and creativity researcher, Mark Runco. Next, I introduce three new terms: *emergent creativity*, *metacreativity*, and *creative confidence*. Following this, I offer a brief historical overview of creativity.

The literature is vast, so my intent is to highlight a few key studies showing scholarly attempts to explain it, measure it, and relate it to children. Creativity has been formally studied and debated for almost a century, yet it continues to be an academic enigma. In mainstream culture, creativity is a catch-all word that frequently describes fashion style, social nonconformity, and personal expression in appearance (Moran, 2010; Runco, 2007). This is in addition to the more common associations with art and performances. Scholars, philosophers, and scientists have tried to define it or, failing that, identify its qualities. There have been debates on creativity's processes, products, judgments, measurements, and assessments.

For this dissertation, I define creativity as a distinct expression of individual ideas that are novel for that person, and are evaluated independently of talent or skill. This aligns with Runco (2003), who opposes one overarching view of creativity, and instead reconceptualizes it within the specific context of elementary education. The following is a brief overview:

Children are not professional artists ... it is creative potential that is the primary concern, rather than unambiguous creative performance. ... The basic idea is that any thinking or problem solving that involves the construction of new meaning is creative.

This in turn relies on personal interpretations that are new for the individual ... which allows educators to target self-expression. ... Creativity is, then, something we can find in every child, not just the gifted or highly intelligent (Runco, 2003, p. 317).

New Terms

It is within the context of my research and my evaluations of the literature that I present the following terminology. Three of these terms, *emergent creativity*, *emergent artist*, and *creative confidence* are new. The fourth, *metacreativity*, has been re-defined. The order of these terms, emergent creativity, metacreativity, and creative confidence, functions as the stages leading to a creative becoming.

Emergent Creativity and Emergent Artist

When I teach my students that every child can be creative, I am advocating a different definition of creativity: emergent creativity. This definition divaricates beyond that which produces great inventions, master works of art and music, creative genius, and revolutionary ideas. I am proposing a simple, humble recognition that everyone has something to contribute: a way to express themselves that should not be shut down or judged. To that understanding of creativity I add the descriptor, emergent. Emergent is not the same as beginner, which is defined as a person just learning a skill or taking part in an activity. Emergent is the process of coming into being. While it is associated with a novice level of engagement, the larger meaning implies an internal animation. Therefore, emergent creativity is defined as a growing self-awareness of the expression and validity of new ideas and or solutions, within unfamiliar and unfolding processes. Similarly, an emergent artist is defined as someone with a growing self-awareness within unfolding artmaking processes involving unfamiliar media and techniques.

Metacreativity

Although my search generated hundreds of hits for metacreativity, the scope of the subject matter to which it is linked is wildly diverse. There are two definitions that I find to be pertinent to creativity but not specifically to the nature of my study. Metacreativity as defined by Educational Psychologist Catherine Bruch, (1988) reads, “The study of such internal observations of creative processing and personal characteristics is proposed as a field of inquiry called ‘metacreativity’ (p. 112). Metacreativity as defined by Runco (2015) suggests that assumptions made when studying creativity also be questioned in order to find new perspectives on creativity. My definition of metacreativity is as follows, “In a holistic sense, metacreativity encompasses a student’s knowledge about creativity in regard to a personally embodied experience.” My use of this term differs from Bruch’s use of metacreativity as a field of inquiry focusing on creative characteristics. It also differs from Runco’s description of it as a purposeful shift leading to a more creative result. Whereas Bruch focuses on identification, and Runco on a change in cognitive perspective, I am looking at metacreativity as an embodied knowledge of the creative self that is independent of outside approval. This growing comprehension of personal creativity leads to my use of *creative becoming* as described at the beginning of this chapter.

The implied significance of personal history is an essential aspect of my research focus into the creative foundations of pre-service teachers. The often obscure by-products of this history can surface in their developing classroom pedagogy. Meta- as a prefix within epistemology is used to mean ‘about the category’ that follows the prefix. Within the field of psychology, meta- points to an individual’s knowledge regarding a specified category. Ergo metacreativity indicates a student’s knowledge about creativity in regard to their own experience.

Metacreativity falls under Eisner's co-participatory realm where the burgeoning awareness of creativity blooms within a mentorship "situation" as opposed to a content-knowledge transference. Within this metacreative mentorship, instructors provide opportunities for creative inquiries, coming alongside students as they navigate ambiguity, chaos, and risk. Then instructors can withdraw, to an extent, in order to afford students the space to inquire of their own learning experience.

Creative Confidence

Creative confidence is not addressed in the literature as a complete term. However, the connection between creativity and confidence is often implied, if somewhat indirectly. For example, Deniston-Trochta (2001) writes, "A classroom teacher, already beleaguered with responsibilities, is not going to freely engage in activities in which s/he has the least confidence" (p. 99). I have defined this new term as: "Creative confidence is demonstrated when the willingness to engage in art-making, especially open-ended processes, outweighs fear of failure." I believe this occurs when a student's implicit beliefs, as outlined in the Triadic Tangle, shift regarding what constitutes art and who has permission to make art.

Historical Overview of Creativity

In 1963, Psychologist Ellis Paul Torrance developed the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT). While his test, along with others, are still in use today, researchers keep asking, "Who has creativity, who lacks it, and why?" Topics and theories have fallen in and out of favor. Currently educators are asking, "What does it look like and how do we get it in the classroom?"

Following its high point in the 60s and 70s, interest in creativity fell during the 80s due to changes in education. Along with standards based educational reform, the national focus shifted to math and science achievement. Concurrently, school arts programs adopted this subject-content focus when the Getty Center for Education in the Arts proposed a subdivision of the discipline of art into four distinct parts (art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production).

In 1985, the Getty Center and the J. Paul Getty Museum commissioned Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson to do a study on aesthetic experience. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) describe the creative, aesthetic experience as something that takes skill and practice. The criteria emphasize that the person must have developed complex visual skills. Also during this time, the separate constructs of creativity and cognition merged into one, “creative cognition” (Finke, Ward, & Smith, 1992). Pesut (1990) presented a model for creative thinking as a metacognitive process. In response to the emphasis on cognition, Cropley (1992) countered with his theory that creativity involved a motivational, emotional, *and* intellectual approach to learning that was *not* dependent on high intelligence. This aligned with other scholars who believed that creativity was intrinsic in everyone, even if undeveloped or dormant (Kowalski, 1997; Ward, Smith, & Finke, 1996).

Frustratingly albeit not surprising, seventy years after creativity first emerged in the scholarship, Fleith (2000) writes, “Studies in creativity have tried to conceptualize the term creativity and explain the process involved in the creative act ... but no consensus exists, however, about how to define creativity” (p. 148). Despite the discontinuity, interest in creativity rebounded. Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe (2000), in a challenge to creativity tests, took issue with the assumption that creativity is an objective quality that can be determined through responses to thinking tasks.

However, I find Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe's stance slightly contradictory since they also contend, "If you cannot persuade the world that you had a creative idea, how do we know that you actually had it?" (p. 83). This circular argument hinges on how the designator *creative* is bestowed, whether it is named so internally (by the creator) or externally (by other). It all comes down to what you believe. Moving towards a more democratic position, Eisner (1992/2005) posits, "a school is a culture for growing minds" (p. 129) and "the arts celebrate imagination, multiple perspectives, and the importance of personal interpretation" (p. 132). By allowing space for personal interpretation, Eisner's reasoning acts as a modifier to Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe's position on external validation.

Section 2 – Literature and Research Review

Implicit Beliefs

Building on their earlier research, Runco and Johnson's theories (2002) explain implicit belief as the place where expectations are formed. In turn those expectations are comprised of individuals thoughts and ideas about a particular construct. Moreover, "Though these theories may never be explicitly expressed or formalized, they are maintained and are either intentionally or unintentionally applied when making judgments about certain characteristics and behaviors" (Runco & Johnson, 2002, p. 427). In and through all of this are implications and illuminations for education. What do teachers believe about creativity? How do teachers understand creativity as connecting or disconnecting from the classroom? And finally, why does it matter? These issues fall under the study of teachers' implicit beliefs. According to Runco, Johnson, and Bear (1993), teachers' implicit beliefs function intentionally or unintentionally as a model against which student creativity is judged. They can either enable or impede.

A person's implicit beliefs are impacted by background, culture, education, and life experience. Moreover, what you *already* believe about creativity will influence what you accept when you encounter new information. The degree to which a person's beliefs can be reshaped is also dependent on the quality of openness. This describes how willing an individual is to entertain new ideas versus immediately assuming a defense position. Knowledge is subjective and therefore determines to what extent you agree or disagree with new information. Likewise, the receptivity of a pre-service teacher to creativity and art is influenced by their beliefs, which are largely misinformed due to tangles in implicit beliefs.

Implicit theories are beliefs constructed by lay people, and *explicit* theories put forth by experts, and are based on data and other empirical evidence (Runco, 1990; Runco & Bahleda, 1986). Chan and Chan (1999) define implicit theories as “conceptualizations of creativity that frequently provide the psychological basis on which people make evaluations of their own or others creative behavior” (p. 185). Regarding creativity, Kampylis et al (2009), acknowledges creativity as a widely used term whose meaning is *still* difficult to define. The meanings that do exist become domain specific. For example, educational psychologists will likely have a different actionable interpretation than cognitive neuroscientists. Those differences are finely nuanced but appreciable. It is a contextual dilemma.

This is why I think it is critically important to clarify *how* creativity is taught to pre-service teachers. I want them to understand creativity in two contexts, as individuals, and as teachers. If as individuals, they have embodied a shift in identity, from non-creative to creative, then they can build on that experience. In other words, creativity becomes something personal and accessible, which results in art being doable and teachable. This is essential to their role as future educators responsible for nurturing creativity in children.

As teachers, their untangled beliefs would translate to a view of children as intrinsically creative, or possessing ‘creative potential’ (Runco, 2003). This would be a change from singling out talent as an indicator of a creative student. Next, the awareness that creativity manifests within individual expression would influence the type of lessons teachers used. This would be a change from presenting one exemplar to be copied by all students. Furthermore, process would itself become a valued part of learning within art experiences. This opens up opportunity for exploration and growth, while moderating the merit of finished products. Instead of a student becoming dismayed by failure, which tangles confidence, they could look to what was learned. Essentially, the teacher would be shaping the beliefs of the next generation.

The Triadic Tangle

As I re-searched my data, and the stories of my students, I struggled to make sense of the patterns I was seeing. Within them I recognized similarities in student behaviors, responses, reflections, and comments. Moreover, it was undeniable that implicit beliefs and prior experience impacted these students (e.g. Runco & Johnson, 2002, p. 427). However, organizing the meanings into themes did not adequately communicate the complexities that I believed existed at a foundational level. While sketching out the three themes (perception, permission, confidence), I realized I was doodling pictures of knots. It was an appropriate visual, so I named the knot the Triadic Tangle. Eventually, through a number of revisions and refinements, I was able to fully conceptualize the three themes in a way that illustrated the importance of implicit beliefs.

Within the context of education, the Triadic Tangle functions as a barrier to creativity in art-making. The Tangle is comprised of three strands. They usually present together. Untangling them requires that all three be addressed, even if one is absent, or in contrast, stronger than the others.

In each of these strands, a person has answered a question, whether consciously or subconsciously. Answers are influenced by: previous experience and the nature of that experience (e.g. Kowalchuk and Stone (2000); and the nature and source of content knowledge.



Figure 4. A three-stranded tangle

The process of becoming untangled is described in detail in each of the portraits. As the tangle unravels, the student exhibits changes, sometimes before they consciously realize it. For example, in the strand of perception, students broaden their understanding of art, and also begin recognizing the value of process along with product. With permission, students acknowledge that art-making is not limited to professionals, and does not require talent. In terms of confidence, students become cognizant of the way they feel in ambiguous activities. Moreover, anxiety is lessened as they realize meaning is found within processes, not perfect outcomes.

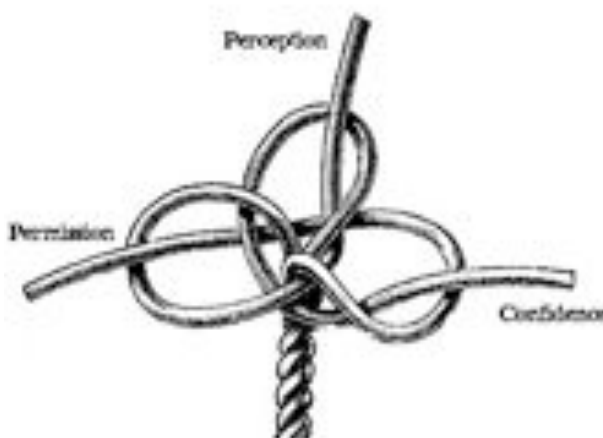


Figure 4: Triadic Tangle

The following outline codifies the aspects of each strand of the Triadic Tangle:

Strand 1: Perception

Perception involves issues of knowledge, identification, and judgment of works and ideas created by someone other than the one who is perceiving.

Perception answers the questions: What is art? Where is art? How is art valued? What is creativity?

When tangled, art is restricted to assumed materials, arenas, appearances and characteristics.

- a. Fine art is art (i.e. painting or photography)
- b. Art is in museums
- c. Art is beautiful or ‘good’
- d. Art is a product not a process
- e. Creativity is a ‘great’ idea

Strand 2: Permission

Permission involves issues of qualification.

Permission answers the questions: Who can make art? Why can they make art?

When tangled, art making is restricted to certain people.

- a. Artists make art. (Professionals)
- b. Talented and gifted people make art.
- c. Untalented people cannot make art, i.e. “I am not talented, therefore I cannot be an artist, therefore I cannot make art.”

Strand 3: Confidence

Confidence involves issues within art making processes.

Confidence answers the question “How do I make art *right*?”

1. When tangled, art is halted or abandoned when the artist is confronted with a problem. There is little to no tolerance for the following situations:

- a. There is no clear answer or approach. (Ambiguity)
- b. There is no guarantee of a successful outcome. (Risk)
- c. My art is not as good as hers/his. (Comparison of technique, design, idea)

2. When tangled, art outcomes are valued* in a binary of Failure or Perfection.

* The judgment in confidence is by the artist relative to his or her own work (internal). It differs from judgment in perception, in which another person's art is evaluated (external).

In the effort to better visualize this tangle, I searched for images of knots. This led me to explanations for the basic structure of knots and cords. From there I was able to form some interesting parallels that increased the clarity of the Triadic Tangle concept. To make a cord, or a rope, individual fibers are twisted into yarns, the yarns are twisted into strands, and the strands are twisted into a cord. The finished cord is strong and flexible. . Whereas unraveling those separate strands, then interlacing them, then tightening the ends, makes a knot. In art-making, here is how that translates to a student:

cord = creativity

strands = perception, permission, confidence

fibers = experience, beliefs, knowledge, failure, judgment, comparison, risk, etc.

Art making thrives when creativity (cord) is robust. In turn, creativity is robust when the elements (strands) of implicit beliefs, permission, and confidence are secure. Finally, the elements are secure when (threads): experience and valuation are positive or constructive in nature; beliefs and knowledge are well-founded; and obstacles are understood as part of process.

Conversely, the cord will unravel if the strands loosen and become entangled. This results from disruption of the threads. Therefore, tangling occurs when:

1. There is minimal, or an absence, of art-making experience. (issue of opportunity)
2. Experiences have been negative. (issues of failure, teacher judgment, peer comparison)
3. There is a lack of basic subject/content knowledge. (issue of education)
4. There are misconceptions regarding broader interpretations and expressions of art. (issues of belief, understanding, codified knowledge)

In Section 3 of this chapter, I examine the implications for educators, as well as the national standards and its views on best-practice in art education.

Research on Pre/In-service Teachers' Implicit Beliefs

My literature review looking at teacher beliefs about art and creativity spanned 24 years (1990-2014). Although there is a significant lack of research on creativity in the art methods course, there is a consistent focus within the existing research: concern. From Galbraith's study in 1990 to Daher and Baer's study in 2014, researchers have analyzed the problems regarding art methods students' experiences and learning within the course. Galbraith (1990) found a number of issues in the art methods course, including the "low status of methods courses within the hierarchy of teacher education," and the problems with "perceived assumptions of preservice teachers" about art in education (p. 54). Bae (2013) writes, "Although participants did learn about the three visual arts integration strategies taught in the methods class, most only superficially applied learning through visual arts in their teaching" (p. 70). Daher and Baer (2014) describe their course goal as encouraging students to connect art to teaching, but the authors concede, a "lack evidence for how students defined art" (p. 113). This points back to the importance of understanding implicit beliefs and how they affect art methods students.

From the existing literature, I chose to do an in-depth review of seven studies that were the most instructive to my own research. My criteria for being instructive required the study's focus to contain three key themes: participants who are pre/in-service teachers, teacher beliefs, and creativity. Studies were dismissed if the research was overly specific (i.e. a specific art project), had a limited scope (i.e. duration or number of participants), or creativity focus was approached as a descriptor instead of a cognitive or behavioral attribute (i.e. 'creative' lesson planning). To prioritize the findings from my review, I have elected to place them at the beginning. Following this, the seven research studies are described in detail.

Findings

- 1) Teachers considered aesthetic products, original ideas, and intelligence as demonstrative of creativity. Whereas experts commonly agree divergent thinking, fluency, flexible thought, and the ability to elaborate on an idea indicate creativity (Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005; Runco, 2007; Torrance, 1974). Aljughaiman and Mowrer-Reynolds (2005) maintain, "Teachers do not appear to see the connection between divergent thinking and the production of original ideas" (p. 25). Some teachers mentioned "that creative activities might bring some fun to the class but not many learning opportunities" (p. 30). The authors admit, "even when teachers described creativity with positive attributes, their conceptions of creativity were fraught with inconsistencies (p. 18).
- 2) During the activities, the participants displayed emotions that are similar to those expressed by my students. Loveless et al's (2006) student teachers "felt unsettled when faced with open-ended learning outcomes" which indicates a discomfort with divergent thinking (p. 8).
- 3) Teachers agree that they should teach creativity but feel inadequate to do so (Kampylis et al, 2009).

4) The dominant method of investigating teacher beliefs depends on questionnaires filled out by the participants (Andiliou & Murphy, 2010). This reduces the reliability of the answers because they are a) removed from the context, b) interpretation of questions is subjective, and c) participants answers are biased by their own implicit beliefs.

5) Teachers tend to label some children as creative based on their talent and or behavior.

Hondzel (2013) reports the “general definition identifying what, exactly, a creative child looks like was different for all participants” (p. 70). The implication is that some children are *not* recognized as creative.

Research Studies

In this section I describe seven studies from 2000-2014. As you will read, all of them encountered similar beliefs, as did I. Primarily, in-service and pre-service teachers generally do not possess theoretically or philosophically educated views on creativity. Nor do they have a working understanding of the broad ways creativity can be manifested in an educational setting.

Fleith’s (2000) study, *Teacher and Student Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom Environment*, analyzed data from 7 teachers, and 31 students (3rd and 4th grade). The data was based on semi-structured interviews that consisted of open-ended questions. The aspect of creativity most often highlighted by teachers and students was the production of something original. While originality is good, the issue becomes how originality is determined, and who determines it. Another concern is the participants' emphasis on product. This points to a lack of recognition of creativity as the cognitive function of ideas. A product is just one of the ways it presents.

Aljughaiman and Mowrer-Reynolds' (2005) study, *Teachers' Conceptions of Creativity and Creative Students*, examined teacher beliefs about creativity in education. The researchers also looked at how teachers defined creativity and how they described creative students. Aljughaiman and Mowrer-Reynolds administered questionnaires to 36 elementary teachers in a public school district in northern Idaho. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information, open-ended questions, and closed-ended statements pertaining to "teacher beliefs, opinions, attitudes toward teaching creativity in the regular classroom" (p. 20). Findings revealed teachers as frequently possessing narrow, stereotypical views coupled with inaccurate concepts of what constitutes creativity. Some examples are "being quick to respond (p. 25), enjoyment, playfulness, independent" (p. 26). Additionally, even though participants associated creativity with original ideas, it was unclear if they knew what that actually meant (p. 24). Furthermore, "the majority of participants stated that regular classroom teachers were not responsible for helping students develop their creativity" (p. 29).

Teachers are products of an educational system. It stands to reason that the "inaccurate, narrow, and stereotypical" views could originate partly from that same system. It forms a cycle of misinformation. When creatively education is absent, students grow up misunderstanding it. Those that become teachers pass this misunderstanding to the next generation. If teacher beliefs were proactively addressed and informed, it could reset the cycle. Of additional interest is the discrepancy between experts and teachers. It goes beyond the difference in professions, and it indicates a disconnect between two fields of knowledge.

Loveless, Burton, and Turvey's (2006) study, *Developing Conceptual Frameworks for Creativity, ICT and Teacher Education*, involved 16 education ICT (information and communication technology) specialists in the final stage of their BA in the United Kingdom.

The researchers focused on the student teachers' "experience of engaging in creative activities to prepare, teach and evaluate a school-based project, and identified themes of their understandings and personal experience of creativity" (p. 3). When they asked their participants to describe creativity answers included artifacts, imaginative ideas, and engaging activities. Additionally, some participants stated that creativity "is in all of us" while simultaneously admitting to "difficulty in recognizing creativity in themselves" (p. 7). Some of the feelings articulated by the student teachers are "anxiety and reluctance to make mistakes at the beginning of the activities and frustration and irritation when things did not go smoothly" (Loveless et al, 2006, p. 8). Loveless et al's participants describe creativity in terms of products, original ideas, and fun. The inconsistency in their views on creativity is similar to the teachers in the previous two studies. This underscores the existence of a gulf between education and cognitive science while also indicating that the disconnect is an international concern.

Kampylis, Berki, and Saariluomaa (2009) conducted a survey of 70 in-service primary school teachers and 62 prospective teachers in Athens, Greece regarding conceptions of creativity. In their study, *In-service and prospective teachers' conceptions of creativity*, almost all of their participants agreed or strongly agreed that the teachers' role includes the facilitation of students' creativity (p. 15). Yet, more than half of prospective (51.6%) and in-service teachers (56.5%) replied, "they do not feel well-trained to act as creativity facilitators" (p. 15). Kampylis et al (2009) submit, "Further research is needed in order to point out why they do not feel well-trained to facilitate students' creativity. Is it just a matter of initial and in-service training or something more?" (p. 25). My researching connecting implicit beliefs to the arts methods course seeks to answer Kampylis, Berki, and Saariluomaa's question. The short answer is yes; it is definitely *more*.

Teachers cannot teach what they do not understand and have not personally experienced. This is where Eisner's secondary ignorance intersects my study. Teachers do not understand why they do not feel prepared in spite of training or methods courses. It is because they do not know what they do not know (Eisner, 2002).

Andiliou and Murphy (2010) completed a review and synthesis of researchers' and teachers' conceptualizations of creativity. Of the seventeen studies examined by Andiliou and Murphy, the vast majority examined the perceptions teachers' hold of creativity and creative students by using questionnaires and checklists. These scales were used primarily to work toward a definition of how teachers view creative students, and assess the implicit theories teachers hold with regard to student creativity. The authors findings and meta-analysis show that teachers view creativity in multiple ways, and there is a noticeable disconnect between researcher conceptions of creativity and the applied personal theories of teachers. Once again we see the two main problems: one, teachers lack a functioning understanding of creativity; and two, it stems from a lack of education regarding cognitive theory.

Compounding these issues is the fact that creativity and creative beliefs are investigated predominately through questionnaires, checklists, and tests. I believe this is the place where creativity scholars must look to art. Research instruments that depend on information generated by the participant by-pass the actions and emotions that support the processes in which creativity is expressed. Thus the data (i.e. test result) is acquired out of context. Disembodied creativity will never be accurate. Teachers may believe what they say is true but act in a contradictory way. Moreover, the fact that teacher definitions vary considerably affects the reliability of their answers in terms of research. For example, in my study I have seen teachers personally identify as 'very creative' because they make scrapbooks, yet become nervous in open-ended activities.

In contrast, other teachers who actively engage in open-ended activities identify as non-creative because they cannot draw. Surveying these students would not generate viable data.

In contrast, the portraits in this dissertation combine an entire semester of observation, interaction, and data gathered from a variety of sources. As such, this multi-layered, contextual research hopes to shed real light on the nature and origins of teacher beliefs.

Hondzel's (2013) dissertation research, *Fostering Creativity: Ontario Teachers' Perceptions, Strategies, and Experiences*, looked at the perceptions Canadian elementary school teachers hold regarding creativity. Additionally, she investigated the strategies they use to foster creative thinking and behavior in their students. She uses a mixed methods approach comprised of surveys filled out by 22 participants. From those 22, twelve teachers agreed to individual observations followed by interviews. In her analysis, Hondzel found, "most participants indicated that all children were creative in some way or another ... but that some children have a special talent or creative skill" (p. 56). Yet teachers were uncertain how to identify creative children, and unable to recognize creativity in their own classrooms. This is unsurprising since most teachers positioned creativity in the arts (art, music, drama).

However, many teachers said they were willing to foster creativity in their classroom. Their primary strategy was "recognizing and attending to learning preferences (i.e. visual, linguistic, kinesthetic) because this allowed children to flourish and demonstrate their personal creativity" (p. 70). Equating creativity with learning preferences reveals a clear lack of understanding of creative cognition. Furthermore, when questioned about creative experience, the teachers spoke of field trips and special guests. Unfortunately, this means that the teachers look outside of themselves to facilitate creativity for their students.

Although the teachers did innately recognize the importance of an emotional climate that inspired trust and confidence, they did not connect it directly to creativity.

Bae's (2013) study at the University of Wisconsin, *Rethinking an elementary art methods course: A model of three visual arts integration strategies*, looked at seven pre/in-service teachers in who had previously taken the art methods course. This course was built around five art projects: "a five-senses book, tessellations, pop-up books, Kuna paper molas, and Peruvian retablos" (p. 73). The study asked what participants learned and how this was applied to their teaching. Data sources consisted of interviews, pre/in-service teachers' lesson plans, and researcher notes. Findings included: the participants lacked understanding of learning with visual arts, lesson plans were simple activities, and "most participants utilized the learning through visual arts approach in a superficial manner, seldom using learning with visual arts and learning about visual arts in their lesson plans and teaching" (p. 79).

When I consider this study in light of the Triadic Tangle, I see how the focus on learning through art projects did not equip students to art connect and curriculum to the extent that Bae had hoped. Bae was following Kowalchuk and Stone's (2000) recommendations that art methods courses should include "activities involving talking about art using reproductions and original artworks, modeling and discussion of successful art teaching, and building a knowledge base of teaching strategies, materials, and processes" (p. 32). The ineffectiveness of this type of approach will be discussed in Section 3 of this chapter.

In light of this literature, combined with what I found in my own research, I concur with the preponderance of other scholarly views - There is serious gap in the research on teacher beliefs of creativity and a corresponding lack of understanding of what is needed for teacher perception.

To this I add:

1. There is a lack of research examining the origin of those beliefs.
2. There is a lack of research documenting the nature of how those beliefs manifest in art making and identity.

We, as scholars invested in the field of education and the children served within it, have the responsibility to understand and effectively educate teachers' conceptions of creativity. I believe this research study, coupled with the Triadic Tangle, contributes to the understanding and education of future generalist teachers.

Section 3 - Conceptual Intersections

This section connects implicit beliefs to teachers, students and the new standards for art education. First, I explain how teacher beliefs impact education. Next I review the significance of implicit beliefs on the personal experiences of pre-service teachers in the art methods course. This is followed by a review of one specific textbook. The review illustrates why teaching art to emergent artists requires a different approach from teaching preservice art teachers. Following this, the implications are discussed for K12 art education. Then I present an in-depth review of the national art standard for creating and its implications for creativity. This section concludes by revisiting the rationale for creative objectives in my classroom.

Why do teacher beliefs matter?

Kampylis et al (2009) write, "the importance of schooling in the development of students' creativity is well documented (e.g. Cropley, 2001; Starko, 2005) and the concern for creativity in the primary education milieu has increased in recent years" (Craft, 2006; Sawyer, 2006a) (p.15). The values and beliefs of each teacher determine what, if, and how they teach art (Gray & MacGregor, 1991).

Attention to these beliefs can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas have not and cannot. The study of beliefs is critical to education" (Pajares, 1992, p. 329). Beliefs lead to action, specifically the decisions teachers make regarding the types of lessons and projects they use, and whether students are allowed to creatively explore and express within those assignments. In addition to limiting creativity to art production, teachers tend to hold negative perceptions of creative students (Runco & Johnson 2002; Moran, 2010; Scott, 1999; Cropley, 1992). This is because "many teachers and parents seem to be uneasy about emphasizing creativity in school, because this might mean encouraging unruly, disobedient, careless, imprecise, or just plain naughty behavior" (Cropley, 1992). So, in addition to the addressing the obstacles caused by a creativity = product perspective, it is necessary to educate teachers on misperceptions of creative behavior. Otherwise teachers will relegate creativity to the art-room in favor of traditional academic work and good conduct.

The good news is that the art methods course is already strategically located, in teacher education programs, to inform teacher beliefs and develop their personal creativity.

Connecting Beliefs to the Art Methods Course

A look at the inconsistency of curriculum and texts used (or not used) in the methods course is indicative of the larger problem. It points to the continual efforts of colleges in general, and instructors in particular, to find way to influence preservice teachers' understandings and practice of art. In this segment I share my own attempt to find out what other schools do. Then I take a look at one specific textbook, *Emphasis Art*.

As part of my research, I contacted the top 15 Schools of Education in the United States, as ranked by U.S. News and World Report for 2013. I asked them for the name of the textbook they used for their art methods course.

From the 12 responses, 9 of them used a book, and none of them used the same book. A professor from Michigan State University shared this in a personal email (2013):

one of my courses (Creative Dance and Learning) relies on one textbook, most often I put together a course packet to meet the varied points in the course Creative Arts for Children ... which is primarily an introduction to arts integration

A professor from Vanderbilt University uses *Creating Meaning Through Literature and the Arts* (Cornett, 2007). A professor from Indiana University responded (personal email, 2013):

We have a course, Books for Reading Instruction, that has a strong emphasis on reader's response approaches through transmediations particularly drama and visual arts. We mostly use journal articles instead of textbooks for this course.

What was consistent in their comments was the aim of the arts methods course as equipping pre-service generalist teachers for an arts integrated curriculum. None of the correspondence indicated that the course was used to train teachers to teach art in the absence of an art specialist. The irregularity of course descriptions and supporting material is concerning because it signifies that teacher preparation is inconsistent.

Textbook Review - Emphasis Art

I am going to review one text, *Emphasis Art*, by Clements and Wachowiak (2010). This textbook was chosen for two reasons. One, it originates from my own university, and has been suggested for art educator courses *and* general educators art methods courses. Two, it was mentioned in Jeffers' (1993) study, A Survey of Instructors of Art Methods Classes for Preservice Elementary Teacher, which surveyed 121 art methods instructors. The findings revealed a variety in course syllabi emphases and texts. Only 44 of the 121 instructors used textbooks, and of the 44, 30 different books were mentioned (p. 237).

Emphasis Art was one of the books mentioned more than once (cited by 9% of respondents) (p. 238).

Although I recognize *Emphasis Art* as a very good text for an art education student, I chose not to use it in my art methods course. The reason being because the method's students' experience and beliefs about art are so different from art education students, that the book becomes impractical. This segment will argue for why this book is not an appropriate choice for art methods students, and why they benefit from an approach that differs from art education students.

Throughout the book, the authors specifically address art teachers and the art room. In the preface, it reads, "Emphasis Art is designed first and foremost for elementary and middle school teachers who want to enrich their art programs" (XXIV). An art *program* is decidedly different from art integrated into a general elementary classroom. The authors make clear that "The first two chapters of this book are about teaching art to children, exploring these important questions: Why should children study art? and, How can anyone go about making art that is pleasing or beautiful or good?" (p. 2). Studying art in the general classroom requires prepared and knowledgeable teacher. When we take into consideration the implicit beliefs, knowledge and skill gaps, and add that to the reality of the time constraints under which in-service teachers work, we get teachers who lack the ability and motivation to teach their students art. Then there are the implications in the sentence "making art that is pleasing, beautiful, or good." Who determines the value? How is the art valued? As previously discussed in this chapter, art teachers have tangled perceptions on what art is and how it is judged.

As an art educator, I wholly support Clements and Wachowiak's 10 rationales for art education in schools and in society; as a teacher educator, I believe some of them to be unrealistic. For example, under #5 General and Artistic Creativity, the authors write, "Through art, students can acquire a feel for what it means to transform their ideas, images, and feelings into an art form" (p. 5) Under the guidance of a trained art teacher, this is certainly plausible, but can a typical elementary education pre-service teacher, with limited personal experience, bring this out in students? A better question is - Can they bring it out in themselves? Can a teacher teach something they do not grasp? Under #8, Literacy & Cognition, it reads "Education should develop a young child's literacy in many symbol systems, many modes of thought, and any means of inquiry. The arts provide experiences that will later coalesce into sophisticated reasoning and problem solving" (p. 6). The literature has already established that pre-service teachers have little experience with the arts. Therefore, it is unlikely that they have ever consciously experienced the process of "thinking *through* art." Furthermore, *if* they had art in grade school, they may or may not believe that it coalesced into sophisticated reasoning. This claim may be difficult for them to believe from a secondhand perspective. Rationale #9 reads, "A core participant in learning in school: The arts are great partners and participants in academic learning" (p. 6). Again, based on the statistics, the pre-service teacher has had little involvement in the arts; certainly, not enough to believe art and learning are partners. While they may read the chapter, even agreeing with it to some extent, it is probably not enough to change their long-held beliefs.

In the same book, the Three Approaches to Art include: contextualist (art as subject matter in the context of society); media ("exciting and different media experiences"); and formalist ("using the elements and principles of art to create beautiful artworks") (p. 6).

Creating art can be terrifying, not exciting, to the pre-service teacher because they are often convinced they are untalented and incapable. I believe if the authors had intended this book for general education pre-service teachers, they would have devoted an entire chapter to anxiety in the artistic process. The authors in fact make statements that further concern the non-artist:

“What some observers call *art* in a child’s drawing very often is not art at all, but simply a visual report that relates to factual writing” (p. 8); and “The most evocative children’s art employs art principles to create unity and rich design very different from more ordinary work” (p. 8). Note the clear distinction between ‘simple visual report’ and ‘evocative art.’ Allow me to deconstruct the authors’ two statements. First, ‘most evocative’ implies outside judgment and/or gatekeepers independent from the child’s opinion of his/her own work. Second, “employs art principles” implies that a *good* art product must use and meet predetermined criteria. Third, “different from ordinary work” by extension means if you don’t produce ‘rich design’ your work is not *good*. Furthermore, the ability to execute rich design using elements and principles of art is something that is developed over time, and usually under the tutelage of an art specialist. Indeed, the authors state, “the teacher must guide the process” (p. 8). How do you think an art methods student hears these statements? Most likely they will stress producing good enough art themselves, and they will definitely doubt their ability to teach their students to produce rich art. Deniston-Trochta (2001) reiterates, “In fact, it takes many years of training in the arts (including the studio arts and art history) to become an art specialist” (p. 97). It is not something a pre-service teacher can acquire in one short course. Additionally, I am concerned at Clements and Wachowiak’s assertion, “Only children who express their ideas, responses, and reactions with honesty, sensitivity, and perceptiveness from within a framework of compositional principles and design actually create art” (p. 8).

Many people, myself included, cherish the abandon with which a child visually expresses him/herself. There is a refreshing charm and honesty in child art. If a child's art is not *art* unless it meets Clements and Wachowiak's stringent criteria, then how much higher is the bar for elementary pre-service teachers?

Then there are assumptions such as, "Most people, probably including you, have been using many of these design element terms in their normal discourse, and they describe what they see and think" (Clements & Wachowiak, 2010, p. 12). This presumes the reader has a background in art, thus emphasizing once more that art educators are the intended audience. Ironically, the section Teachers and Teaching reads, "If [a school] does not attract teachers who are prepared to teach art confidently, enthusiastically, developmentally, and qualitatively, it has little chance of establishing and implementing an art program of excellence and stature" (p. 24). Moreover, the authors state in Chapter 3, "Most art teaching is done by elementary classroom teachers. Three-quarter of these teachers teach either all of part of the art that their students receive in school" (p. 25). Again, the statistics show that schools are not producing students knowledgeable in the arts. Continuing to demonstrate an unawareness of the mindset of the general classroom pre-service teacher, the authors charge, "Thus, if you believe in art's value, you, a classroom teacher, are likely the one to teach art" (p. 25). It is so much more complex than whether or not you believe in the value of art. What do you believe art is? Where is it found? Who can make it? What makes it valuable? All of these questions correspond to implicit beliefs as described by the Triadic Tangle.

Methods Instructor Awareness

In the big picture, what does it all mean and how much does any of this matter? The final beneficiaries of the art methods course are the children. I believe that the point of the art methods course is, or should be, to bring the creative arts and creative thinking into every day education. The nature and extent of that integration varies. As described earlier, there is no standard curriculum for this course. The overall pedagogical approach is most likely informed by whether the course resides in the school of education or the school of art. Additionally, the school's underlying philosophy of art education will affect the perception of it as a distinct subject, a supportive subject, or a peripheral subject. Consequently, the beliefs of the school will influence the beliefs of the pre-service teacher. The conventional thought is that the course will equip (non-artist) teachers to teach art. Kowalchuk and Stone (2000) write, "To develop art education lessons, elementary classroom teachers rely on their prior experiences in art, often recalled from their own elementary days or gained in a single art education course taken during their teacher preparation program" (p. 29). Thus, the methods course offers a considerable opportunity to prepare teachers while helping them to constructively address their intertwined beliefs of creativity and art.

Grauer (1998) submits, "Ultimately, the beliefs of the individual teacher dictate what, or if, art education will take place" (p. 351). It is our job as art methods instructors to be in a knowledgeable position to inform, enlighten, and encourage pre-service teachers in a field in which they come to us feeling disconnected and alienated. While the issues of teacher creativity and beliefs are not widely researched, they have existed for decades. For example, Karnes et al. (1961) write, "Teachers who are amenable to change and who model divergent thinking themselves seem the most effective in stimulating creativity in students" (p. 320).

The questions are: How do they get amenable? How do they model? and, How do they know what divergent thinking looks like in practice? The arts methods course is the place where this transformation could occur. Yet, the literature reveals change is not happening. This research submits that the reason there is no change is because instructors are unaware of implicit beliefs, the extent they influence students within the course, and the method of teaching through those beliefs.

Educating art methods instructors is the first step in creating a bridge for pre-service teachers to cross from old perceptions to new understandings. This includes an awareness of the different ways artists, and by extension art educators, think within the art-making process (i.e. the chaotic-ordered thinking continuum). Additionally, instructors should be mindful of how difficult risk is for teachers. Likewise, instructors should be prepared for the way that perceived failure or fear of failure will likely suppress creativity and the willingness to continue engagement. Galbraith (1991) urges, “it is crucial to understand how primary student-teachers respond within our methods courses, and the ways that we, as art teacher-educators, affect the environment within pre-service methods classrooms” (p. 329).

Reconsidering Best-Practice

Implications for Content Focus

Instructors cannot know the possible consequences of a student’s inquiry. What can be known is that it will be individual in scope, with the hope of a becoming that extends through life. As Deleuze states, “What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes” (1987, p. 238). Analogously, Eisner called for education to equip students for ongoing reinvention.

However, in some instances, the application of the New National Standards, circumvent Eisner's exhortations for exploration and imagination. The NCCAS (2014) writes, "We will talk about standards as measurable and attainable learning events based on artistic goals" (p. 7). The College Board's (2011) International Standards Report reads:

The National Standards for Arts Education is a comprehensive document meant to identify what students must know and do in the arts at each of 3 grade bands: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 (p. 7).

The standards are aimed at developing student competence in the arts. Their definition of competence is the ability to use an array of knowledge and skills within each arts discipline. The standards ask that by the end of secondary school students be able to:

1. Communicate at a basic level in all four of the arts disciplines.
2. Communicate proficiently in at least one art form.
3. Develop and present basic analyses of art works.
4. Have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
5. Relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.

Yet Eisner writes, "Imagination gives us images of the possible ... and we can do something about what lies beyond it" (p. 4). Theories from Deleuze and Eisner support the idea that education should not lose vitality or fail to move students' imagination forward. A curriculum that primarily focuses on content hinders the flow of ideas in general, and creativity in specific. Teaching for creativity, through open-ended investigations accompanied by reflection and reflexivity, provides space for a student's ongoing inquiry.

Inquiry

By questioning the genesis of our own knowing, we form a habit of inquiry (Dewey, 1934/2005). In the world of Dewey, reflexivity means the doing and undoing in relationships of the self with and within the experience. Embodied reflexivity, as I define it, is reflecting with and through the symphony of movement in our hands, materials, hearts, and minds. It is not the exclusive purview of language alone. Through the arts, reflexivity is acknowledged and mediated through many types of symbol systems.

Dewey (1910/n.d.) states our inquiries have no boundaries or set definition. I agree, however, I am dealing with students who do not believe this is true. They tend to self-identify as uncreative which functions as a boundary, acting as a psychological denial of entrance into art-making and associated creative ventures. This is identified in the permission strand of the Triadic Tangle. Deniston-Trochta (2001) speaks to the gap between art specialists and pre-service teachers who are looking in from outside the field of art. In my study, *Art for the Pre-Service Teacher*, students were asked to approach and breach this boundary by inquiring of the boundary. Eisner (2002) writes, "...students' unfamiliarity with the material invites an experimental attitude." While this is true for the younger students who are open to learning, older students are no longer open to this wisdom that children possess. In lieu of an experimental attitude, pre-service teachers rein in their willingness to experiment as they instead focus on the end goal of high performance, grades, and getting it "right." In order to begin the process of creative inquiry, issues of secondary ignorance must be addressed. To bring this unknown boundary into view, explicit creativity instruction must be implemented within the curricular objectives of the art methods course. Students cannot cross a boundary they do not know exists.

Why Students Need Triage

Research has shown that ‘failure’ in early art experiences has an adverse impact. Referring to his study, Thompson (1997) writes, “Those who remember art as something occasional and expendable, a source of frustration and embarrassment, or an intermittent respite, may continue to work under the influence of those experiences, unless their attitudes are transformed through teacher education (Britzman, 1991) (p. 16). “Intimidating encounters with art” (Smith-Shanks, 1993, p. 34) often prevent prospective elementary teachers from participating enthusiastically in methods courses and from accepting the models and messages provided in them” (Thompson, 1997, p. 17). Those ‘intimidating encounters’ influence implicit beliefs, which in turn affect both identity and the potential for future engagement. Whether the ‘I’m not creative’ or ‘I’m not an artist’ identity originates via negative experience or something else, methods instructors must realize that “elementary education majors are particularly sensitive to unrealistic expectations and to their identity as non-art majors” (Deniston-Trochta, 2001 p. 98). If the self-applied label of non-artist persists in spite of the experience within the course, it is unlikely that a teacher will ever incorporate art-making in their classroom. Regrettably, their attitudes and beliefs can be passed along to their own students. As some of these students grow up and enter the teaching profession, the cycle is perpetuated.

National Core Art Standards and Creativity

Based on my research and review of the literature, I think an understanding of implicit beliefs, along with the insight into how non-artists think and view the arts, would improve art education. Although the understandings and practice of individual art teachers varies, there are national standards in place. This segment asks: How do the New National Core Art Standards conceptualize and facilitate creativity?

The National Coalition for Core Art Standards (NCCAS) (2014) is a coalition of leading national arts education organizations that revised the nation's voluntary arts education standards (www.nationalartsstandards.org). Their 27-page document detailing the new standards is entitled, *National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning*. For the remainder of this discussion, it will be referred to as the standards document. It “outlines the philosophy, primary goals, dynamic processes, structures, and outcomes that shape student learning and achievement in...visual arts, as articulated in the National Core Arts Standards” (p. 1). These standards set guidelines for the field of art education. As such their impact is far-reaching.

Formulating the Standards

As a first step towards formulating the standards, the NCCAS concluded that international art standards are grouped into three areas: Generating/Problem solving, Expressing/Realizing, and Responding/Appreciating (p. 5). They assigned the correlating American standards as Creating, Performing, and Responding (p. 5). Next, they state that standards will no longer be about “lists of what students should know and be able to do” but instead will be described “as measurable and attainable learning events based on artistic goals” (p. 7). To accomplish this, the NCCAS incorporated the Understanding By Design model (UBD) as designed by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). UBD offers a structure for planning and teaching toward desired results, and determining what evidence will be looked for in assessments. The desired results are keyed to what a teacher wants students to understand, and to essential questions that engage students in making meaning. UBD promotes the importance for students to know why the knowledge they are learning is important.

Backwards design can function like a roadmap that offers the choice of taking a straight or a scenic route to your destination. Using this metaphor, creativity is the scenic route. Unless your outcomes clearly invite a scenic route, there will be no detours or alternative paths allowed. It all depends on how you think about your outcomes. If taking scenic routes is important, then the learning should be designed accordingly. However, after my review of the standards, I believe there is a problem in *how* NCCAS is modeling these standards within the UBD framework. With the current application of UBD, the how (steps) and the what (outcome) are predetermined. In this context, the ‘learning event’ centers more on art production and art content knowledge. These types of instructional outcomes may not offer enough room for emergent artists to actualize personal creativity. In lieu of instructional outcomes (straight route), I have adapted the UBD model for “expressive outcomes” (scenic route) (Eisner, 1967). The outcomes that I am teaching for do not seek content knowledge, technical competence, or great student art products. I teach to inform implicit beliefs and to develop attitudes that recognize and embrace both a personal artistic awareness and a broad understanding of creativity. I believe curricular objectives that address the combination of belief and attitude, more than anything else, encourages the possibility of continued art engagement into adulthood.

Standards and Creativity

The international standard for creativity, Generating/Problem solving, points to cognitive processes, whereas the NCCAS standard, Creating, denotes products. This research questions how the current interpretation of the backwards design model for the creating standard affects creative growth. In the forward of their document, the NCCAS writes, “arts ... generate a significant part of the creative and intellectual capital that drives our economy” (p. 2).

This is supported by a reference to widely held definitions which characterize creativity as the “capability or act of conceiving something original/unusual (p. 20). Following this, other characterizations listed for creativity include innovation (implementing something new) and invention (something never made before). All three of these concepts point to novelty, which is associated with creativity but is only one of many traits. The NCCAS also specifies four creative practices: “imagination, investigation, construction, and reflection in multiple contexts” (p. 19). Accompanying this is a list of meta-cognitive attributes: curiosity, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration” (p. 19). It is clear that the standards are attempting to prioritize creativity. However, I think a deeper understanding of creativity in context of emergent artists would support a more realistic development of creativity in art education.

My concern is that the stated goal of these meta-cognitive attributes is success and achievement in the arts (p. 19). This outcome is counter-productive to emergent creativity. The first anchor standard says that the students will: “Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work” (p. 13). Under the National Core Arts Standards Artistic Processes and Anchor Standards, creating is defined as “conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work” (p. 13). This is a focus on production that is incompatible with their connection of ‘creating’ to the international category of ‘generating and problem solving’ (p. 5). Table 1 lists the standards for Visual Arts - Creating (p. 13):

Table #1

Visual Arts Standards for Creating

Artistic Processes: Creating	
Definition	Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard 1	Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
Anchor Standard 2	Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard 3	Refine and complete artistic work.
Enduring Understanding	Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed
Essential Question(s)	What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking? What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks? How does collaboration expand the creative process?

There is nothing wrong with art standards for generating work. The problem is when production is confused with creativity. It is true that creative and innovative thinking are important and can be developed. However, I am going to answer their essential question: What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks? A focus on production, combined with their application of the backwards design model, will not only hinder the creative process, it will create tangles.

NCCAS, P21, and Creativity

The standards for Creating ask for the conception and development of artistic ideas. What determines an artistic idea? I am assuming artistic, in this instance, means creative. The NCCAS's standard for creativity is informed by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21). P21 is "is a national nonprofit organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student" (www.p21.org). According to P21's 21st Century Skills map, creativity is originality and inventiveness (www.p21.org, p. 6).

Therefore, a successful product is conditional upon the evidence of a novel idea. Who judges novelty? Is it the teacher or the student? Even though a teacher has seen an idea before, it could be new for the student, which therefore counts as novelty (Runco, 2003). If a product lacks novelty and is deemed uncreative, it can generate a tangle in confidence, meaning the student believes they are unable to make art ‘right.’ This has even more ramifications for future art engagement if the student is unable to separate the worth of the idea from the way it was executed it.

The *Arts Education Standards and 21st Century Skills* (2011) report is an analysis of the relationship between the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education and the 21st Century Skills Map in the Arts. It is prepared by the College Board for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, and published by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21). The report examines the level of alignment between the current arts content standards and the skills, lesson examples, and outcomes included in the P21 Arts Map. The verdict from the report states the National Standards in Visual Arts, in grades K-4, are in alignment. Here is an example for the skill of creativity for fourth graders within the National Standards/21st Century Skills Alignment:

VISUAL ARTS. (pp. 333-335):

“Skill: Creativity

21st Century Skills Map Outcome and Skill Definition:

Students will draw on a variety of sources to generate, evaluate, and select creative ideas to turn into personally meaningful products.

- Demonstrating originality and inventiveness in work
- Being open and responsive to new and diverse perspective

The correlating National Arts content standards are as follows:

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of structures and functions
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines”

Although the language in the 21st century skill map outcomes speaks to creativity (i.e. generate, evaluate, select), it is directly linked with production. Success within the creativity skill means having a creative idea *and* translating into a product. Here are few of the examples listed beside the NCCAS creating standards in the alignment report:

learning about symbols and images to reflect on feelings and emotions; developing new techniques; learn vocabulary; grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate and respond; and must learn important ideas and concepts offered by the visual arts and exhibit competence at various levels” (pp. 333-335).

There is nothing wrong with any of these objectives. However, there is also nothing within them that speak directly to individual creative growth as demonstrated by how the student orients themselves and their ideas in the midst of design and art-making experiences.

Out of the four artistic processes, Creating, Presenting, Responding, Connecting, outlined by the standards, I question their ability to develop creativity and creative confidence. This concern is further examined in the language used in the standards.

To explain, I am going to analyze the meaning in the standards comments quoted from the alignment report, pages 333-335. Keep in mind that the “anchor standards describe the general knowledge and skill that teachers expect students to demonstrate” (p. 12). However, personal creativity is not the primary focus of general content knowledge or skill improvement. The first comment specifies ‘learning *about* symbols and images.’ This implies the subject content is prescribed. The student is then asked to reflect on their feelings and emotions that resulted from that visual. This is not the same as creating and responding to your own visual. The content knowledge is art symbols, and the skill is making an emotional connection to the image.

It is under the artistic processes’ heading, Performing/Presenting/Producing, that interpretation, relative to the student’s work, is located. This involves the student “realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation” (p. 13). The student is asked to analyze and interpret their finished artwork *in preparation for* presentation. Furthermore, they are to “convey the meaning of the work” (p. 13). This process is similar to a studio art critique model, in which the student explains their artwork, how they made it, and what it means to them personally. This type of interpretation can give rise to tangles. In addition to the anxiety often evoked by the words performing and presenting, there are two problems with ‘interpretation.’ One, it involves a class presentation which immediately ups the stakes. Two, this type of sharing moderates the meaning and reshapes it for an audience. An outward focus is not helpful in encouraging personal, creative growth in emergent artists. Creative growth looks inward.

Continuing, the ability to ‘describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond’ are good aims but they are limited by the context. Specifically, these are located under the artistic processes, Responding, is defined as “understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning” (p. 12). ‘The arts’ indicates works of art.

This type of discussion and evaluation falls under art criticism. The final comment, “must learn important ideas and concepts offered *by* the visual arts and exhibit competence at various levels,” places the significance on the ideas imparted *to* the student, not *from* the student. The inclusion of ‘techniques,’ ‘vocabulary,’ and ‘exhibit confidence at various levels,’ within the Creating standard further hinders emergent creativity.

Standards and *Open-Endedness*

My understanding and use of open-endedness describes assignments that have diverse, multi-modal processes instead of step-by-step processes. Corresponding objectives are structured so that the knowledge, meaning, and art arrived at by the student, is not predetermined by me. This type of learning situation problematizes assignments that are structured with a narrow application of choice. A narrow application ensures that different responses are allowed, but everyone is answering the same ‘question.’ Open-ended means students are encouraged to develop their own questions, and then determine how to interpret the answers through a visual-verbal multi-modality. In *Child Development and Arts Education: A review of Current Research and Best Practices* (2012), a report prepared by the College Board for NCCAS, there are several cognitive recommendations for creativity. Within elementary grade levels, they endorse the use of reflective and critical thinking activities in art. Then the next sentence reads, “Interestingly, the research also reinforces the value of open-ended exploration and improvisational play” (p. 5). The supporting research is in the literature review at the end of the standards document. As the concept of open-endedness is based in research, why is it not made explicit in the objectives for the creating standard? The core arts standards say that open-ended inquiry is key, yet the conditions around it limit its potential.

Within the New Core Art Standards document there are two references using the word open-ended. The first reference to open-endedness is connected to performance tasks (p. 16).

Table #2

The NCCAS Context for Open-endedness

Open-Ended as used in the Standards Document:	“integral to each model cornerstone assessment are key traits ... to build evaluation tools for open-ended performance tasks” (p. 16)
Context of use:	“these assessments should anchor the curriculum around the most important performances that students should be able to do ... with acquired content knowledge and skills” (p. 15)
Concern:	Open-ended is situated in assessment of students knowledge and ability

The second and last instance of *open-endedness* in the standards document reads,

One effective classroom approach to elicit creative process is to encourage open-ended responses by asking essential questions and providing lessons that allow for more than one solution. A student engaged in creative practices:

- Imagines a mental image or concept.
- Investigates and studies through exploration or examination.
- Constructs a product by combining or arranging a series of elements.
- Reflects and thinks deeply about his or her work (p. 19).

The NCCAS, in one sentence that exists outside of the standards, suggests eliciting open-ended responses by allowing for more than one solution. How do teachers facilitate this in the classroom? The creative practices (imagination, investigation, reflection) are significant to personal creativity. Yet, the actual standards restrict those processes to knowledge and skills. The question remains, how do teachers encourage these practices within curricular assessments that prioritize knowledge and skill acquisition? In summary, the alignment document refers to ideas that are important for creativity, but they are not specifically aimed for in the standards.

Standards and Assessment

Assessment is an important part of the backwards design model. It asks teachers to predetermine what is important for students to know. However, factual information and content knowledge are not the end goal for backwards design. Knowledge is the first step and it is followed by step two, constructing meaning, and step three, transferring that meaning to new situations. Regarding assessment, the standards document reads:

what is chosen for assessment signals what is valued...the evidence that is collected tells students what is most important for them to learn. What is not assessed is likely to be regarded as unimportant (p. 15).

The NCCAS provides model lessons and assessments for teaching and incorporating the practices of creativity into the core standards. To see an example of what is valued, I referred to the Visual Arts Model Cornerstone Assessment for 5th Grade (p 4). The assessment expectations focus on knowledge and skills.

Table #3

NCCAS Assessment Expectations and Foci

NCCAS Assessment Expectations	Assessment Focus
Students should receive instruction that builds on previous knowledge and skills prior to beginning the assessment.	build on previous knowledge and skills
Knowledge and skills in this assessment should be taught in the classroom.	learn new knowledge and skills
Students should have adequate opportunity and time to learn what is expected of them.	learn what is expected
Expectations for learning should be clearly stated for students prior to beginning the assessments.	expectations are specified at onset
Students should have many opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned and to work through difficulties they may experience.	work should show evidence of knowledge and skills
Assessment should represent what has been taught or should have been taught.	evaluation relative to intended knowledge acquisition and final product

Within the same model lesson for fifth grade, the evidence for meeting the standards is connected to exemplar art, i.e. “used in artworks investigated, inspired by artworks observed and interpreted, and uses vocabulary to explain choices inspired by artworks” (p. 17). Again, we see the parameters for a student’s creative ideas and artwork are situated within a connection to other artwork. The ‘creativity’ is evidenced when the student interprets and develops this connection in a way that is innovative (novel). However, if ‘what is valued is assessed,’ then it is important for students to know *about* art. I want to reiterate that there is value in introducing exemplar art and having students interpret and respond with their own artwork. What this research shows is, this type of teaching and learning should not be depended on to develop personal, emergent creativity.

Table #4

Concerns for the NCCAS Evidences of Standards

Standards: Creating	Strong Evidence	Concern
Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making	effectively combines ideas about content, style, and technique <u>used in artworks investigated</u> along with ideas about places that have personal significance.	personal ideas are built on established exemplars
Demonstrate quality craftsmanship	Demonstrates exceptional craftsmanship	emphasis on technical skill
Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.	Creates a work of art that communicates about a place of personal significance <u>and is clearly inspired by</u> content, style, and/or technique <u>of artworks observed</u> and interpreted	work is built on established exemplars
Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices made in art-making.	Uses advanced art vocabulary in artist statement that thoroughly explains the choices made to <u>communicate ideas and reflect inspiration from artworks.</u>	statement must connect personal art to exemplar

NCCAS and Artistic Literacy

In the Philosophical Foundation section of the standards document, the NCCAS states, “Participation in ... the arts... enables individuals to discover and develop their own creative capacity” (p. 10). My research seeks to illuminate how the arts can help students discover and develop this personal creativity. For non-artists and emergent artists, participation in the arts is not enough. Then the NCCAS suggests artistic literacy should be a life-long goal, “Artistically literate citizens find at least one arts discipline in which they develop sufficient competence to continue active involvement in creating, performing, and responding to art as an adult” (p. 10). The dictionary defines literacy as a competence or knowledge in a specified area. This equates artistic literacy with competent production. The issue is some students will exhibit more competence than others will. Those students who do not believe they are capable of making art will disengage. Therefore, participation will only promote artistic literacy if a student experiences success in art. The implication is that adults who cannot make art are incompetent and therefore not artistically literate. Policies adhering to these types of perspectives contribute greatly to the gulf between artists and non-artists. As such, they are instrumental in creating tangles in the strands of perception and confidence.

Intent vs. Actualization

After my review, I question why there is such a discrepancy between the *intent* of creativity in art and the *actualization* of creativity in art. Currently, the art standards do not reach their full potential for facilitating creativity in the classroom. I believe this stems from a lack of knowledge of implicit beliefs. Furthermore, there is a need for understanding *how* to purposefully implement this knowledge into teaching practice.

Saying that art “exercises creative practices,” and then placing those exercises into a structured assignment, does not develop creativity in a student. NCCAS writes, “Success and achievement in the arts demands engagement in the four fundamental creative practices of imagination, investigation, construction, and reflection in multiple contexts” (p. 19). Although these purposes support creativity, the purposes are not clearly interpreted into the standards. In Table 5, I have applied the processes to the standards and then listed possible implications for creativity.

Table #5

The Disconnect Between Creative Process and Personal Creativity

NCCAS Creativity Processes	Art Education Standards	Standards Implementation	Implications for Creativity
imagination	creating	generate artistic ideas produce artistic works	designs shaped by specific content knowledge is not improvised tangles of perception tangles of permission
construction	creating	technical skill acquisition	tangles of confidence tangles of permission
investigation	responding	observe, analyze, & respond to teacher provided artworks	observation and analysis seeks to inform students about the structure of exemplar art
reflection	responding presenting connecting	Use art vocabulary to reflect on design choices, characteristics, and how they connect to the artworks viewed in the beginning. Present art and reflection to class. Relate art works to culture, history, etc.	response is framed by structured objectives presentation is not a creative process relating art works is an educational objective, but not a creative process

The creative processes are further shaped by the enduring understandings set forth in the standards. These understandings determine the important ideas and processes “that students should come to understand as a result of studying a particular content area” (p. 13).

Additionally, these understandings, “articulate what students should value about the content area over the course of their lifetimes” (p. 13). When the standards, assessments, and understandings are combined into one overarching objective under the creating standard, the essence does not point to the development of emergent creativity. Students are taught *about* art, how to *appreciate* art, how to *think* about art, and how to *make* art. Within this purpose creativity is assumed to materialize: “Due to the highly process-oriented and reflective nature of arts making, arts education *naturally* encourages creative thinking, logical reasoning, and meta-cognition” [emphasis mine] (p. 17). Although art teachers often recognize the problem solving processes that students engage in through art-making, creativity is unlikely be distinctly developed if it is dependent on the current application of the standards. I believe that art educators who are informed of cognitive theory and implicit beliefs would be better able to proactively address creativity within their existing curriculum. This could contribute to a society of learners that would come out of the educational system with a more flexible conception of themselves as creative individuals.

Creative objectives in my classroom

Creative potential, interpretation, construction of meaning, and individual expression are qualities I can extend to my students and any other emergent artist, regardless of age. When they navigate visual problems, they learn about themselves during the process. As such, the meanings they construct are more important than the products they make. This position of creativity is independent of latent ability. To address theoretical concerns that originality and usefulness are required, Runco maintains, “there is no incompatibility if you keep in mind that a personal construction will likely be original and useful to that one individual ... and is consistent with the notion that creativity is a kind of self-expression” (2003, p. 318).

Additionally, he cautions teachers that even if they have seen a design before, a child's art is original for them. This is also applicable to methods instructors who might have low opinions of pre-service teacher art.

Kampylis et al's (2009) understanding is similar but he restricts the parameter as that which occurs in a specific time-space, social and cultural framework. What I find appealing as an educator is that Kampylis et al augments previous theories and definitions to include that which "leads to a tangible or intangible outcome(s) that is original, useful, ethical and desirable, at least to the creator(s)" (p. 18). Including both the tangible (works) and intangible (ideas), permits multiple opportunities in schools for children to exhibit creativity. By explicitly placing the evaluation of the outcome's value in the mind of the creator, Kampylis et al supports Eisner's theories of personal interpretation.

Objectives valuing personal interpretation and expression place the significance on the meaning constructed during the art-making experience, not the object itself. This is different from the New National Standards for art (2014). Their eleven core standards can be condensed into four areas of intent: design (generate ideas to develop into artwork); production of artwork and refinement of techniques; analyze and interpret artwork; and, connect artworks and ideas to a larger context. My application of creativity prioritizes creativity itself, as understood and developed by the student, regardless of the skill employed in its demonstration. What they learn and value within, and resulting from, the experience is emphasized. While products and skill may improve, they are not the objective; i.e. Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation (2014, p. 13).

Adding to the Creativity Conversation

It is important to note that the interest of creativity in K12 art education has been recently reinvigorated with the publication of the new book, *Connecting creativity research and practice in art education* (Bastos & Zimmerman, 2015). This book offers an anthology of diverse philosophy, theory, perspectives, and applications for teaching. For the purpose of this study, I compared ideals and approaches from various authors in the book to my working understanding of creativity and creativity terminology:

In Chapter 4, *Friedl Dicker-Brandeis' Strategies for Creative Art Teaching in a Nazi Ghetto Camp*, Susan Leshnoff describes Dicker-Brandeis' (1898-1944), a Bauhaus-trained Jewish artist, use of encouraging creativity by providing a non-judgmental atmosphere respectful of natural development and personal interpretation of subjects. This construct is compatible with my use of *emergent creativity*.

In Chapter 5, *Rhetorical Claims About Student Creativity and the Arts: Pragmatic Appropriation Versus Humanistic Realization*, Jen Katz-Buonincontro discuss Beghetto, Kauffman, & Baxter's (2011) ideas implying that art teachers should focus on building up students' self-efficacy. Their construct of *creative self-efficacy* is compatible, but not the same as, my use of *creative confidence*.

In Chapter 6, *Learning as a Condition of Creativity: The Relationship Between Knowing and Making Art*, Kerry Freedman declares art and design education should prepare students prepare all students for a lifetime appreciation, production, and critique of creative endeavors. This construct differs from my use of *creative confidence*, and it conflicts with my use of *creative becoming*.

In Chapter 7, *Connecting Artistic Creativity and Applied Creativity*, James Modrick contends that developing an understanding and applications of the principles of art should be the primary emphasis of the content of art education - not the expressive and imaginative nature of the art product. This construct conflicts with *emergent creativity* and *creative becoming*.

In Chapter 10, *Pedagogy Toward a Creative Condition*, Jermone Hausman, Nicholoas Hostert, and Keith Brown state that creativity cannot be taught. This conflicts with my use of *metacreativity*. They also explain creativity as an active response, reaction, or experience in the making of novel forms and ideas that occurs in the context of unforeseen situations and challenges. This is compatible with *emergent creativity* and *metacreativity*.

When reviewing the book, I found that the conversation occurred at three different levels. The first level tended to employ creativity as an adjective, i.e. a creative lesson plan or a creative work of art. The second level recognized cognitive attributes such as divergent thinking, novelty, and problem-solving. I believe the Triadic Tangle can take this conversation to a deeper level. By looking at the foundational issues of implicit beliefs, and they way they affect student artmaking experiences, the Triadic Tangle can offer a clear structure for understanding emergent artists in the art classroom. Furthermore, the Triadic Tangle can support most of the perspectives in the book.

CHAPTER 3

*an enfolding and refolding of experience, interpretations, and narratives
that gives rise to the whole*



Figure 6. Student sculptural response to collaborative mark-making

CHAPTER 3 – STORYING A CREATIVE BECOMING

Why Narrative?

Placing storied scenarios in the first chapter was a purposeful decision. Narrative has historical precedent for recording and understanding life. Whether carved, scratched, painted, printed or inked, almost every culture across time has shared through story. Price (1978) writes, “Millions survive without love or home, almost none in silence; the opposite of silence leads quickly to narrative, and the sound of story is the dominant sound of our lives” (p. 3). I find Price’s sentiment to be both beautiful and relevant because art-making establishes a unique space for personal narrative and discovery, and likewise, it should not be silent but accessible to all. When we seek to understand each other through narrative, we focus on living and reliving our lives within a specific social context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Building on a connection between narrative inquiry and Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) connect story with experience. They state, “narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story...is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience” (p. 38).

Storied narratives are a way of ordering an experience and constructing meaning (Bruner, 1986). As such, in sharing my own journey in the introduction, my past experiences were not randomly recalled but selected and evaluated based on the analytical relevance to my research into pre-service teacher metacreativity and the development of a supporting curriculum. My pasts, my students’ pasts, and our shared present within the classroom are intertwined. We each bring our stories with us and they in turn affect how meaning is made in the creative arena. Along the way, I have come to recognize the truth that wherever we go, we bring our *self* with us. It benefits my students for me, as their teacher, to understand what I believe to be valuable to them and why.

Inasmuch as “self is a carrier of culture,” it is my responsibility to understand my own story (Goodall, 2008, p. 125). Likewise, I believe it would be a disservice to my students to dismiss who they are as individuals and the resulting ramifications of their starting points when they enter my class. Dewey (1938) considers a student’s personal experiences to be their greatest asset. I have expanded that notion to include the view that some experiences might also be a student’s strongest obstacle to creativity. These experiences, both before and during the semester, are best understood in context of the student as a whole person. Therefore, the most compelling reason to me personally to use narrative is because it “captures the fullness or complexity of lived experience” thus allowing for “creative methods of expression about those experiences” (Goodall, 2008, p. 12). As such, I found narrative methodology to be the most holistically accommodating way to share my students’ rich stories of creative becoming while also depicting their navigation of the tangles.

Narrative Knowing

Narrative inquiry is just one method that stresses “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). At an MIT conference, Worth (2005) asserted “traditional forms of knowledge are not sufficient to cover a third kind of knowledge in the way that storytelling can.” This third kind of knowing, the *nature of the knowing*, is what I believe reveals the impulsion for foundational metacreative becoming in my students. A narrative knowing like this aligns with my research goals of understanding the interrelationships and nuanced beliefs, behaviors, motivations, and experiences that my students encountered in our arts-methods course. Narrative knowing opens up space for the whole of this experience to be examined. The whole goes beyond the who, what, and how.

It encompasses the contextual intricacies of the conscious and subconscious that informs the why. And within the *why* are the implicit beliefs that inform my students art understandings and reveal possible tangles.

Narrative as Data

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) write, “The data from narratives are not like results from an experiment. My research cannot exactly replicate the lives of my participants, but I can, as a narrative researcher, “collect and tell stories about them, and write narratives of experience” (p.2). This study utilizes narrative as method in the specific context of teacher research. Within it, the data exists on multiple levels because there is no line between the doing (data) and the writing (method) (Wolcott, 1990). Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) contend narrative thought is data *and* method *before* it is written down. Agar (1980) declares that data does not become method until they are selected and entered into the circular process of learn, analyze, and interpret. What I take from all three positions is that narrative data appears in different ways and at different times throughout the research. It can occur before recording, during writing, or later upon reflection. In short, narrative data is as dynamic as the situations that generate them.

Barthes (1975) discusses how individual and classroom culture may make use of narrative as theory, data, and method. In my classroom, there existed many forms of narrative including conversations, written reflections, and personal art. Additional observations, musings, and notes are written in my personal teaching journal and lesson plan book. Contemplations are also present in the reflections written on my laptop after class. My written data share characteristics with ethnographic field notes because both are recorded following observation (Emerson et al., 1995). However, there also revelations which occur at unexpected moments.

These serendipitous insights are written down on whatever surface is handiest and transcribed later onto my laptop. Together, these notes record, represent, and invoke verbal exchanges, classroom practices, and inferred connections (Goodall, 2000, p. 98). When compiled, they become woven into the overall narrative. They also form a supportive brace for the central narrative, that of my students' stories.

As the main characters, their data is generated directly and individually. It documents their experiences as filtered through multiple interconnected artifacts, which emphasize each of their distinctive voices. These artifacts are comprised of their written reflections on: academic readings, art-making experiences, and the art they create. Mingled with this, I weave in my thoughts on what I observed in their behaviors, what I heard in their conversations, what I saw in their art, and what I sensed in the interpersonal dynamics, which infused the classroom. Thus, the data is deeply layered and tightly interlaced while simultaneously positioning me as a character in the story.

I believe analyzing the unfolding stories within the narrative context from which it evolved is imperative in making meaning from the research. Also, it permits me to reprocess the stories through theory and literature as I looked for clarity and connection to the fields of art, creativity, and teacher education. Narrative methodology offers a clear structure for shifting between and among self and others, past and present, and the visual-verbal space between art-making and art-meaning. Schubert (2005), writes, "When one tries to capture classroom experience autobiographically through artistic renditions - be it story or visual art or other - there is wholeness" (p. 24). Within this narrative framework, I have chosen portraiture as the vehicle with which to tell my students' stories.

Portraiture as Narrative Theory

Within Narrative, I will be following theoretical and methodological model as developed in *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Their theory greatly informs my research because it provides a way to “blur the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience” (p. xv). An important factor in portraiture is the focus on goodness, which is an “approach to inquiry which resists the more typical science preoccupation with pathology and remedy” (p. 141). Within this shift, the authors advocate searching for, “What is happening here?” “What is working?” and “Why?” (p. 142). Portraiture does not idealize a person’s experience but assumes that goodness (i.e. “strength”), will always be imbued with “flaws, weaknesses, and inconsistencies” (p. 142).

As a teacher-educator within the field of art, I too “search for goodness” in my students; for the myriad ways that they meet, navigate, and personally redefine success according to their own experience. I found myself aligning with the authors’ definition of portraitists as those who “seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions - their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (xv). Each portrait is sketched within the context of my classroom and shaped through the dialogue between myself, as the teacher, and my students. The evolving ‘image’ is personal creativity. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis describe the relationship between the portraitist and subject as an area where emotion and intellect collide surrounded by the “ongoing dialectic between process and product” in which the process is collecting and interpreting data and the product is the portrait. In this research, I present the portraits of three pre-service elementary education students as drawn from our classroom experience.

Portraiture as Narrative Methodology

Stories are more than personal data; they provide a narrative underpinning that functions as both data and method in the sense that they inform and modify each other. Hankins (2003) writes, “Narrative data holds the confusions, but narrative methodology dissects it” (p. 15). To dissect this narrative confusion in my own work I have followed these seven steps as explained by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997):

Step 1: a macro introductory reading of the data as a whole

Step 2: construct initial perceptions and understandings

Step 3: establish a rich layer of contexts

Step 4: regulate portraitist’s voice so that it supports through insights and expressiveness but does not overshadow participants’ voices

Step 5: examine relationships between portraitist and subjects

Step 6: identify emergent themes

Step 7: develop the aesthetic whole (identify researcher bias, identify overarching whole, attend to the narrative’s form, structure, coherence, and exclusions)

As part of tailoring this methodology to the unique context of a story (metacreative becoming) inside of a story (student’s experiences in class), I elaborated on some of the steps. The first step, a macro introduction to the data, involves the hermeneutic process of writing, followed by reflection. Step 2, a micro investigation, repeats the process with a focus on the narratives involving confusing and or significant events. Step three, required me to contextualize each narrative within the context of the classroom, my own knowledge of the participants, and myself as teacher.

In steps 4 and 5, I looked to Clandinin (2013) who found, “it is important to understand narrative inquiry spaces as spaces of belonging for both researchers and participants— spaces that are always marked by ethics and attitudes of openness, mutual vulnerability, reciprocity, and care” (p. 200). Step 6 added another layer of reflection as filtered through theory. It is this enfolding and refolding of experience, interpretations, and narratives that give rise to the whole in step seven. In this way, the narrative’s composition remains “fluid and contextual” (Riessman, 1993, p. 15).

Story Selection

The data generated from sixty-nine students over the course of four years was too immense to examine each with the degree of thoroughness and respect that I require in this dissertation. Here I will explain how I narrowed it down to three. My notes are full of surprising moments and remarkable stories. There was Judy who emailed me the day before we started a painting project. She told me would be absent because she “couldn't paint” and did not want to “embarrass herself in class.” After a few back-and-forth emails in which I promised her I would sit with her and coach her through the process, she agreed to come to class. Although she was 27, her reluctance originated from grade school in which her art teacher threw her painting away because it was “wrong” and told her to start again. Because of Judy’s negative experience, she had become tangled in issues of permission (she was not an artist and therefore could not paint) and confidence (my art is not right). While she did finish our project, I believe she will never willing paint again. In a different semester, during a visual-verbal assignment connecting poetry and art through metaphor, Frankie only wanted to do the painting part because she “hated poetry.”

She and I went back and forth during the process because she would write a poem but it would be unrelated to the concept of metaphor. Here are her comments during a group interview in which she reflected back on the assignment:

Frankie: “It’s funny because I honestly really hated poetry all through high school. Every experience I ever had to have with poetry, I just like...grinned and bared it. I just, I did not like it at all.”

Me: “You suffered?”

Frankie: “Yeah, I suffered basically. But honestly, this is almost, I know this is not the point of this class, but I like poetry now. And that’s really weird to say. But I really do. I have a personal journal and I write poetry in it a lot now. Yeah, true story. I was going to bring something in my journal so you could read it but I didn’t have time today, but ... yeah. I don’t think that’s the point of this class but that came out of it, so...”

In her words, we hear another example of negative experiences generating long-term ramifications. But these are not irreversible. It was through art that Frankie grew to like poetry. As she continued to explore it on her own she became more confident. After the interview, she indicated that she was no longer afraid to incorporate poetry into her teaching. Although I was delighted by her revelation, her surprise indicates that she had not quite finished making the connection between visual and verbal elements. Judy and Frankie’s accounts invite further examination. Where else did the struggle? How did they overcome obstacles? What is the nature of their creative becoming and the extent of their movement? This type of deep inquiry yields long stories. That is why I had to limit the portraits to three.

As described in the section Journey from Teacher to Researcher (p. 13) in Chapter 1, the curriculum aims evolved during the four years of the study. Restructuring the approach and activities to be more appropriate for emergent artists was helpful, but did not address foundational issues. It was only after I began centering the curriculum on implicit beliefs that the issues arising from tangles of perception, permission, and confidence began to untangle. This curricular shift was in place for the last year of the study that included the semesters from fall 2011 and spring 2012. Since the purpose of this dissertation research is to examine the navigation of the tangles, the participants from 2009 and 2010 were subtracted. This brought the overall participant pool down from 69 to 40. The next thing to consider was structural collaboration as described by Eisner (1994, p. 241) in the section entitled Credibility on page 80. This refers to the amount of data and supporting evidence that is necessary to assemble a rich, authentic story. All 40 participants had the same amount of data resulting from the course itself, (i.e. including but not limited to photographs of artwork, written reflections, and essays). This data needed to be filled out. Two additional sources of information came from my field notes and three interviews. I looked closely at the notes written during and shortly after class. Specifically I looked at conversations, observations, and antidotes that referenced participants by name. This list was compared to the 10 participants I interviewed.

As I re-search the stories of these 10 participants, I found myself gravitating towards certain narratives. These were the stories that spoke the loudest to me and which I determined might be the most significant to others in my field. By loud, I mean their struggles, frustrations, and misperceptions were very evident in both their writing and their art-making processes. From these I chose the ones that were representative of the students I most worried about (Allen, Shockley, Michaelove, 1993).

These were reflective of many students I had previously taught. This suggested that other methods instructors would recognize the situations portrayed in the stories. The significance would proceed from other instructors relating to the stories and seeing possible ways to help their own students navigate through similar issues.

I have always been concerned with the students who displayed frustration, discouragement, or anxiety; who evoked the implicit belief that there was no way to close the gap between artist and their self-identification as non-artist. These are the students that consistently, either consciously or subconsciously, allied with the stereotypes, misconceptions, and unrealistic expectations that pervade the implicit beliefs of pre-service elementary teachers. In selecting the final three portraits, I chose students with different issues. Bailey displayed oppositional behavior and a low tolerance for open-ended processes. This relates to the proclivity for teachers to use templates and highly structured art assignments which result in identical student outcomes. Anika had an underlying tension between the value of art as function verses experience. She also exhibited a need to explore and play with the media. This was indicative of her limited exposure to the arts and the gap between non-artists and artists. Emily had a strong bias towards verbal responding and struggled with the visual aspects of assignments. Additionally, based on her imagery, her visual-cognitive age is 7-9 years (Lowenfeld, 1947). This speaks to the reality of expecting generalist teachers to teach art. Each portrait investigates the sources, ramifications, and navigations of the triadic tangle for that student. The phenomenon of their creative becoming coalesces as their stories progress.

Re-lighting the Narrative

When pondering the passing of time between the lived story and the written narrative, I see the passing of time as offering an advantage. It allows me the space in which to pay particular attention to the intersection of reoccurring narratives that emerge throughout the research. Much as the day's changing light affects the colors in a room, shifting the hues from pale to deep, this perspective re-lights the experiences, revealing nuances not seen before. In this way, something obscured in one light (time of occurrence), becomes visible in another light (time of analysis). "Narrative method includes narrative analysis that takes as its object of analysis the event or story itself" (Hankins, 2003, p. 14). Some of this re-lighting will occur naturally due to the enrichment of new teaching experiences and in-depth studies of the literature. To this I add two years of living and teaching China. I must acknowledge that I, as an individual, am never the same. I believe there is truth in the saying, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man" (attributed to Heraclitus, 5th c BC). But to *do* re-lighting purposefully, I needed to reflectively reexamine the data from each story. This final immersion showed me when and where my thoughts had changed, and if and where they veered off into new territory. The resulting insights gave me fresh perspective with which to re-enter the data before completing the portrait.

Interpretation in Narrative

This circular hermeneutic process of interpreting and understanding the narrative as a whole by its parts, and as parts by the whole, stresses the meaning of the narrative within the context of the classroom experience. Narrative, as interpretation, can be situated near hermeneutics. I do not intend to meld these two forms of interpretation together; rather I want to metaphorically lean into it.

In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger (1950/2002) used the hermeneutic circle to argue that artists and artworks can only be understood in reference to each other (p. 1). Gadamer (1975) reconceptualized the hermeneutic circle as a process of understanding wholes through exploration of details. He also considered understanding to be linguistically mediated. When I envision a hermeneutic circle within narrative interpretation, I submit that a student's visual and verbal works, which I have labeled as data, are texts that can only be understood in light of who that student is and their experience within the class.

While it is the students' voice you will hear in the stories I write, what you read is my interpretation of their narrative, which is an amalgamation of multiple data sets as described earlier in this chapter. Of importance is Eisner's (1991) assertion that observations can be *read* as text. This is another way that narrative interpretation courts hermeneutics. Drawing from Hankins (2003) model of narrative methodology in her teacher research, I too look for meaning in the texts my students produce and in texts that I have previously written as part of my layered responsive analysis (p. 8).

This kind of observational analysis is not unusual for a teacher who must work to interpret, draw conclusions, and interacts appropriately in real time and in the best interest of the students in the class. Effective teachers learn to *read* their classrooms. Within this wider understanding of hermeneutics, I am able to explain the significance of why I included or excluded certain stories. Here it is important to acknowledge that selection and interpretation begin when some aspect of the data is grasped as significant enough to re-examine (Riesman, 1993). I openly allow for this personally interpretative stance. As Denzin (1989) states, "narratives then, like the lives they tell about, are always open-ended, inconclusive, and ambiguous, subject to multiple interpretations" (p. 81).

Credibility

Creating a credible story involves looking at the whole, not just the individual components. This effort towards trustworthiness is the narrative standard of “validity” (Maxwell, 1996). In portraiture, because the portraitist is part of the narrative, the resulting stories are told from a subjective perspective. However, “objectivity is not the standard for validity as it is in quantitative research” (Lightfoot, 1997, p. 243). Instead, Maxwell describes it as a synthesis, determined by, “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 87). Therefore, writing a reliable story hinges on ‘structural corroboration’ and ‘referential adequacy.’

Structural corroboration is a process of gathering data or information and using it to establish links that eventually create a whole that is supported by bits of evidence that constitute it. Evidence is structurally corroborative when pieces of evidence validate each other, the story holds up, the pieces fit, it makes sense, the facts are consistent (Eisner, 1994, p. 241).

Referential adequacy “depends on the expertise of the researcher, and on her familiarity with the setting being studied” (Lightfoot, 1997, p. 246). As a portraitist, I meet this criterion because I taught this particular class for six years, at two different locations, which makes me very familiar with the setting. To address corroboration, my stories are assembled on the evidence meticulously gathered from student artwork, student writing, and my field notes. Details and conversations in the stories have been diligently constructed from notes and transcripts. I have endeavored to authentically represent my participants and conscientiously re-present their experiences.

Lightfoot (1997) describes the finished portrait as an aesthetic whole that seeks “a portrayal that is believable ... that causes a ‘click of recognition’ ... that resonates” with readers” (p. 247). It is my intent that the three portraits in this research resonate with other instructors as believable stories in which the issues and dynamics are recognizable and relatable to their own experiences.

Of further note, credibility in research should reveal the failures as well and the successes. This is to avoid biasing the results in order to prove a theory or treatment. However, I am philosophically opposed to evaluating emergent artists in terms of failure and success. Instead, I examine their individual movement relative to their personal, artistic starting point. This type of valuation is discussed in detail in the section entitled Valuing Movement (p. 86) in Chapter 4. With the exception of two participants who had relatively advanced artistic skill, all of the others in this research were emergent artists. As such, they all experienced some degree of struggle, and some amount of movement. On one end of the spectrum were students who demonstrated progress in the traditional sense of improved technical skills and imaginative ideas. On the other end, were students who drew stick figures and struggled to generate any ideas. As far as the artistic processes, it was typical for students to express preferences for or against different media and assignments. The purpose of this research is to present the stories that illustrate issues of the Triadic Tangle, and to show how those can be navigated. Therefore, none of the participants who showed tremendous movement are included because that amount of “success” is atypical. Within the three portraits, I have shared the small “successes” that others might overlook. This is to establish that movement *can* happen even in students who do not, on the surface, appear to be doing well in class. The stories also show that movement is not the same for each person. Nor is the art remarkable. What is significant is that each student reached a point where she reconsidered what creativity meant for her.

Conclusion

Storytelling is a means for sharing and interpreting experiences and can bridge age-related divides. My narrative excerpts build on each other as the students gradually impart meaning into their own creativity (Green, 1995). As the teacher-researcher, I pick up these individual narrative threads and weave them into one overarching narrative theme of metacreative becoming in pre-service teacher education in the context of the course that I teach. When a story is shared, the author has as much to learn as the reader. This experience of telling unearths new truths to be reflected on and re-valued. By extension, constructing and interpreting the narrative makes me a better teacher because it informs and illuminates insights that help me grow as a teacher-educator. The reflections I have re-immersed myself in over the years, and yet again when writing this dissertation, continue to reveal shifts in my pedagogy, changes needed in my curriculum, and more effective ways to reach my students. Hankins (2003) describes her belief that stories “shape the way [she] understands similar events that will occur in the future. Past, present, and future are contained in any moment that we are fully aware of living; it is never only ‘now’” (p. 17).

As shared in my own portrait in chapter one, it was through narrative re-searching that the origin of the driving factor behind my research was revealed in the co-experiences with my children. When a pre-service teacher shared their doubts, frustrations, and fear, I was seeing it through the lens of my past: where my son’s art was judged as inferior, where my daughter’s friend felt ineligible to participate in art, and where my student considered withdrawing from my class. This new perspective was unearthed during the narrative as method process. It uncovered the changes and what invoked them, it traced the evolution of my pedagogy, and it sensitized me to the issues and needs of my students. Furthermore, this process underlined my belief that art

(as object) is not as important as the lives that form it and were perhaps, in some small way, in turn transformed through the process. Truly, I did not expect that while studying my students' past and present beliefs that I would find my own. Documenting and storying their journey led to the uncovering of my narrative as an art teacher: I too am in the midst of a creative becoming.

CHAPTER 4



Figure 7. Student art. Wooden Widget 3D challenge

CHAPTER 4 – TEACHING FOR CREATIVE BECOMING

Study Purpose and Design

My study was both iterative and extended over time. The initial stages of research were conducted to explore the issues of creativity in general, and more specifically, metacreativity in pre-service generalist teacher education. The purpose being: to trouble students ideas about art; to address pre-conceived notions of what creativity is; and to investigate who has access to the arts.

The study took place at two separate locations. Location 1 was at a small college in north Georgia. Location 2 was at a large university on the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia. The total duration of the study spanned four years, from 2009-2012. There were a total of 69 participants from 2009-2012. The participant total from location one was 43. The participant total from location two was 26. Of those totals, 66 were female and three were male. All participants were Caucasian. Table 6 lists the demographic breakdowns by date and location:

Table #6

Participant Demographics

Date	Location	Participants	Gender	Race	Participant IDs
Fall 2009	1	18	All Female	All Caucasian	1-18
Fall 2010	1	11	9 female/1 male	All Caucasian	19-29
Fall 2011	1	14	12 female/2 male	All Caucasian	30-43
Fall 2011	2	10	All Female	All Caucasian	44-53
Spring 2012	2	16	All Female	All Caucasian	54-69

Participants were not recruited. All participants were students in each school's respective Art for the Elementary Teacher course. They registered for this course as part of their degree program requirements. Student participation was optional.

No different materials or treatment was given to participants. For each semester, the students from location one met once a week for three hours for 16 weeks, totaling 48 contact hours. For each semester, the students from location two met twice a week for two hours and forty-five minutes each class, for a total of 16 weeks, totaling 88 contact hours. The study revolved around regular course material and accompanying assignments. No special or additional instruction was provided to study participants. In summary, a total (from the combination of both locations) of 136 hours of classroom data was collected over five semesters.

Data Sources

Data obtained directly from participants encompassed: written reflections on selected journal articles relevant to creativity and education; interviews; essays; photographs of students at work; photos of student projects; student reflections on their work and on their processes; photographs of students' visual journals throughout the term; and researcher field notes based on classroom observations and personal reflections. Additional data included pre/post questionnaires on personal background in the arts, personal experience with the arts, ideas regarding creativity, and ideas on art in the elementary classroom. Data generated directly by me as the researcher included personal field notes and reflective journal entries.

Initial Outcomes from Study

In the beginning of the course, students displayed a low tolerance for ambiguous and open-ended assignments, activities, and visual-journal prompts. This manifested in varying degrees of hesitancy that bordered on unwillingness to participate, to verbalizations of distress that bordered on animosity. When the combined responses from reflective writings and class discussions were reviewed, the root of students' strong feelings became apparent.

These originated from the following main areas of concern or combinations thereof:

perfectionism; lack of confidence in technical skill; fear of mistakes or perceived failure; lack of permission or dissociation from the field of art; fear of comparison to classmates; assumption that drawing ability equated to creative ability; and anxiety regarding the credibility of personal ideas. All of these issues fed into the creation of the Triadic Tangle. Preliminary analysis revealed, towards the end of the course, that students demonstrated an improvement in the following overarching areas: willingness to explore open-ended assignments; confidence in the validity of their own ideas; and, increased ease with adapting or modifying their work when faced with perceived mistakes or unexpected outcomes. While the extent of development varied, each student was gauged relative to that individual student's starting point. It is within this range of relativity that the remainder of the research is located.

Tightening the Focus

While the initial phase of the study approached issues of metacreativity and creative becoming from a broad perspective, the subsequent research shifts the focus to individual students and their distinct journey within the course. In review, the first stage of the study took place in my classroom as I investigated student understandings about art and creativity. Their ideas and misconceptions were examined within the general scope of the course. Concurrently, I analyzed the effects of systematic curricular and pedagogical adjustments devised in response to what I observed as being either effective or ineffective.

The second stage delves into the individual perspectives of three students who participated in my initial study. Through a paradigm of experiential learning and a narrative methodology, I will trace their metacreative journeys as they occurred over the course of one semester.

Part of this involves looking underneath the surface of the data and asking, What is unspoken? and What can be inferred? These answers offer insight into the nature of any creative barriers, which in turn generates the questions: Where were they tangled? How did they get tangled? and If/How did they navigate those tangles?

Valuing Movement

As I inquire deeply into the whole of the student's experience, I am endeavoring to understand their creativity relative to their particular starting point. Each student's journey is distinctly personal which is why I refer to it in terms of growth and movement. By definition, movement is an act of change. It is not qualified as bad or good, but as an occurrence. This is a deliberate rejection of any assessment that values student outcomes in terms of successful or unsuccessful. *Success* is based on achieving a desired aim. In terms of this course, were I to evaluate students in this way it would heighten tangles involving issues of perfection and confidence. Earning an unsatisfactory 'grade' would guarantee that students would retreat further from art. For these same reasons, I also take issue with *progress* that is dependent on the student's distance to and from a *predetermined* target. This is counterproductive. It would divert their focus from the significance of their own development to how they compare themselves to others.

This type of evaluative language can be linked with educational objectives in general and standards in particular. Dewey (1934/2005) writes, "standards are measures of things ... not values" (p. 307). Eisner (1967) questions the educational objectives because they evaluate how students should perform after having learned something. He goes on to explain their four limitations.

I find two to be especially relevant to the methods course: “cannot be predicted with accuracy,” and “confuse objectives as a standard for measurement when in some areas it can be used only as a criterion for judgment” (Eisner, 1967, p. 559). He maintains that objectives should relate to behavior in context. For this he describes expressive objectives. These identify a problem for students to engage in within a specified situation, but focus on providing an educational experience as opposed to acquisition. They are “the outcomes students realize in the course of a curriculum activity, whether or not they are the particular outcomes sought” (Eisner, 1994, p. 161). He also speaks of problem-solving outcomes as “objectives in which the criteria to be are specified, but the form the solution is to take is not” (Eisner, 1994, p. 160). Both expressive and problem-solving objectives are applicable to the art methods course because growth takes place through problem-solving experiences in which only the problem, not the outcome, is specified.

Instead of judgment, as I share their stories, I will offer an appreciation of the qualities *of* and *within* their movement. Some students move further than others do. Some move in multiple areas, others only one or two. Some are aware of having moved, some are not. What is important is that the movement *happened*. Movement refers back to my concept of creative becoming, which is an ongoing, both conscious and subconscious, emerging understanding of the self as a creativity entity. Although I do not know what possibilities lay along a student’s horizon (Rosiek, 2013), I hope that the momentum carries forward.

Prompting Movement

Metacreativity is both philosophical and cognitive, therefore it is best understood through experiences designed to engender both. Approaching creativity from a meta-perspective fosters a Deleuzian-Eisner entwinement that engenders the beginning of becoming within an educational context.

Whereas a formulaic content driven curriculum may supply precise subject matter, the literature overwhelmingly predicts if not guarantees frustration on both the part of the student and the instructor. Eisner (1991) asserts, “A narrow focus on the technical mastery of the material or a preoccupation with the quality of form leads to neglect of matters of intention” (p. 51). By extension, it also leads to a neglect of beliefs about and within the creative self. My course incorporates a three-part approach comprised of visual-verbal journals, written reflections in response to academic readings, and a variety of art-making activities. These following sections will explain each of these three methods, and then elaborate on my rationale for their application. In addition, they will provide background for things discussed in the individual portraits.

Visual-Verbal Journals

Words are curious things. Beyond mere definition, they can accidentally invoke implications and undercurrents unintended by the speaker. I learned this the first semester I taught. It is one of several reasons I do not name my students’ books as *sketchbooks*. Although by definition it is just a book of plain paper for making sketches, what my students hear is somewhat different. To them, a sketchbook resides in the domain of artists. Since they do not identify as artists, they place immense pressure on themselves to make their sketchbooks perfect. When they ‘can’t draw’, the sketchbook is ruined and their opinion as an untalented, non-artist is confirmed. In contrast, a *journal* is commonplace. By definition, it is a daily record of occurrences, experiences, and observations. Anybody can keep a journal and there are few, if any, expectations of what it should look like.

Like a journal, it functions in our class as a place to express, reflect, and interpret. The difference is that the entries are combinations of visualizations and writing. Eisner (2002) writes, “the limits of language in no way define the limits of cognition” (p. 5).

I never ask my students to draw in their visual-verbal journals (VVJs).” Like the word sketchbook, *drawing* is associated with artists. They believe drawing requires talent. Just the thought of having to draw sends vibrations of anxiety rippling through some students. So, I stick to works like visualize and visually represent. When students find out they can use any of the different media we have in class, however they choose, it relieves a lot of pressure. What is interesting is they all end up drawing in their journals, but it is their choice and on their terms.

However, the journals are visual *and* verbal and this combination is important. Merging words and images as a cohesive idea in response to a given prompt is a multi-modal problem. Defining multi-modal problems requires the incorporation of the overlapping concepts of texts, symbols, and literacy within the context of visual art-making. Pantaleo (2013) describes multimodal texts as a combination of the modes of image and writing. Multi-modality literacy as expanded on by literacy professors Peggy Albers and Jean Sanders covers the following three principles, “No particular symbol-system mode carries the entire message,” “Literacy is entangled,” and “... modes, media, and language systems are in symbiotic relationship and offer humans the potential to express what they want to say in innumerable ways, forms, and combinations.” My definition of multi-modal problems is, “Multi-modal problems are inquiries into a prompt, comprised of imagery and or language, that entail a combined visual-verbal response.” This is a complex cognitive exercise and doing it at the beginning of every class provides a lot of practice. It challenges students while still providing them a choice to start the process from a place of preference. If words come easier, then they can build images from them and vice versa.

Uhrmacher and Matthews (2005), *Professors of Education*, in explicating the ideas of Elliot Eisner write:

When people want to express themselves, they convert their concepts into a form of representation, which may be linguistic or mathematical, but may also be musical or visual. Each form of representation allows us to express some concepts but not others. Each form reveals and conceals (p. 5).

In addition to the creativity workout, the journal entries are designed to build confidence. As is often used in Language Arts classes to give students a jumping-off point for creative writing, I give prompts to my class. These can be anything from a quote, to song lyrics, to an imaginary idea, but the one thing they have in common is that they are all open-ended. This opens space for individual interpretation. As a result, it is difficult for the students to compare their work because each is very different. Furthermore, because they are working in journals as opposed to on a canvas (another word full of connotations), the art-making is low risk. It is not an official art project (even more connotations). If an idea does not turn out like they wanted, they have not ‘failed.’ Instead, they rework the page, for example collaging something else on top of the mistake. The journals also function as a place for media and technique explorations, most of which are new to the students. For these, there are no directions regarding outcome, just an invitation to discover what the media does and what it feels like as they move it across the paper.

A visual-verbal journal serves as an instrument for addressing the Triadic Tangle. Before I began my explanation, I want to reiterate that everything is in context of emergent artists.

These are novices, who as adults, have acquired years of built up beliefs about art and opinions of their own capabilities, or lack thereof. The concepts I teach are not in alignment with traditional understandings of art and art education. While those have their place, it is not at the forefront of my curriculum. This is because I believe those traditions are often the source of the tangles for those outside the art world. Therefore, I have adopted a broader, more inclusive concept of art.

The first tangle centers on issues of implicit beliefs, i.e. what is art and where is art. The visual-verbal journals teach students that anything can be art including what they imagine and make in their journals. It is not restricted to galleries. The second tangle concerns issues of permission, i.e. who makes art. The VVJs teach them that anyone can make art and it is not limited to a talented few. When they create art, they are artists. The third tangle focuses on issues of confidence, i.e. how is art made. The VVJs teach students how to approach ambiguity. The prompts are open-ended. There are no set of directions, no exemplar, and no assurance that what they envision in their minds will make it intact to the page.

Although the visual-verbal journals provide a structure for working through personal creativity, they do not promise that all students will experience the same extent of change in beliefs. However, by the end of the semester, the journals in all of their glorious messiness do promise to provide an intimate glimpse into the journey of the student in a way single projects cannot do. Transformation occurs over time and looks differently for different students. They grow in their own way. Some movement is akin to baby steps, and some are leaps. This is why I do not use qualifying language such as “this student’s work was successful” or “this student was not as successful in her project as she could/should have been.” Any movement is to be celebrated regardless of the degree, and any inertia should be viewed with anticipation.

Written Reflections

Each week students were assigned one article to read. These included academic journals, book chapters, and occasional current event stories. Some of the topics covered included: the nature of art, creativity, cognition, teaching art, and connecting art to writing and poetry. The goal was to speak explicitly to their beliefs from multiple fields of literature. Following the reading, students responded with a written reflection. At the beginning of the semester, I explained what I meant by reflection. First, it is not a summary. Second, they had to be honest as opposed to writing what they thought I wanted to hear. This meant that questions, concerns, and opinions were needed. If they liked or disliked something, they had to explain why. The reflections were used a starting point for class discussions. Their written and verbal responses revealed their beliefs and misunderstandings to me. It also provided a basis for troubling ingrained ideas and stimulating new perspectives.

Art-Making

Both Dewey (1934/2005) and Vygotsky (1971) speak to the process of making art as a difficult one that involves thinking in terms of qualities. I am often asked, “What kind of art do your students make?” This is a legitimate question. The course has ‘art’ in its title. However, my definition of art, in the context of this course, is very broad. I should also point out that the way I describe art is not in line with a traditional view. There are inherent expectations for art made within a college of art, regardless of which class or department makes it. Application requirements for higher education art education positions frequently require portfolios of student work. It is often assumed that the *best* student work goes into a portfolio. However, my students were not art education majors, they were elementary education majors. Nor were they artists. As such, the best art for a portfolio is not necessarily best art for these students.

So, in answer to the question, my students make all kinds of art - as long as the process does not intimidate them. I find their art to be significant to their development, and charming in its naivety. Unfortunately, I doubt the art world would view it as portfolio material.

As the teacher of emergent artists, I planned art-making experiences that helped with untangling. Vygotsky (1971) believed the significance of child art lay with a process, not product, orientation. To prioritize process, art making was exploratory, open-ended, low-risk, and induced engagement. One of our first projects, “Collaborative Marks,” used inexpensive supplies like colored paper and collage materials. No specific outcome was designated or desired, just mark making and simple construction with tape. It did not matter what it looked like, only that it took up three dimensions in space. It was an art *problem*, and the students were delighted when they met this criterion. I never used the word sculpture (see paragraph on connotations) with them, but these sculptures were abstract and crazy. Later we moved on to clay, and the students made *imaginary* animals. Because this project required that the animal *not* look real, it circumvents issues of comparisons and technical aptitude. Other projects I designed, such as identity weavings, canvas art based on song lyrics, and altered books, incorporated mixed-media. The variety of materials and techniques freed students from the pressure to draw or otherwise represent their ideas realistically.

Another art-problem was the Wooden Widget Challenge. Each student was given a 4-inch high wooden peg, and asked to take it home and make into something. Some of the finished objects were more complex than others. This is not indicative of better art. It is a reflection of movement. There are three relatively simple objects on the table: the flag, the palm tree, and the umbrella. While it is hard to see the detail in the photo, each was finished with care. These three students struggled the most with generating and visualizing ideas.

Two of them often needed a lot of coaching and validation when making art. The fact that they were able to take a plain wooden peg and conceptualize it into something else signifies movement on their part. Although these three students were impressed with some of the other objects, I was impressed that they were able to make theirs on their own. Would palm trees, pirates, and magic wands look dazzling in my portfolio? Not if you value them independently of the student who created them.



Figure 8. Wooden pegs modified by students for the Wooden Widget challenge

Play

Play has been researched in multiple contexts and explained through various lenses. However, there is still an absence of consensus on the basics: the definition of play; the credibility of play; the benefits of play; the supporting evidence for play; and the appropriate place for play, if there is one. Unfortunately, this disparity can lead to fewer studies even though more are needed in order to bring clarity and validity to play. The following examples provide succinct highlights for four historical views on play: Dewey (1933/1986) defined play as an antidote to labor. Piaget (1962) considered play as the means for the child to understand the world around him, and as an indicator of cognitive development.

Bruner (1972) discussed play as creating a safe environment for children to work through complex situations. Vygotsky (1978) viewed play as aspect of social growth and meaning making. Although the vast majority of play theory is directed towards the act and meaning of children playing, I do find that some current ideas lean towards creativity. Harris (2007) writes, “I’ve learned that what holds for children holds for adults too – that play is more than an activity, it is a frame of mind, an approach to action, a predisposition to be bold and creative, and experiment with ideas” (p. 143). However, it is art educator, and President-Elect of the National Art Education Association, George Szekely’s (2015) approach that I think is the most relevant because it is specific to the arts, and it correlates with my concept of creativity. He teaches that opportunities to play are necessary for making original art because “play is a practice in self-guiding,” which builds confidence in decision making (p. 13). His ideas support what I have observed in my class.

Making messes and making art go hand-in-hand in my class. Students were not taught techniques so much as they learned what the media did by *playing* with it. It is how I introduce art media and creative processes. “Creative play,” according to Szekely (2015), “moves the understanding of art from skill or talent ... to thought, where art means ideas” (p. 16). Play is about fostering attitudes open to discovery, and creating opportunities to take risks without failure. It facilitates students’ willing involvement. As a result, in spite of initial doubt in themselves, they learn to try new things. For example, I ask students to literally pour paint onto paper and freely manipulate it with a brush, fingers, or other object. During their play, I suggest ways in which they might attend to the process: in what manner are the colors mixing; how does the paint move differently with different tools, pressures, or strokes; how does it feel to manipulate the medium.

Making *messes* with paint is “is neither a waste of paint nor a sign of an artist in need of instruction ... it’s an important to journey to the end of colors and textures” (Szekely, 2015, p. 42). Without the pressure to produce a product, they are able to enjoy the experience. When I use the word ‘enjoy,’ I am sharing with you their feedback. Their initial fear at the thought of *having* to paint ends instead with comments like, “that was fun” and “painting isn’t as bad as I thought.” Technically, they have not made or produced any art per se, even though many students like the abstract designs that result. Whether or not it can be counted as art is irrelevant. What is notable is the shifting of their attitudes from resistance to engagement.

How else is play valued? Through students’ play, the foundations are established for introducing more complex work later in the semester. Szekely (2015) writes, “... play is the finest preparation for students of all ages to create unique and exciting works of art” (p. 3). He describes play-based art as “unrestrained by art history, adult notions of art, or what has been done before,” (p. 9) and unimpeded by “principles, rules, traditions, and the way art supposed to be look” (p. 17). Likewise, Bartlett (2011), discussing the value of play, writes, “the ability to think abstractly is a huge mental leap forward, and play can make it happen” (p. 28). Furthermore, recognizing art made during play as a type of art, attends to the tangle of permission, and issues of validation. Szekely (2015) writes, “just because their creations are products of play doesn’t mean they aren’t art” (p. 8).

Whoville

As a follow-up to the section on play, I am going to tell you about one of my most-loved projects: Whoville. This lesson begins with mining the book “Horton Hears a Who” for meaning. This generates lessons such as bullying, helping a friend, and teamwork, but we settle on children can make difference (in reference to “every Who matters”).

We discuss ways that children can impact their worlds, and we decide they can recycle. For day two, I ask students to bring in clean and dry recyclable trash; i.e. yogurt cups, soft drink bottles, cereal boxes, pop-tart boxes, etcetera. As the bags sit forgotten on the floor, I tell them that we will be making our own Whoville. Excited chatter fills the room. Then I inform them that they will be making it out of the trash. The abrupt silence is accompanied by looks of incredulity and doubt.

I began by having the students dump out on the table all of the recyclable trash they had gathered. For those that had multiples of any particular items, for example yogurt cups, I suggested they trade. As there was a curiosity regarding what everyone else had collected, this set the stage for class dialogue. It also prodded them to begin looking at the trash in a new way. Now they were comparing the sizes and shapes of the objects. At this point, there is an air of anticipation and a few giggles as my students look back and forth from each other to all of the trash laid out their tables.

Next came the directions. One, make something for Whoville. Two, use only glue, tape, scissors, and tissue paper. No one moved. The silence that fell again was followed by a peppering of questions and a few glares of betrayal.

Megan, "What is it supposed to look like?"

Cara, "How big should it be?"

Deidre, "What am I supposed to make?"

Michelle, "How will I know if I'm doing it right?"

Lynn, "How do I start?"

Trailing close behind were preemptive statements of disclaimer and defense.

Heather, "I don't know how to do this."

Bridget, “But I’ve never built anything before.”

Tyler, “I’m just telling you now that mine won’t look good.”

Nicole, “This is not going to work.”

How could I dare ask them to make something with so little direction? Contrary to their fear of being set up to fail, I was setting them up for success. In Whoville, there is no one right way to construct a Who building. It is dependent on their imagination, and therein lies the problem. Their critics, both internal and external, have suppressed creativity.

I wait for them to settle down and then addressed the most important question at hand, ‘How do I start?’ I tell them to begin playing with the materials by placing a few objects next to each other or stacking them vertically, and experiment with how it looks. My intention is that the physical manipulation will allow them to start thinking before they consciously engage in the designing part of the process. But it’s not that easy for them, and I continue to see ‘the deer in the headlights’ look in their eyes. Their apprehension is very real and it merits recognition and respect from me as their teacher. It is not so much that they cannot envision gluing random objects together, it is whether they can glue them together the right way. But there is no ‘right way’ in Whoville.

I try to lighten the serious mood that presently pervades our class. After all, play should be fun. So I begin to playfully stack stuff together and ask them what I could make out the assemblage. The exchange went something like this:

“A house, ok, what else? What does someone else see? A hotel, cool. What if I take away this small milk carton and, instead, place a yogurt container on top?”

Melanie thinks it looks like an observatory.

“That’s imaginative, Melanie. What does the observatory need now?”

Tyler hands me a straw and declares it to be a telescope.

Someone scoffs.

Debbie reminds them that it *is* Whoville and says, “Add these four caps to the bottom so our observatory can roll around town.”

I find myself getting caught up in the play and have to pause. The tension has greatly eased but it is time to redirect the students back to their own projects. Many jump right in, but a few still stare suspiciously at their pile of trash. Helen asks me what she should do to make a doctor’s office. At this question, I speak to the class as a whole, emphasizing letting the structure emerge as opposed to trying to plan what it should become. I remind them that this is Whoville and that reality is suspended. More importantly, I reassure them that there is no wrong way to make whatever they make. Attending to Helen once more, I ask her to play a little more with her objects, just in case something else might emerge. By doing this, I am asking her to be open to possibilities and explore options that have yet to be revealed. I try to induce her to release herself from self-imposed restraints and recognize that she has a creative voice, and furthermore, she can trust herself to speak.

All sizes and configurations of structures begin to materialize around our classroom, yet there is more happening. I hear students laughing. I see them showing their works-in-progress to their classmates. I hear them asking for feedback and offering suggestions. They are collaboratively sharing ideas, although I never explicitly told them to do this.

Heather is contentedly pasting tissue paper around a 20 oz. plastic coke bottle.

“What are you making?” asks Jesse.

“I’m not sure,” answers Heather, “what does it look like to you?”

“I don’t know but I like the colors you picked.”

Continuing my observation of this conversation, I see Heather extending her tissue paper past both ends of the bottle and securing both sections with tape, so that the paper fans out on each end.

Jesse, also watching this, exclaims excitedly, “It looks like a Tootsie Roll!”

“That’s it!” grins Heather. “I’m making a candy store! Whoville needs a candy store!”

Once the students are truly convinced that there was no way for them to mess up their Who structures, they give themselves to the process. They did not want to stop. In fact, many students started on a second project. At this point I was able to meander around the room. Here is an exchange between Tyler and I:

“Cool Tyler, tell me about what you’re making.”

“This part is a tree house and it’s going to connect to the counseling office so kids aren’t afraid to go. I want to add more to it but I’m not sure...”

(Now I get to offer suggestions without dictating solutions) “Ok, two buildings. What kinds of things connect rooms or floors? (I want him to problem solve.)

“Um, um, doors ... elevators ... stairs ... bridges” “Which should I use?”

“It’s Whoville, you can make it however you want to. Have fun with it.”

At this, I walk away. By leaving the final decision to him, I hope to demonstrate my confidence in his ability to make decisions. Twenty minutes later, I return to Tyler’s project. He shows me his swinging bridge, secret door, and crazy, twisty stairs that go up the outside of one building and arch to the top floor of the second building.

But Whoville is not finished because it cannot exist as a room full of separate projects. It has to be brought together to form a community. The class moves to the main lobby of the student center to a table we have permission to use for display.

They look to me and I look back at them and smile and say, “It is your town, and y’all have to figure out how you want it to come together.” I offer one more thing, “Look at it and think about what a town might need.” First, everything came back off of the display table because someone pointed out that a town is not built on a Formica tabletop. Off went two students to get large sheets of bulletin board paper in green and blue; green for grass and blue for water. But wait, another student reminds the group that towns have to have roads. Now brown paper is needed. This leads to one student announcing that she’ll make a Who car (since we will now have a road) and a second student says she’ll make a Who boat (since we now also have a lake). Once the groundwork is laid, literally, they place their projects. Here is a partial list: a school, a city hall, a town mayor, a TV station, a Whoville security officer’s car (to protect all Whos), a wedding chapel, a Who bride and a Who groom, a candy shop, a hospital, a pet store, a church, a tree house, and assorted houses and businesses. But wait, that’s not all. Even though class is ending, two more students declare the need for trees and bushes and those were quickly made.



Figure 9. Whoville at Site 1

While it started off slowly, as it always does, Whoville jump-starts a receptive attitude for investigating possibilities. Eisner (1974) writes, “The teacher does not know what interests such an experience will generate, but once they emerge, his task is to facilitate their development” (p. 49). This is why play matters, particularly with emergent artists. During the semester students refer back to the experience, reminding themselves of the “cool” ideas they came up with. Is Whoville art? Yes. And it seems to stay with students. I’ve had emails from some of them long after the end of the semester sharing with me how they still have their Who structure displayed on a bookshelf at home; or how they ‘did a Whoville’ at a summer camp for kids; or how, as a new teacher they “finally got to make a Whoville” with their first graders as part of a social studies unit. These ‘non-artists’ had the confidence to independently initiate art-making because they believe they are creative. They believe it because they *experienced* it, not because of *what* was made.



Figure 10. Whoville at Site 2

Nurturing Atmosphere

Helping my students feel ‘safe’ in new art encounters extends beyond the curriculum. My goal is to try and emotionally offset the anticipation of failure as explained by negative past experiences influencing future expectations (Rosiek, 2013). Because I am aware of many of my students’ fears (if they have no confidence) or hesitation (low confidence), it has motivated me to ‘soften’ the classroom. One way is through music. During the ‘making’ segments of class, I play songs from a play-list. The students compile this list at the beginning of the semester. Numerous times students comment on how relaxed they get when the music is playing. Others describe it as therapeutic. When students walk in the room, the music is playing, the materials are out, and the visual-verbal journal prompt is on the board. Together this creates an invitation to come in and create. Another thing I find helpful is having a coffee pot. I recognize that this is not standard classroom equipment nor is it always possible or practical. However, coffee is very much a part of current culture and indicates a relaxed atmosphere. Cafés are associated with good things: a gathering place for friends or a comfortable spot for reading and studying. In fact, one of my classes changed the name of the course to C.A.F.E., Creative Arts for Educators, because they said it ‘fit’ the course better than the name in the catalog. Offering coffee does not cost me anything. The students chip in to buy it, and bring their own mugs, and in this sense, they take responsibility for their environment. They have an invested interest in the space. Perhaps the most important element in creating a nurturing environment is the nature of the interactions between the students and the teacher. Care is vital. It is also personal because it blurs the line between positions. I am no longer just a teacher talking to a student. The quality of care brings us together as human beings. It provides a conduit for genuineness, encouragement, and trust.

CHAPTER 5



Figure 11. A student's visual-verbal journal page

CHAPTER 5 – PORTRAITS OF CREATIVE BECOMING

Setting the Scene

Some students say they like arts and crafts, and smile when they see the assortment of art supplies in the room. A few can draw fairly well. Three students have even switched from general education to art education after taking the methods course. But these are not the stories I want to tell. As an arts instructor and artist, it is rewarding that some students share my love of art. Yet they are not the ones who taught me what it looks like when an individual experiences the awakening of their own creativity.

The stories I choose to share with you reveal the ebb and flow in struggling and navigating tangles in creativity. You will read about Bailey, a student who met me with opposition. Then you will meet Anika, a student entrenched in structure and insecurity. The third story tells of Emily, who self-identified as being non-creative and intimidated by art.

These three stories takes place in a university located in the outer suburbs of a southern metropolitan city. The room I taught in was on the third floor, and featured a wall of windows facing the bamboo garden below. The ceilings were high, and we always enjoyed a well-lit space to work. Plastic baskets of art supplies sat in a neat row, on top of the cabinets that spanned the length underneath the windows. The cabinets held even more supplies, ranging from printmaking inks to charcoals to large reprints of famous works of art, and everything in between. The actual space in the rectangular room was a bit of a tight squeeze. We usually had six rectangle tables (approximately 5'x2'). They were arranged so that two facing tables formed a nice square. This larger work surface allowed for groups of four or five students to sit together. In addition to the two big squares, one of the two remaining tables served as a place for setting up special supplies or workstations. The other functioned as my desk.

The wall facing the windows featured a sink and smaller set of cabinets. It is where we kept cups full of jars, and the coffee pot. To the right of the sink was a door to the supply room, or as my students called it, the ‘cave of wonders.’ The whiteboards and smart board covered one of the long white walls. The other wall had a row of fine art reproductions thumbtacked up high. Underneath it was fair game for whatever the class wanted, or needed to hang up, which brightened up what would otherwise be a stark, utilitarian space. The floor was a grayish-colored cement, but that did not stop students from spreading out and working on it.

All participants in this study who mentioned or alluded to within the portraits have signed IRB consent forms and are identified with pseudonyms. As I describe the journey of the three students, who are all pre-service general elementary education majors, I am going to refer to them only as students. It is much less text-rich, ergo easier to write and to read. I hope their stories illuminate the significance of how it feels to struggle against your own beliefs and blocks, and gradually become aware of yourself as a creative human being.

Bailey: The Messiness in Creative Becoming

Bailey's Journey

Bailey's story can be traced by her movement through fall semester's assignments and written reflections. Within them, we can see the ebb (resisting) and flow (engaging) in her demeanor. Because the focus on movement is important, so is the context in which it occurs. Therefore, the assignments are described in order and with some detail. The nature of the assignments also serves as examples by which other art methods instructors can correlate similar contextual reactions in their own students. The assignments are not art projects in the classic sense. Instead, I choose to identify these assignments as *endeavorings*. By definition, an endeavor is an earnest and industrious effort sustained over a period of time. As a verb, endeavor's synonyms include: try, aspire, undertake, struggle, do one's best, strive. The nuances of this word can be extended to the art experiences I foster in my classroom as I encourage students to openly immerse themselves in creativity.

A Preference for Order

At the conclusion of the first day of class, the students were given homework: bring in a visually interesting object. No other criteria were given in order to counter any expectation that the object had to be beautiful or monetarily valuable. Accompanying this, the students were asked to write three things on an index card: one, identify the object; two, explain why they chose it; and three, describe why they find it visually interesting.

The show-and-share was informal. Bailey, tall and athletic, stood up with a confident smile. She was wearing sweats, and her brown hair was tied on top of her head. She looked like she had just come from the gym.

Holding up a colorful scrapbook to show the class, Bailey read from her index card:

My sister made this for me as a gift. She doesn't enjoy artsy things but she still put a lot of time into this. I think it's interesting because she took a poem that someone else wrote and made it applicable to her project. She worked with different colors, shapes, and patterns but still kept it uniform and cohesive. I love it!

Of all of the things she could have written, she qualified her appreciation with the words *uniform* and *cohesive*. This sheds light on the way she sees and values visual art. It needs to be orderly. This foreshadows issues with perfection, which falls under the confidence strand in the Triadic Tangle. It is probable that if the colors, shapes, and patterns had been abstracted and random, the book wouldn't have held as much aesthetic appeal to Bailey.

This tendency towards external order did not surprise me. Think about a school environment. It is a predictable system with a clear objective, graduation. It rewards a student who completes the circle of delivery; teachers deliver the content and the student redelivers the content in the form of a passed test. This is the setting in which my students have found success. It is understandable to see that Bailey appreciates this type of uniformity even if she has yet to realize the extent to which this predilection has spilled over into her ideas regarding her own creativity.

This Mess is Not OK

After the class finished sharing their interesting objects, we began the first entry in their visual journals. Expecting to do some type of drawing on the first page, the students were disconcerted when I asked them to open their journal books to the middle. Bailey was not the only one to request permission to do her assignment on the first page but she was the most insistent.

Here is my exchange with her:

“Why can’t I do it on the first page?”

“Because this needs to be done in the middle.”

“Uhm, can I please do it on the first page?”

“Nope. I need everyone to turn to the middle.”

“Shouldn’t the first thing be on the first page”

“Not necessarily,” I smiled, trying to lighten the moment.

Why is there resistance? After all, it is just a page in a sketchbook, right? No, not to the students, and especially not to Bailey. She was not smiling when she opened her book. I heard muted grumbling accompanying the rustling of pages as ten resigned students turned to the middle of their books. This placement was not arbitrary. It immediately put things both physically and psychologically out of order. Why does this matter? A sketchbook, particularly a brand new one, is precious and the expectations are high. Students want their book to be pretty, but this goal creates internal tension that can put a significant damper on creativity. My goal was to “de-precious” their sketchbook.

Once their books were opened, the class was instructed to flip through the magazines laid out on the table and cut out any words or pictures that caught their eye. They were given three minutes. I could see most of the students carefully arranging their cuttings on their sketchbook page.

“Ok class. Now I want you to pick up all of your clippings and hold them in one hand over the page.”

“But, Ms. Cline, I already have mine arranged the way I like them,” stated Bailey.

“I see that Bailey and it looks nice, but you still need to pick them up,” I responded. “It’s part of this activity.”

“Ok.”

A few other students chimed in, ‘It’s okay.’, “Don’t worry about it.”, “Just remember where you put them.”

However, the next series of steps ended with the students literally dropping the magazine clippings on the page and gluing them where they landed - even if they were overlapped or hanging off the page. Following that, they watercolored over everything. Then, after blindly selecting an oil pastel (literally eyes closed so favorite colors cannot be chosen), they were instructed to look at the page and write the first 3-5 words that came to mind. Some students obediently followed instructions although I was aware of their skepticism, but not Bailey. She was clearly uncomfortable. Bailey sat at the table; her body stiff, her eyes overly bright to the point of almost being teary, and her mouth a tight line.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“This. This is not okay. I’m not okay with this”, she snapped, slinging her hand out over her work area.

“What?”

“This mess.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s ruining my sketchbook. I like things to be in order, and I don’t even know what this is supposed to look like.”

“It’s not supposed to look like anything.”

“Then how do I know I’m getting it right?”

However, I also heard this:

“Well I don’t have to worry about me messing my book up. It’s already trashed,” laughed Ashley. Fortunately, this resulted with the whole class laughing, even Bailey.



Image 12. Bailey’s wrecked journal book

When I did this activity for the first time, I had no idea it would be met with such resistance. It was supposed to be just a fun and crazy way to make the first marks in a sketchbook without the pressure of drawing or ‘making something. Bailey objected to this *art*, not so fondly titled by Ashley as “Wreck My Sketchbook,” because it didn’t produce anything of perceived beauty or value. It *messed up* her sketchbook. Pay attention to her words: “ruining”, “order”, “supposed to look like”, and “getting it right.” She was not alone in her response. In varying degrees, I’ve heard it each semester over the last several years. What my students are protesting is chaos, the antithesis of order. This type of chaos involves ambiguity and risk. For Bailey, this points to the threads that gave rise to a tangling in the third strand of the Triadic Tangle, confidence. Without a clear outcome and a way to evaluate success, Bailey was disoriented.

It's Stressful to Just Paint

In the following weeks, I continued to have my students participate in process-oriented art-making. One of these was painting while listening to music. Before beginning, we talked about how a conductor moves the baton. Specifically, we corresponded types of sound to gesture: i.e., loud, powerful sounds are big; intensity is sharp and angular; melody is rounded and flowing. Those gestures were then connected to the nature of brushwork.

A change in music signaled a change in stroke. They were instructed to just feel the music through their brush - no drawing and no attempt to paint an image. Once the explanations were finished, I turned off the lights and played the series of instrumental segments. The low light emanating through the blinds allowed enough light to work by yet hindered attempts to look and compare to what was on another student's paper.

Afterwards, as we discussed the experience, Bailey said:

"I didn't really, like, enjoy this. I mean I liked the music but not the painting."

I appreciated her honesty and told her so. "Thank you for being honest Bailey. What didn't you like about it?"

"The music switched before I could figure out what I wanted to paint and all the colors ran together. "

Once again, Bailey is expressing unhappiness with the lack of a clear objective. She has focused on the end result (the product) covering her paper rather than the act of painting (process). Some students agreed with her, but some students found the exercise to be relaxing. The purpose however was to experience painting without the pressure of making a picture. In six years of teaching, this class I always have students ask me if they need talent or drawing skills in order to pass the class.

Galbraith (1991) describes this specific type of anxiety in her own research, “All student-teachers were worried about their artistic abilities, and felt they would not be able to perform adequately in my class” (p. 336). Me telling them they will do fine in class is not enough to relieve their anxiety. Therefore, the first part of the term we spend a lot of time *not* drawing.

Here is an excerpt from Bailey’s verbal response to paint-to-music activity:

The painting to music was hard for me because there was no “plan” - it’s hard to just kind of ... paint. ... I like to plan and map out what my ideas are and its hard to just paint for the sake of painting. I found that it actually made me stress more. ... I didn’t really like the end results which left me feeling kind of frustrated.

In addition to the tangle of confidence threads: perfection, ambiguity and risk, Bailey’s dissatisfaction with the end result indicates a tangle in implicit beliefs. She believes art should be beautiful. By her standards, there is no value in process or experience, only the appeal of the finished, polished product.

Engaging in Ambiguity

The next class we made paint blots, which consists of squirting different colors of paint onto a small square of paper, folding it over and rubbing it to blend the colors, and then opening it back up to see the design. The requirement was three blots, but all of the students made many more. Although there was a lot of talking and show-’n-tell, I noticed Bailey was quiet but not discontent. She was absorbed in this random process to the point where she lost count of how many she made. This was the first time I noticed her shelving her need for a pre-conceived outcome and just allowing herself to simply enjoy playing with paint. By the next class, the blots were dry and the students cut and glued them in their journals. For the last step, they imagined what they saw in the blots (similar to finding animals in clouds) and added line details.

Many students over the years tell me they have not had art since elementary school, and some did not have it even then. Ballard (1990) asserts, “We would expect [students] to enter college with at least some very basic skills and knowledge of the arts” (p. 47). The problem is, they are not. For example, I have had students that did not know the secondary colors. The color wheel is so rudimentary that I was shocked when I began teaching this course. After that, I found ways to address it. Although this activity may seem juvenile in some ways, it is actually an engaging way for my students to experience color theory. Additionally, because it is not product oriented, it carries no risk for *messing up*. They just experiment and learn. To see Bailey willingly and contentedly immersed in a process, without worrying if it was right or wrong, showed progress in her tolerance to ambiguity. When it came time to “see” what was in the blots, Bailey ended up with three pages in her journal. As she and Ashley were looking at each other’s blots, I heard Bailey say, “I can’t believe I made so many different ones.” She seemed surprised at her own capacity for imagination.



Figure 13. Bailey’s paint blots

What Qualifies as Art?

Written reflections in response to assigned readings of scholarly literature and book chapters paralleled classroom experiences. While the activities reveal subconscious involutions, the writing reveals conscious development. In her response to *Artforms* Chapter 2: Awareness, Creativity, and Communication (Frank & Preble, 2006), Bailey writes:

Art can be aesthetically pleasing without being beautiful. ... Is anything invoked by creative thinking or imagination art? ... The more I think about it and the more we discuss it in class the more confused I become about what qualifies as art. No one from the Art Institute of Chicago is going to be moved by my child's [elementary student's] scribbles ... But it is delightful to my eye because they made it. ... Is it still art?

Her questions reveal her confusion about what constitutes art. She distinguishes and simultaneously defends the value of child art versus museum art. Consistent with her appreciation of the scrapbook made by her sister, she shows sentimentality and emotional connection to who makes the art. Yet, I think this reflective writing is an important revelation because it shows her openness to seeing child art as being art. Child art is 'imperfect' and often displays abandon in the process.

From her comments, we can tell she has a hierarchy in regard to art, with Museum art at the top and her own art at the bottom. Why do I say her own art is at the bottom? It is implied in her qualifications. Museum art is professional, real. Child art is meaningful because there is a sense of relationship with them. As a teacher, Bailey is protective of their efforts. What about her own art? She knows she is not an accomplished artist. For the questions, What is art? and Who makes art? Bailey's tangles of perception and permission tell her art is situated out of her reach. It must be made by an expert (talent).

However, she makes an exception when there is sentimental value attached to the art (e.g. her sister, a child). She has yet to recognize any value in her own art.

Maybe Mess is Interesting

Continuing with experiential art processes, I asked students to pour paint onto a journal page. This was to be a symbolic act of generosity to themselves as artists. It was followed with a reflection that acknowledged their own positive character traits. Bailey was not keen on this idea. Her first attempts were barely small dribbles of color. However she eventually added more and more paint until it started to run a little off the edges. Some students went a step further, and explored the paint with their fingers. Bailey did not, instead opting for a brush to interact with the paint. Yet, she did look at it when she was through and was surprised, writing, “It looks interesting, more so than I thought.”

I feel like this was the beginning of another turning point for her in that she was becoming open to aesthetic options. A paint spill is messy. It is not a ‘picture.’ It is not anything. For Bailey to find interest in it demonstrated her increased reception to a lack of order and realistic representations as something that could potentially be visually appealing. Why is this important? Deniston-Trochta (2001) writes, “It is common for elementary classroom teachers to classify themselves as non-artists and/or individuals not talented in art” (p. 98). This is often measured by their drawing ability. Therefore, making something, independent of drawing, and finding it interesting, suggests Bailey’s concepts are shifting. She is starting to untangle the ideas that art is not always beautiful (perception), and there are not always clear paths when making it (confidence).

Seeing Things Differently

In the reflection for, *Anatomy of a Picture Book: Picture Space, Design, Medium, & Style* (Matulka, 2008), Bailey has started to become self-aware that she is looking at things differently. This is occurring primarily in her personal environment, i.e. furniture and dinner table.

After this chapter, I noticed I would start looking at things differently. I noticed the way lines in certain pieces of furniture made me feel differently. ... My sister's couch is curved and makes me want to curl up but the chair next to it has sharp edges and it makes me want to sit up straight. ... The idea of balance is confusing to me, but I realized that we practice balancing things without really realizing we are. For example, on Thanksgiving when we set the table we place some things so the table looks even, but it isn't necessarily the exact same thing on every side of the table. So the table is asymmetrically balanced.

She is also connecting emotions to design elements, i.e. curved and comfortable, sharp and attentive. Yet, her words highlight a limited working knowledge of art elements and principles. This is not surprising and students are cognizant of this gap, which adds to their feelings of intimidation regarding art. However, at the end of her reflection, Bailey makes the declarative statement, "the table is asymmetrically balanced." Here she displays confidence in her relative understanding of a previously confusing idea. This is an example of new knowledge meeting a student where they are by relating to what they already know. Linking art principles to personal spaces is a step in closing that gap.

It Doesn't Have to Be Perfect

For this assignment, the class made Imaginary Animals. The parameter for modeling these ceramic creatures was that they could not be naturalistic. This immediately lowered the risk from a creativity standpoint. Furthermore, it circumvented comparison (Confidence Tangle) because students could not judge success based on whose animal was the most realistic. For example, “Hers really looks like cat, but mine doesn’t even come close to looking like a horse.” Without a focus on talent (Permission Tangle), students were free to experience the clay. This positioned the outcome on the horizon of the possible (Rosiek, 2013), letting the animal evolve without predetermining what it becomes. When body parts and features did not materialize the way a student anticipated, the challenge became one of adapting and modifying instead of failure.

The following week, after the painting and firing was complete, students completed the verbal part of the assignment by naming and writing about their animals. This is what Bailey wrote:

My animal has big paws, walks on four legs, has a long purple curly-que tail that boings like Tigger, his wings are big and gorgeous. He is soft and cuddly and can fly. He’s pretty and sweet, lives in the mountains. His fur keeps him warm. He doesn’t eat other animals because he is nice to all living things. His name is Sphinxxy, I don’t know why. His job is to bring lots of snow from the mountains and fly to Egypt so the people there don’t get too thirsty. He flies so fast it doesn’t melt before he arrives.

While making it, Bailey struggled to form the legs identically and the wings symmetrically. I was concerned that she would get exasperated and give up. Yet, she continued to work the clay and her frustration stayed at a minimum.

I think part of the reason she did not become discouraged is because she could see that all of the other students were facing the same difficulties. She realized they were all beginners in clay. During the construction, we discussed art “problems,” and ways to change, rearrange, or reconceptualize their animal: the ambiguity was no longer a threat. I found it encouraging that Bailey was pleased with her animal even though it was not perfect. Her satisfaction carried over to her reflection, and it is easy to catch the playful tone in her writing. She is happy with her creation. In letting go of perfection, another thread in the strand of confidence is untangling.

The Mess Doesn’t Matter

In this visual-verbal journal activity students were introduced to a playful technique. First, they chose either warm or cool watercolors and painted different shades over the entire page. After it dried, they were given a straw to blow ink across the page. Following that, they looked at the colors on their page and responded to the prompt, “What is color?” I asked them to think about their answers through the lens of their five senses. Here is what Bailey wrote:

red: tastes bold, spicy; sounds like dynamite, a strike at the bowling alley, firecrackers;

makes me feel confident, superior

hot pink: I see new love, taste sour lollipops, sounds like a standing ovation, I feel

restless, it’s explosive and exciting

light pink: I find [it] in my grandparents’ old love, it melts into the sunset as they walk

by the river holding hands, it tastes refreshing and sounds like Beethoven, it’s comfort,

it’s routine, it’s peaceful.

Bailey shows fluency in expressive language, and her associations, memories and imaginations are vivid. One of her continual strengths has been the emotional connection to things she sees, and that is evidenced here in her writing.

We can also see the progression from the simple associations of red to the metaphoric associations of light pink. Additionally I was encouraged that there was no resistance to this activity. Nor was there any mention of the fact that her pages (*Figure 14*) were messy and that work from the backside of another page had bled through to this one. Additionally, there are places where she has made mistakes or changed her mind and just crossed them out as opposed to trying to white them out or otherwise hide them in an attempt to appear perfect. She no longer seems to mind the *mess* in her art. She even joked to her classmate that, “there’s nothing I can do about it now so I might as well just not worry about it.” I see this as Bailey coming to terms with her visual-verbal journal as a space to work, a space that shows and appreciates the inherently involved processes. This is a huge shift from her response to that first “Journal Wreck” activity because she is becoming more tolerant of disorder.

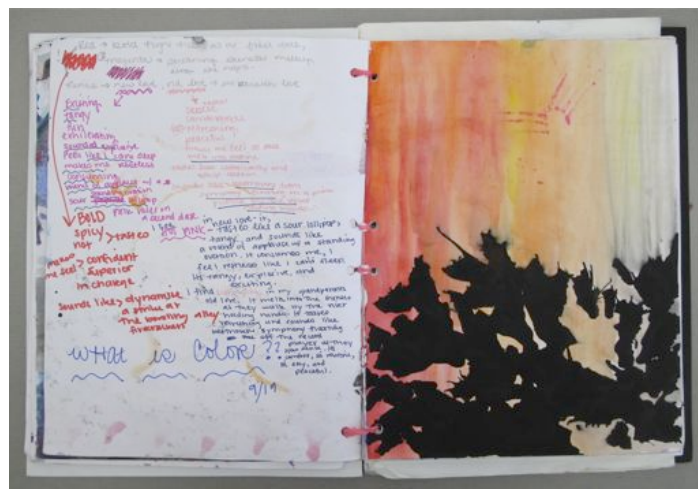


Figure 14. Bailey’s What is Color? response and ink blow art

Messy But Meaningful

The Identity weavings are a metaphor for self. Instead of teaching the technique of weaving for the sake of technique alone, I asked students to bring ephemera and other bits and pieces of their lives souvenirs, photos, and mementos they found personally meaningful.

These were integrated into the weaving. Depending on the size or shape of the artifact, it could become an art problem to solve. The finished weavings were as unique as the individuals were.

Next the students' display we hung an information card that read:

We have woven together different strands representing personalities, experience, memories, and passions. Each 'thread' comes together, connecting the parts to the whole.

These parts reflect personal fibers that contribute to who we are as individuals.

During the final workday on the weavings, the students talked animatedly and walked around looking at each other's mementos. As they noticed what others found significant, energetic conversations begin build. I listened to the questions they asked each other: "What's the story with that?" (lace scrap), "Why did you bring that?" (gum wrapper), "Look at this!" (perfume label), and "This reminds me of ..." (ticket stub). In this way, students were connecting art-making to story. It was personal and real and provided a window into their lives.

The weavings were all different, from the color and size of the yarn to the stuff overflowing the edges. Given the nature of the project, the weavings appeared somewhat chaotic. Here's a slice of Bailey's dialogue with a classmate:

Bailey: "I'm really pleased. It turned out better than I thought I could do. I'm actually excited to take it home!"

Mary: "[Mine's] not that beautiful or colorful but it all means something to me"

Bailey: "Yeah. I know. Everything on mine means different things. It's got pieces of me glued on. ... I think I'll hang it my room"

Although Mary commented on what she perceived as a lack of 'artistry,' Bailey responded to the other remark about the meaning. Not only does she agree that the work is meaningful, she intends to display it.

The fact that it is visually chaotic but still visually appealing enough to hang in her room indicates that Bailey has undergone a change in valuing. No longer does it have to be orderly (as in her sister's scrapbook) for her to accept the significance of her own art. Nor does it matter that it is not museum worthy. Bailey's answer to the question, Who can make art? has expanded to include herself. This begins the untangling of the permission strand.

Thinking About Thinking

In Bailey's Reflection on Finke's (1996) article, *Imagery, creativity, and emergent structure*, which presents the ordered-chaotic thinking continuum, she writes:

The chaotic thinking versus ordered thinking was incredibly interesting to me. ... It made me wonder which category I fall into, because the ordered thinking part of me comes out in class.

I was surprised by Bailey's realization that she exhibits ordered thinking in class. In writing "it makes me wonder," she is thinking about her thinking (meta-) relevant to her own creativity. In addition, she has associated her thinking with her approach to art activities. Her sense of metacreativity is emerging. In the beginning of the term, Bailey did not self-define as creative but she did state that she enjoyed crafts kits. Typically, these kits consist of step-by-step instructions that result in whatever is pictured on the front of the package. A preference for this structure is in keeping with ordered thinking and a low tolerance for risk and ambiguity. Historically, she gravitates towards this type of process. Yet, her clay animal and weaving both indicate an expanding range of creative self-expression and art-making. This is occurring through repeated and explicit exposure to open-ended, ambiguous projects.

Obvious Objectives?

In reading *The Misunderstood Role of Arts*, in Eisner's (2005) *Reimagining Schools*, Bailey has recognized that multiple answers are valuable while simultaneously realizing that it is personally difficult.

My favorite part about this article was when the author stated, "not all problems have single correct answers. ... And it's ironic that this is my favorite part considering it's a concept incredibly hard for me to grasp. ... for me to accept for myself. I want to know that I have done things correctly and completed the task in an acceptable form. I get frustrated when there is no obvious objective.

These are huge admissions and major turning points in awareness. Bailey acknowledges that she wants her work to be done correctly. She also recognizes her frustration with a lack of obvious objectives. Previously she questioned her tendency toward ordered thinking. Now she admits that multiple solutions are hard for her to accept, even though she likes the idea. But is she really continuing to get frustrated within these open-ended types of situations? She may think she still needs clear objectives to know if her work is "correct," but I submit that subconsciously this is changing.

Bailey's acceptance of imperfection in her visual journal, along with her satisfaction in her work even though she had no exemplars to work towards, demonstrates a growing tolerance for ambiguity as part of the creative process. She is working without "obvious objectives" and without "frustration," but she has not realized the extent. In Figure 15, the prompt was Secret Wishes. The directions included covering the page, making an envelope, and filling it with secret dreams. Bailey could have chosen from any medium along with pictures from magazines. Instead, she did an abstract painting with words in a wax resist. I watched her as she made it.

She was smiling and absorbed in the process to the point of barely responding when Anna leaned over and told her she liked Bailey’s “dreamy” background. So, while she claims in her reflection not to like open-ended objectives, she subconsciously displays a growing comfort with the “risks” of free expression.

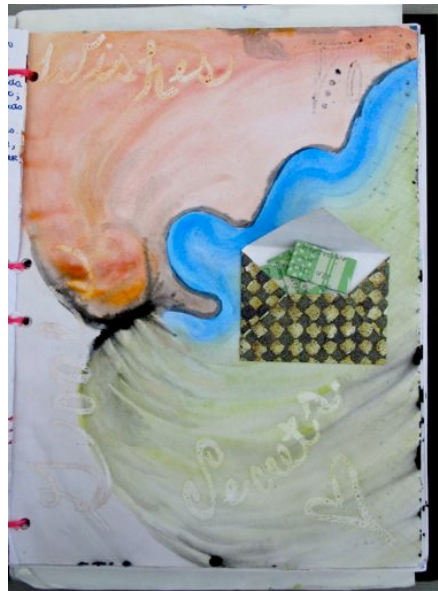


Figure 15. Bailey’s Secret Wishes visual-verbal journal page

Personal Creativity

In Bailey’s reflection on teacher bias towards creativity, she writes:

The more we talk about creativity in the classroom the more I begin to put the pieces together from elementary classes I took. I can still remember the names of each ‘creative child in my classes. Students in elementary school get told “not to scribble,” “to color in the lines.” and “to make your sun the right colors.” I don’t understand why we as teachers take these elementary years and squash [students’] creativity because we don’t recognize it or understand it! [The years spent in elementary school] is a long time for a student to hold his ground on exploring new things when a teacher disapproves.

We cheat every child in our classrooms that could have seen the way that child finished an assignment and think ‘He did it different...maybe I’ll do mine different.’ There has to be some way to find a few minutes everyday in our classroom to let our students be themselves and be creative. If they aren’t creative that’s fine but they deserve the chance to explore that option.

This is Bailey’s first personal connection of creativity to her own elementary experiences. While previously, she admits preferring to “color” in the lines; she is now questioning the origin of that. She also is able to remember the names of creative children while simultaneously letting us know that she was not in that group. Another interesting comment is ‘the teacher disapproves.’ Bailey was one who wanted the approval of her teacher. But what did that approval cost her? As I read this, there seemed to be a trace of outrage for students who were forbidden to scribble, perhaps also for herself. Take notice of her phrases “not to scribble,” “squash their creativity,” “hold their ground”. This is aggressive language suggesting Bailey is ready to fight for children’s right to be creative in whatever way that manifests.

However, her last statement, which reads, “if they aren’t creative that’s fine,” signifies that she still has not accepted that *every* child can be creative. Which in turn implies that there is still a standard to meet. It is, however, promising that she is okay with a child who does not, in her opinion demonstrate creativity, as long as they have the opportunity. Desiring all children to engage in creativity is progress. Recognizing it in all of them, and herself, is still to be learned.

I found it interesting that in the class period following this reflection, she took her own advice, and “did it different.” During the introduction on perspective, we practiced drawing a receding fence with trees on the board. It was very basic and I asked them to try drawing it in their journals. Afterwards, they could add the trees. But Bailey went her own way.

In Figure 16, she started another drawing of a beach scene. While the drawing is simplistic and the imagery stylistic, she incorporates the change in scale from the palm tree in the foreground to the ship on the horizon. However, the most important thing was her own perspective, literally. She finally felt empowered enough to give life to her own interpretation.

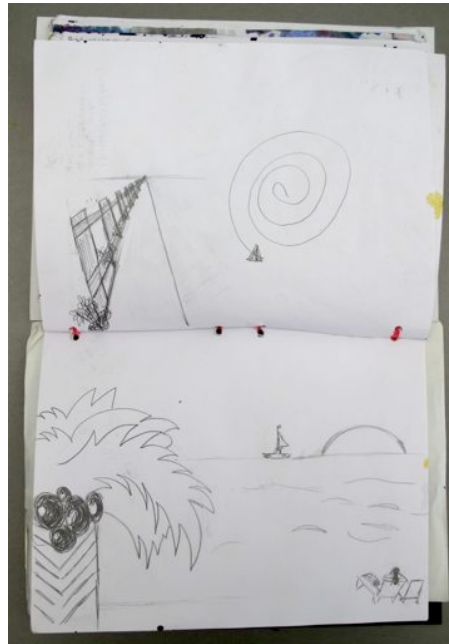


Figure 16. Bailey's perspective sketches

On the top, is the class assignment; on the bottom is her own interpretation.

Creativity-Product Binary in Child Art

In this reflection, Bailey is connecting emotions, approval, and affirmation while also recognizing that those can occur in spite of failure. However, she is still projecting the valuing of student work based on an external standard, i.e. “not every project will be beautiful.” This is remedied to some extent when she states, “but I know there has to be something constructive and kind that can be said.”

No child likes to feel like they've failed. She [meaning me, the author] talked about how failure was just a window to finding a more successful way of doing something. She reiterated repeatedly that failure wasn't a bad thing. While I had never really thought of it that way, I can't help but wonder how, in a world like ours - so focused on being "the best" and "getting it right" - we push that meaning in our classrooms. How do we convince our students that failure is really not a bad thing? Not every project my students bring home will be beautiful or possibly even pleasing to the eye, but I know there has to be something constructive and kind that can be said. Unfortunately, there is ample opportunity in the world for our students to feel poorly about their efforts or negatively towards the end result of hard work, but the classroom should never be one of them.

Kampylis et al (2009) ask, "Do primary school teachers refer to creativity as an 'all-or-none entity' or as something that could be expressed in different levels by all?" (p. 19).

Explaining the import of their question, the authors write "The answer to this specific question is vital because teachers act in the classroom according to their implicit theories and those teachers who believe that creativity is an 'all-or-none entity' might not try to facilitate all students' creative potential." Continuing this line of inquiry, Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe (2000) explain, "Teachers constitute a field that judges the ideas and products of students. So, it is the teachers that are in a position to measure creativity."

By this point in the term, Bailey has recognized that there are different manifestations of creativity, yet her value for creativity is on the product that results as opposed to the process and experience of the child.

Fortunately, as she looks at a child's artwork, she is aware of the need for positive statements regardless of her personal judgments as to the aesthetic beauty of the work. This creativity-product binary indicates she is still wavering in terms of the tangle of perception.

A Beautiful Mess

Deleuze and Guattari (1998) state that, "Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative" (p. 238). In support of this philosophy, I have challenged my students consciously and subconsciously to navigate this border between what they thought creativity was and what they are learning it can be. It is through Bailey's final art project that I realized just how far she had moved within her created becoming, and how at ease she now was with the messiness of ambiguity.

In preparation for this art, I asked students to bring in a song that they found meaningful. I chose to use the word meaningful as opposed to beautiful or favorite because I wanted to open up space for nuances. With their journals in front of them, the students were asked to listen to their song (via their ear-pods) and respond visual and verbally to the music and words. The next step involved translating those "in the moment" responses into a design for a mixed media piece of art. For this, each student was given an 11x14 canvas panel along with access to all of our media and supplies. They had multiple class periods to design, to bring in alternative supplies if they desired (i.e. photos), and to work.

In looking at the photo of Bailey's art (*Figure 17*), we see layers and layers of neutral coloring, paint, handwriting, words clipped from magazines, painted lettering, torn paper, and a partial drawing. The more prominent or legible words read: refined, this is your moment to be beautiful, beginning, ending, step by step, imagine all you can be, and hope certainly fits the profile.

The imagery consists of a subtle overlap of city buildings, music notes, a broken cup, and a single eye.



Figure 17. Bailey's mixed media lyric art

It is important to note that the criteria did not require collage, only mixed media. Let us revisit her reaction to the first collage in her visual journal:

“What’s wrong?”

“This. This is not okay. I’m not okay with this”, she snapped, slinging her hand out over her work area.

“What?”

“This mess.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s ruining my sketchbook. I like things to be in order, and I don’t even know what this is supposed to look like.”

“It’s not supposed to look like anything.”

“Then how do I know I’m getting it right?”

Bailey's lyric art reveals *and* revels in a newfound sense of freedom. Her compositional choices show confidence, and demonstrate high level of tolerance for visual "disorder." This is seen in the variety of materials, the disjointed images, the overlapping elements, the one eye (instead of complete set of features), and nonconformity in the lettering. The finished piece does not "look like anything." Only this time it is her choice, and it is a choice executed purposefully. By removing the shadow cast by efforts to "get it right," Bailey was able to focus on expression and conveying emotion. Out of everything she made, she told me this piece was her favorite. When I think back to the paint spilling activity, I realize that what she was had not been able or ready to do then, she embraced here - a generosity to herself.

Embodiment: The Artful Educator

Bailey's story thus far has traced her emerging and expanded understandings about creativity and art from both her personal (art making and visual-verbal journaling) and academic (scholarly articles and reflections) perspectives. Yet, the purpose of requiring this course in the elementary education degree program is to equip teachers to transfer this embodied knowledge into their future classrooms. In the final two projects for the class, I found evidence that made me hopeful that Bailey had a practical understanding of course concepts in terms of teaching it forward.

Creative Lesson Plan. This partner project was inspired by illustrated children's book. Together, two students design a lesson and an art project to go with it. The lesson had to meet educational standards, and the project had to allow for individual expression. Bailey and Mary's unit on figurative language was built around *Nacho and Lolita* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. This specific lesson on simile had as its goal: Recognize that two elements working together can be stronger than one.

Objective 3 states: Students will use a variety of materials to create a visual representation of an element of language (*Figure 18*). Note her openness in the wording “visual representation,” as opposed to a requiring a single form such as a drawing or a poster. Within the procedures, Bailey and Mary plan an educational space where students can choose their own simile, share ideas, and explore multiple answers. In one of her reflections, Bailey wrote that this was a difficult concept and personally uncomfortable. However, she demonstrates here that she recognizes its importance and has incorporated it into the lesson. Choice is often missing from student experience. Allowing choice when and where appropriate, by planning for it in a lesson, builds student confidence.

In step 5 of the designing process, Bailey and Mary frame multiple acceptable options with the use of these phrases: ‘can be multi-dimensional,’ and “can create a literal representation or an interpretive/figurative representation.” Students are offered flexibility of visual expression that is not dependent on drawing or talent. In turn, this sets students up for success and lessens the potential for comparison. Allowing broad interpretations encourages creativity. In one of Bailey’s early reflections, she admits to concern that she will not have time for creativity in the classroom. This is when she still operated under the misconception that creativity and art were separate subjects and or major projects. This lesson shows her understanding that creative opportunities in a smaller scope are valuable and practical.

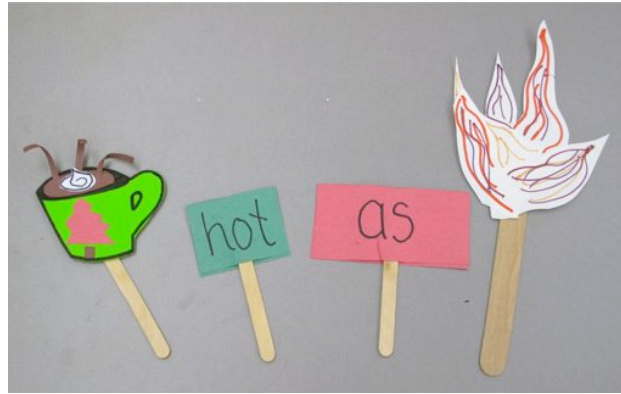


Figure 18. Bailey and Mary's simile sticks

Creative Classroom Ideas. In lieu of a traditional 3-ring binder, the altered book project repurposed hard cover books as a teacher resource. This book needed to function as an inspirational cache for creative learning and teaching. Content, compiled by the student, was a combination of adapted classroom activities plus their own ideas. Artistically, the books needed to be mixed media with at least one interactive component (i.e. pull-tab, window, pop-up). Beyond the aesthetics of the book itself, there were no art projects included, just practical suggestions that could be modified and reinterpreted as needed. Ten finished pages were required; with the understanding that more could be added as the years progressed and new things were learned. Below are a few pages from Bailey's book:

1. Creative research reports that included options for poems, songs, collages, pictures, and creative essays, etc.
2. Providing each child with a visual-verbal journal in which “In the Freedom Journal they are free to write about anything. ... They can draw, journal, ramble ... anything they want. This book is all their own, and they can choose whether or not they want to share with [the teacher].”

3. In lieu of color/activity sheets to occupy students who finish early:
 - a. Set up a music station where “The student will listen to the music and draw what they envision is happening in the song. If they are interested in creative writing, they can narrate their picture by giving it a title and an accompanied story.”
 - b. “Keep old magazines in your room and the students will “find” words in the magazine: cut and paste them onto a piece of paper creating a story

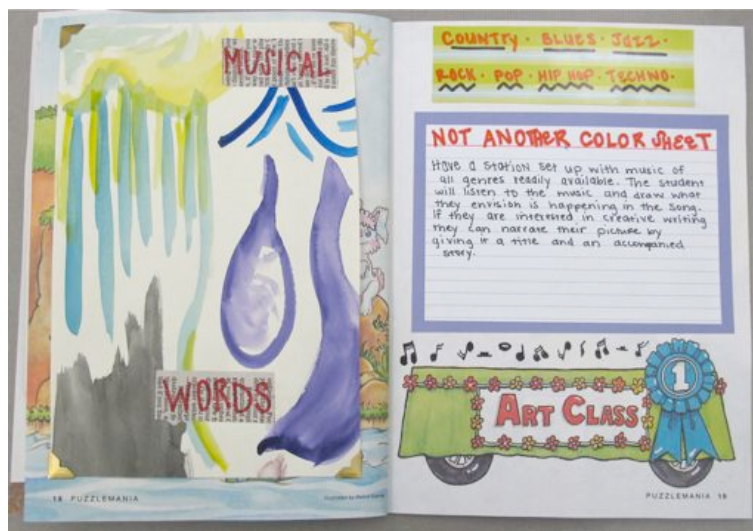


Figure 19. *Not Another Color Sheet* altered book page

In each of her pages, and indeed her all of her pages, Bailey has found ways to incorporate her experiences, and the techniques learned during the semester. Remember how she initially dismissed the painting to music activity? On the “Not Another Color Sheet” page, it is clear that she has reassessed its value. The common theme throughout each of these is a freedom of personal expression and interpretation. Specifically she is opening the space for her students to explore multiple modalities, *including* artistic responses. Yet, the art is not a time-consuming project. Each of these encourages creativity, yet are practical and inline with educational intent; i.e. language and writing.

“It kinda grew on me”

In closing, I return to the journals. At the end of the course, thirty-eight pages were filled. This cumulated body of work spanned the entire semester, and in it, students could visually trace their own journey of creative self-discovery. In acknowledgment of its significance, the students gave the cover careful consideration. Figure 20 shows the cover of Bailey’s Visual-Verbal Journal.



Figure 20. Bailey’s visual-verbal journal cover

Going back beginning of the semester, here are the comments written in her journal following the paint-to-music activity:

The painting to music was hard for me because there was no “plan” - it’s hard to just kind of ... paint. ... I like to plan and map out what my ideas are and its hard to just paint for the sake of painting. I found that it actually made me stress more. ... I didn’t really like the end results which left me feeling kind of frustrated.

Now, let’s fast forward to the end of the semester. When she turned in her journal, I asked her about the cover. This is the conversation:

“Bailey, tell me about your cover, it looks like the paint-to-music art we did in class?”

Bashfully, she replies, “It is.”

“Oh, I’m surprised you chose that as your cover. You told me you didn’t like it.”

“I didn’t at first, but then when I looked through my art, I was kinda drawn to it. It kinda grew on me. In a way it represents art freedom.”

I chuckled, “Art freedom?”

“Yes,” she was laughing, “This whole visual journal is still a mess but I love it. I didn’t have to worry about making things in it. So it was freeing. And it was art. So, Art Freedom.”

Bailey, unbeknown to me, had kept her paint-to-music art. For her cover, she cut it to fit and glued it onto the front and back of her journal and then attached a pink ribbon. Something had changed. She now saw this work differently and appreciated it for what it was and what it is. As I look back on Bailey’s journey, I see a shift in her implicit belief that art, to be ‘real’ art, must be a perfect and beautiful artifact as judged by those external to herself. Over the course of this semester, her thinking expanded so as to embrace art as an imperfect process of personal expression imbued with internal value. In short, Bailey learned to give herself permission to make art, and the grace to appreciate whatever form that art takes. Undergirding these outcomes is her growing ability to tolerate ambiguity, along with the recognition that there can be more than one solution to visual problems; which in turn allows for flexibility in reconceptualizing perceived mistakes or failures. This physical and psychological messy space is no longer seen as a threatening place where her fears and insecurities as a beginning artist would be exposed.

While the foundational barriers to Bailey’s personal creativity have been addressed, there are questions of what and how much of what Bailey has learned might be transferred to the elementary classroom. Going forward, time will most likely continue to be a challenge.

Art ‘projects’ will probably be few, yet, going by Bailey’s Altered Book and Picturebook lesson, I believe she will be able to incorporate little spaces for creativity and art within her standard lesson plans. She recognizes the importance of giving students opportunities for creativity and creative expression. Too, she has shown appreciation for a child’s efforts. However, there remains some tension in regard to projecting external values onto child art. This is an area that I will need to more explicitly address in my future curriculum.

PostScript 1

The following spring term, I found this note waiting for me on my desk:

“Tammy,
Came by to say hi, and see how everything was going. Miss your class .. and your coffee. :) Looking into some community painting classes - if you have any suggestions let me know. :)
I'll see you soon,
B”

PostScript 2

A month later, Bailey came to ‘visit’ during class. She brought her sketchbook and participated in the prompt and other activities. After class, she stayed and helped another student with her Lyric Art project.

Anika: Unfolding a Creative Becoming

Anika's Journey

This story follows Anika creative journey during and shortly after our one-semester course. Through her visual-journal assignments and reflections, we see her struggles with open-ended and abstract prompts, literal versus abstracted visualizations, and the tension between the objectives of art as function verses art as experience. As her teacher, I struggled in my attempts at encouraging her to reach deeper into her ideas. Yet, I was encouraged as I watched her timid interactions with the media expand into a willing, and sometimes playful, engagement. It was not until her interview with me, one month after the end of class, that I became aware of just how far she had come.

Meeting Anika

On the first day of class, initial impressions flowed around me as students walked into the room, providing little glimpses into the people I would come to know over the next few months. The first thing I noticed about Anika's was her reserve. While most of the other girls were animatedly chatting with each other, Anika sat so still that her long, black hair never moved. She was not interacting on any level with the girls around her, and her face remained in a neutral, albeit not unfriendly expression. I wondered if her shyness was because of first day jitters or if her personality tended towards introversion.

In lieu of the dreaded first-day-introduce-yourself preamble, I gave my students questions to ask the person next to them. The interviewer chose a few of the answers to share as they introduced their interviewee to the class. I remember being intrigued by two of Anika's answers. One, her favorite wild animal was a nautilus (a spiral mollusk), and in my years of hearing about kittens, horses, and dolphins, that was definitely a first.

The second surprising answer was her favorite music, which is wind-chimes. While I too enjoy that sound, it was another first and stood out from the typical country and pop choices of the other students.

Hoping to Learn Something New

Following the partner-interview and collaborative mark-making activity, I gave each student a two-page, pre-class questionnaire. The answers provide me with insight into a student's artistic history and beliefs, while also providing data. Depending on the candor and details of the answers, I am able to learn a good deal about the student. Here's what I learned about Anika:

In answer to "Do you consider yourself creative?"

Anika wrote, "Not as much as I'd like to be. I'm more of an imitator. I find it more and more difficult to come up with creative ideas each year."

Her answer reveals two things: one, she does not meet her personal standard for creativity, and two, she equates the production of novel ideas with creativity.

The next question read, "Describe an art project or experience you remember from elementary school?" Anika wrote:

We created portraits of another person. My friend drew me using oil pastels of various wonderful colors. I drew a hilariously inaccurate sketch of my best friend at the time. I learned to branch out and combine different types of media. The experience overall was not remarkably impacting. Rather forgettable, actually.

As I read this, I reflected on the irony of her answer: the experience was forgettable, yet out of six years of elementary school, this is what she remembered. She calls attention to her awareness of being less skilled than her friend is.

However, she redeemed the experience in her mind because she learned to ‘branch out’ with different media. Perhaps, as long as there was a practical outcome, the failure of “inaccurate” drawing was lessened.

I am combining the next two questions because Anika’s answers bring them together. These questions are, “What do you think art teaches?” and “What do you think the role of the Art Teacher is in a school?”

Anika wrote:

[Art teaches] “Expression. Creativity. Release. Happiness. Pride. Perseverance. All sorts of great values.

[An art teacher’s role] is to be a “Teacher, mentor, therapist, maybe even a friend.”

Anika has just described the value of art with abstract qualities, emotions, and personal attributes. There was no mention of techniques or content knowledge in spite of that being the redeeming outcome from her most memorable elementary art experience. Adding on to this, she sees the art teacher as a person capable of nurturing and befriending her, perhaps even extending to her a sense of refuge. There was no connection of the art teacher to art making. With this in mind, I wondered what this shy student expected from this class?

The last question read, “What are you hoping that you will learn in this class?”

Anika wrote, “I just hope to learn something new.”

Again, defying the typical answers, she does not mention learning or improving media techniques, learning how to make creative lessons, or learning how to “make art.” While seemingly vague, when her questionnaire is taken as a whole, I began to understand her. According to her answer regarding creativity, learning how to “come up with creative ideas” is the end goal. In essence, she wants to learn how to generate *novel* ideas.

However, the memory of branching out with new media tells me she values concrete results.

Yet, according to her answers for what art teaches, I believe she hopes for opportunities for self-expression, creative freedom, and confidence in her art-making. Taking all of her answers together, I recognized the potential for internal conflict as she struggles with what she thinks she wants intellectually and with what her answers tell me she seeks experientially.

Prioritizing Practicality

As described in detail in Bailey's story, my first assignment, due the second day of class, is the "Interesting Object." It was a dreary day, and even with the tall windows, the light was diffused. However, the students were lively as they circled the display table looking at the different objects and talking about the way they looked. Some of the items brought in included: a ring, a flower paperweight, a shell, a rattlesnake vertebra, and a scarf. Anika surprised me again, by bringing in a large, red binder clip. Yet, it felt true to what I began to understand as the *how* and *why* she attributes value. Before we began viewing and sharing all of the objects, a few of the classmates teased Anika, accusing her of forgetting the assignment and just grabbing something off of her desk. She just smiled, but when it came her turn to share we realized her choice was purposeful. She stood up quietly and read her object's identification card, "I chose this clip because of its many uses, its shape and purposeful design, even something so simple has a story." It was a utilitarian choice. And with that, I learned something. Anika prioritizes practicality, and she finds meaning in form, or more specifically, the form's use. I wondered how this would translate into her creative journey.

Wet, Ugly, and Fun

The variety of objects, as well as the multitude of reasons they were deemed significant, provided a great segue into the Journal Wreck activity. As in Bailey's classmates' experience, this class also responded with wide eyes along with a few open mouths, especially when I told them to pick up their clippings and drop them on the page. As before, some students had preemptively arranged them on the page. Even so, there was no hostility or open resistance with this class. Just a few pleading, borderline whiny, "I don't like where it landed." and "Can't I move it? Just this one piece?" After finishing, there were some smiles, frowns, and a few nervous giggles. One student commented unhappily that the paint "got on my other page." Now the journals were "wrecked" and no longer pristine canvases beckoning for stressful perfection.



Figure 21. Anika's wrecked journal book

Unlike Bailey, Anika did not protest the journal wreck activity itself. But she did comment on the *wetness* of the paper and the messiness of the activity. It was not the visual chaos that bothered her; it was the physical mess.

In response to this activity, she wrote in her journal:

I think that there's a good overall message here: it's not always about order. There's not always one definite way of doing something. And perfection is in the eye of the beholder.... What I made is messy, sticky, wet, and kind of ugly but I like it. It was fun. I don't think I wrecked my journal; I think I gave it character.

Underneath that she wrote in big letters "Let it go..." Then in smaller letters underneath that, she wrote, "Branch out. Sometimes you can't be in control, and that's okay." While her comments are positive overall, I am intrigued by her descriptions of the page as "messy, sticky, wet." Out of a twenty-minute experience that pushes the relinquishment of control in the midst of process, why did the *feel* of the paper stand out to Anika? What is the benefit of messiness? Of wetness? At this point, I do not believe she recognizes it as the tangible evidence of being engaged with the medium. Whereas Bailey did not like the disorder of the process and the visual disarray, Anika finds the tactile sensations disagreeable. However, she values the 'lesson' she perceives as being about perfection, and chooses to see the 'wreck' as a source of character. She justified the wreck because it had a purpose. This speaks to a tangle of perception. Only with Anika, art is valued more by function than beauty. It was my hope that by the end of the semester she would come to value the process in and of itself.

Wet but Meaningful

For this activity, I turned off the overhead lights, and depended only on the windows to softly illuminate our room. Multiple watercolor pallets were placed on each table. I could hear the students' whispered questions to each other as they awaited instruction. It is a curious thing when the lights go off in art class. The students were instructed to respond (not draw) to the music on paper by moving their brush in time with the music.

I pulled up my playlist consisting of 12 different instrumental songs, many from movie soundtracks, and played them for 30 seconds each. The overall purpose served as an introduction to the emotion conveyed by and associated with lines. As with all of our artistic explorations, the students wrote a brief reflection in their journals. Anika's reflection on this activity was written in a bullet-point list in her journal. It read:

this paper is really wet. looks like it was peaceful, and then a nasty storm hit it. dots and lines on left could be flowers or people. fluid lines. lots of overlap. not used to this. would rather paint a picture. no organization, no order. too many stories in one. it's still so wet, I want to smear it with my hands.

Once again, Anika seems more taken with the tactile elements of the product than with the process. As with the journal wreck, she comments on the *feel* of the finished paper. It's wet and she wants to touch it, but she refrained. Intellectually, she sees the process as the path from A to B; music to lines. While she offered no resistance to the open-ended process, she readily admitted to preferring the order that could be found in making a recognizable "picture." The finished paper looks like "a nasty storm hit it" and destroyed the "peacefulness" probably generated by the first song, which featured a soft melodic tempo. Of further interest is her comment on "too many stories" in the painting. I wondered what stories she was seeing in the abstraction, or if she was thinking about the stories heard in the music?

She referenced this activity in the weekly reflection. It seems that she has reconsidered the messiness of it. In addition to noting the wetness of the paper, she comments on the way *she* felt during the process.

Anika writes:

The question is, “What is art?” But what is the answer? Is there an answer? Art is a creative idea that has been brought into reality. One of the first things to draw my attention about the article is the mention of Kandinsky’s style of painting. I found it very interesting that he painted from his emotions, and tried to capture them in colors and shapes, pointedly avoiding anything that seems to reference to the “real”, “materialistic” world. I wonder if that is why we were encouraged to paint to music in class; as a creativity stimulating activity. I must admit, I felt very relaxed while painting. I felt like I had released my emotions from my body, into my fingertips, down the paintbrush, and into the wonderful colors at the end of brush. The product was a wet, messy blur, but it meant something to me, and contained a piece of me.

In her own words, she felt “relaxed” even though the product was “messy.” In regard to what art teaches, she listed the qualities “expression, release, and happiness” in her pre-questionnaire. It is one thing to write this down as an idea, it is another to associate it with personal experience. She takes it a step further by saying it “contained a piece of me.” As her teacher, I had been concerned that her aversion to the actual mess would distract her from the experience. I was glad to read this was not the case. She continues her reflection:

The article also made mention of art in day-to-day living. To me, this is the most beautiful form of art. It’s practical, expressive, and innovative. I feel that many people overlook the beauty in everyday objects, such as light bulbs, running tap water, or a toaster. Not only are they functional, but they are designed purposely and aesthetically.

When she wrote about the beauty in practicality, I was reminded of her choice for the interesting object. While Anika does not say much in class, she is becoming quite candid in her writing.

As she so often does, she surprised me with the things she identifies as beautiful, i.e. light bulbs and running tap water. As I continued to learn more about her, I realized that she was inadvertently challenging me to look at the ordinary through her eyes.

Function or Experience

In her reflection on awareness, creativity, and communication in art (Frank & Preble, 2006), Anika writes:

I really quite like the quote “ordinary things become extraordinary when seen without prejudgment.” Everything is subjective and everything is relative. There is no one way to view a work of art. You must open your mind and set it free it from boundaries.

She sees the extraordinary in the ordinary. And that has value. However, this also seems to be a boundary that she has placed around art making and creativity: novel idea + functionality = creativity. But, her original definition of art is based in abstract qualities and experience. Will she be able to free herself from these self-imposed restrictions? Her reflection continues:

I also found the quote, “beautiful doesn’t necessarily mean good looking,” to be very intriguing. I agree completely. Like we’ve always been told, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. While some may think sunfish are rather ugly, boring creatures, I find them absolutely fascinating and graceful. I think the way their bodies float in the ocean is breathtakingly elegant.

Here we see she continues to lean towards the value of functionality as condition or aspect of beauty, i.e. the way the sunfish float.

Recalling the dichotomy of the answers from her questionnaire, she wants to learn something new (functionality) but she looks to art for emotional release (experience). Similarly, she found her improved art techniques to be useful, but looks to the art teacher as a possible friend and therapist. How will she find reconciliation between the boundaries imposed by function and the emotional release found in the lack of boundaries? They are not mutually exclusive unless she makes it so.

Linear Predisposition and Functionality

Until now, I have mostly shared Anika's writing with you. Now, I would like to show you how her thoughts and views were manifesting in her artwork running parallel to her reflections of the assigned readings. In these writings she often comments on order, function, and the ordinary. Yet this is contrasted with what she feels when she paints. However, it is the orderliness that affects her compositions in the following four examples. Keep in mind that this section takes place early in the semester.

After the visual-journal is inaugurated by the 'journal wreck' activity, the students are asked to fill the first page with as many different ways they can think of to write their names. As prep for this, we discussed and illustrated on the board various types and qualities of lines. Then students took turns coming to the board and drawing a letter. The next student had to draw the same letter again but change the way it looked. For privacy, I cannot use Anika's name page, but I can describe it to you. She wrote her name twelve times in a list format. Each of these versions were written left to right, horizontally, and approximately same size. This is orderly. It is how names, within a language that uses the Roman alphabet, are written. We read line by line, left to right. It is how our language *functions*. Anika either saw no need to alter it, or she was unable to imagine new ways to write it.

In comparison, other students wrote their names in different sizes, backwards, vertical, and in mirror image, etcetera. Anika's letters varied only in type of lettering, like different font choices in a document. She employed letters that were either printed, cursive, block, or bubble, etcetera. Only the twelfth attempt was different. It used the letters in her name in place of numerals on a clock face.

Another early prompt involved making a unique color wheel (not using the standard circles or wedges of color). Anika drew six pieces of fruit and shaded them in color. While her craftsmanship is neat, I want to draw your attention to her linear composition in Figure 22.



Figure 22. Anika's color wheel



Figure 23. Another student's color wheel

The design decisions made on the name page and on the color wheel page are indicative of her preference for visual order: left-right. While fruit and flowers seem to be a common choice for representation, Anika's was the only one composed in a straight line. I want to clarify that the two examples above are not a comparison of talent, only a comparison of choices made in the design. Anika's drawing skills are better than many students I have had the past. Technically, she is proficient beyond the beginner stage. However, the ability to expand those skills and express herself creatively is not yet awake.

Next, we will look at Anika's paint blots (Figure 24). While it was originally designed for primary school, year after year, my preservice teachers make a lot more than the few required for the activity. Along those lines, I found eight additional paint blots glued randomly throughout Anika's journal. Each was completed with detailed line-work and a name. Below is her 'official' Paint Blot page. Once again, notice the alignment. This is purposeful. In comparison, other students place their blots more randomly, often at playful angles. Even though "seeing" the images within (i.e. the bee, hot dog, rib cage, fish) in her blots is good practice for imagination. *What* she sees is based on things that exist in real life. In keeping with her pragmatic sensibilities, there are no fanciful or imaginary things.



Figure 24. Anika's paint blots

The prompt for the final example was, "What catches your eye?" This was the basis for a discussion on subjectivity, and becoming aware of personal preferences regarding imagery. Pictures and words were clipped from magazines and collaged on a journal page. Anika's decisions are dominated by control, precision, and order. In Figure 25, look at the limited overlap and neatly arranged clippings. It appears as if she attempted to put them in rows and columns. Additionally, with the exception of two images, all of the others are right-side-up.



Figure 25. Anika's collage Figure 26. Another student's collage

But why is this big deal? If Anika is unable to veer away from a realistic, “right” way of viewing images, this becomes a creative boundary. Remember, this is just a journal, one that is already “wrecked.” It is supposed to be a place to experiment. Years ago, I would have been disappointed by the apparent lack of creativity. Now I look at individual movement. Instead of focusing on my hopes for her creativity, I asked, are the two sideways images a sufficient example of experimentation for Anika? Are these baby steps moving her along her creative journey? Is this something I can draw her attention to explicitly and encourage her to keep pressing forward?

Purpose vs. Experience

Building on subjectivity, I took the students to the university's art museum with a challenge to find a work of art that they thought was beautiful and one they thought was ugly. The ugly could also be interpreted as disturbing or offensive. Students were instructed to briefly describe their chosen works and expand on their opinions of beautiful and ugly in relation to the art. The painting Anika chose as ‘ugly’ was “Sex Smells” by Elliot Walters. What I find interesting is the reason she gives. She wrote, “It’s so ... plain. And juvenile looking. It looks neither creative nor skillful, & I’d like at least one of the two. ... This is art but I don’t like it.”

But this painting by Walters is very similar to her own journal work: plain background and linear composition. This tells me she might be somewhat aware of what she does not like in her own artwork, but is not able to envision alternatives. Her reflection accompanying her visual response (Figure 27) on the beauty/ugly museum experience reads as follows:

The museum was a silent labyrinth. I got sort of lost in the works, and then I got actually lost in the museum somewhere in the more modern art section. ... I also really liked the Andy Warhol soup can. ... Overall, it was a relaxing experience, very therapeutic.

Notice the qualities she assigns to the experience: relaxing and therapeutic. Tension remains between the qualities she experiences in the midst of art and the value she places on *objects of purpose*. Again, there is nothing wrong with objects of purpose. The issue with Anika is that her vision is locked onto what *is* and what *should*, she cannot yet see what *might*. She knows what she *feels*, but she still has to discover what that *looks* like. Rows and columns and lists do not feel like the creative “release” she wants as describes in her pre-questionnaire.

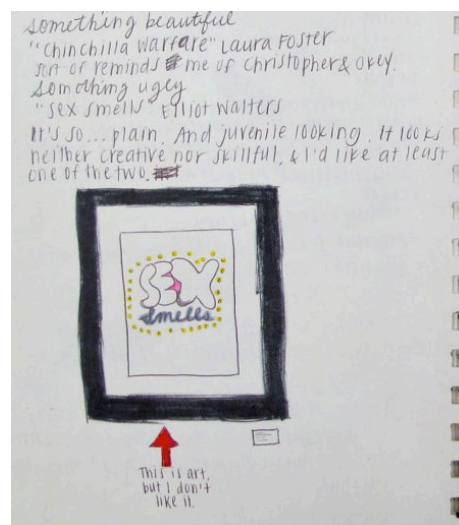


Figure 27. Anika's journal response from the museum

Which brings me back to that questionnaire: In answer to “Do you consider yourself creative?” Anika wrote, “not as much as I’d like to be. I’m more of an imitator. I find it more and more difficult to come up with creative ideas each year.” Earlier in her story, I questioned if her work was a reflection of style preference or a creative block? In the final sentence of her Journal Wreck activity, she wrote, “...branch out. Sometimes you can’t be in control.” This is indicative to me of her struggle: control vs. branching out. It can also be understood as the struggle to take risks, which is a tangle of confidence. Within the context of creatively emergent students, exercising rigidly controlled decision-making puts the processes within boundaries. The artist then knows what to expect. Inadvertently this also sets them up for a good or bad judgment call. If the goal is set but not reached, failure is the result. Conversely, when you decide to take a risk, you go into the process not knowing the outcome. When the outcome is not predetermined, then whatever happens can be viewed through the lens of experience, which has value in, and of itself as a space to learn and grow.

Touching the “Wetness”

The generosity activity is a pouring of paint, until it spreads out all over the page. It alludes to a Japanese custom of overfilling a guest’s cup of tea to symbolize the host’s generosity. In my art room, it becomes an opportunity to tangibly be generous to one’s self when making art. Following this introduction, I asked students to pour paint onto their journal page. In order not to influence their experience, I give no additional instruction. On their own, they began to pick up their books and tilt them in order to watch and control the flow of paint. Some students took a brush or pencil and swirled the paint around. Anika took it a step further.

She looked up from her book and asked me, “Can I put my finger in it?”

“Yes,” I responded simply.

A few minutes later she said, “I want to put both my hands in it, can I?”

“Absolutely!” I answered with a big smile.

Remember her comments earlier in the semester on the “wetness and messiness” of both the journal wreck and the paint-to-music processes? She commented then, out loud, “I want to smear it with my hands,” but she did not. This generosity activity invited her to interact with the paint, and this time she said yes. Some might be tempted to point out that we are *just* smearing paint on a page, right? How could that important? We are not actually making “art”... are we? Maybe, maybe not. But students are experiencing art at its most fundamental level, a direct engagement with the media. What is going on is exploration through play. There are no worries about perfection or product. This is pure process and it sparks a joy that is almost child-like in its abandon. Anika connected, through touch, with the paint. There was no intended outcome. There was no defined purpose or function. I believe her positive reaction within a ‘non-practical’ experience moved her forward on her creative journey. Here is a photograph of Anika’s hands. Of note, she had a big smile on her face when I took this picture; as if she could not believe she finally touched the *wetness*.



Figure 28. Anika’s hands wet with paint



Figure 29. Anika’s Generosity journal page

Tension

The next prompt is from a quote by Winnie the Pooh (author A. A. Milne), and reads, “Rivers know this: There is no hurry. We shall get there someday.” Anika’s response to this quote (Figure 30) is a simple representation: a curvy, tangled blue line with multiple groupings of trees drawn along the way. The top of the line is marked “Here” and the bottom of the line is marked “There.” Near the beginning of the river she has drawn a star and written “You Are Here.” There is no personal interpretation or extension beyond the literal.

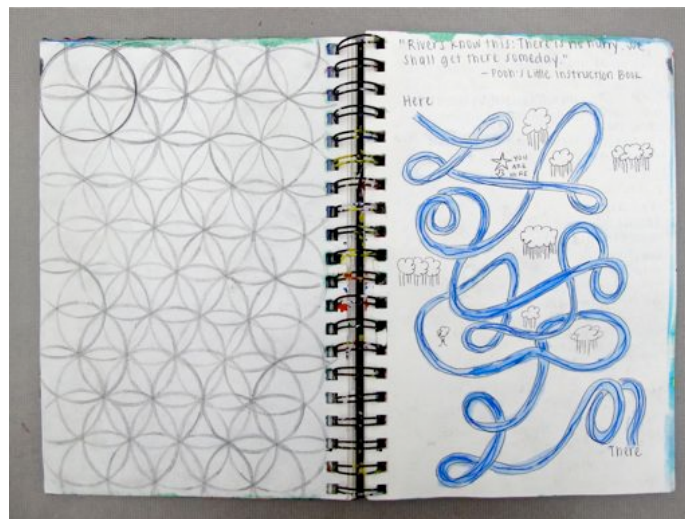


Figure 30. Left page, doodle design; right page, response to river quote

Overall, the drawing is reminiscent of a children’s activity book, the kind where you find your way through a maze. As I look back on previous drawings, it is evident that she can draw better than what she did on this page. There was nothing in her behavior or demeanor to suggest she was disconnected or impatient. What I observed was that she would work a little bit, erase, and then work on the facing page (doodles) instead of the page with the quote. That facing page is interesting. She filled the space with a repetitive design made of traced and precisely overlapped circles. At first, I was concerned that she was more engaged with this design than with the prompt.

However, the more I watched her go back and forth between the two pages, the more I suspected that she was struggling to generate a visual conceptualization of the prompt. It was as if she knew she did not want to do a literal translation, but she did not know where else to go, so she put her energy into this doodle. Something was blocking her creativity.

This block is hinted at in her reflection on the section of Finke's (1996) article that speaks to the chaotic-ordered thinking continuum. Anika identifies, in her own words, the tension hovering at her creative boundary:

Personally, I am a more ordered creator. I believe that everything should have a goal and a plan, and that things should be considered logically and reasonably. ... I am spilling with joy every time I find myself being more chaotic and creative. It makes me feel like I'm creating something more worthwhile and innovative, and something that is completely my own.

Her thinking is ordered but she feels joy in chaotic (open-ended) experiences. Too, she places conditions on the worth of her ideas. Creative ideas must be creative. It may seem obvious but it is not entirely accurate. It involves the tangle of perception. In an earlier reflection on the topic of What is Art?, Anika wrote, "Art is a creative idea that has been brought into reality." However, there is a process involved between empty space and creative ideas. Before *the final* creative idea is asserted, many other ideas have been considered, modified, and rejected. This is an ambiguous process where the finding the *right* idea means taking risks that your ideas might not work. It is a common practice among artists, but it is something ordered thinkers have trouble grasping. For Anika, she wanted the 'creative idea' but was not able to work through the process to find it. The example of the River quote highlights her struggle in seeking a creative experience while filtering her efforts through literal interpretation and misperceptions.

Intellectually she understands the concept of open-ended processes. This is a compilation excerpted from her things she has written:

It's not always about order. ... There's not always one definite way of doing something.

... Perfection is in the eye of the beholder. ... You must open your mind and set it free it from boundaries.

The aim now is moving that knowledge into practice.

Some Movement

While Anika continued to struggle with metaphors and literal interpretations, she moved in other ways. This example is a journal prompt attributed to Picasso, "Some painters transform the sun into a yellow spot, others transform a yellow spot into the sun." After a brief discussion on differing perspectives, students, as always, were invited to make their own interpretations and visualizations. Anika was enjoying the resist technique. She smiled happily as she watched the watercolor pull away from the oil pastel. However, as I looked at Anika's design, I struggled with my thoughts. On the one hand, she had filled the page. This was a change from early semester visualizations, which were small and left a lot of blank space on the page. On the other hand, it was still a very literal interpretation. I found myself wanting her to dig deeper, while at the same time reminding myself that creative journeys often meander. It is my place to facilitate and encourage the movement, not to judge it. The important thing is that she was growing, and she was enjoying being *in* the process.

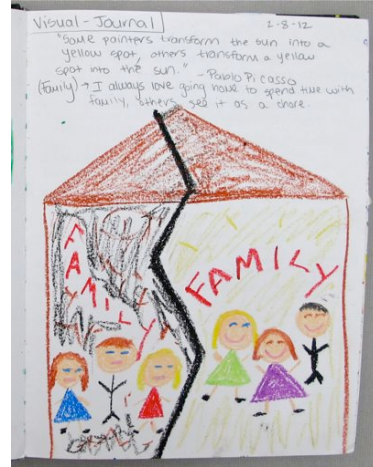


Figure 31. Anika's yellow spot page Figure 32. A classmate's yellow spot page

One Step Forward, One Step Back

On this day, we looked at two of Georgia O'Keefe's paintings. We talked about what the artist might be saying in her work, and how she used shape and color to express herself. The prompt was a quote by the artist, "I found I could say things with colors and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for." The students responded with varying types of imagery, except for Anika. Unlike the yellow spot and sun prompt, this one had no corresponding visuals.

She chose to convey an emotion, Fury. How did she do this? With simple white block lettering on a red background (*Figure 33*). The lettering and paint are neat, and the brushwork is intentional. Some of the strokes are very sharp, pointing inward to the word. This is a purposeful decision and it was encouraging that she recalled our earlier lessons on the qualities of line and how they convey emotion. But the design is very straightforward, and there is no visual interpretation or metaphor. Next to it is another student's response to the same quote (*Figure 34*). Neither page incorporates drawing or definitive imagery, but the other student does convey meaning.



Figure 33. Anika's 'Say it with color' page Figure 34. Another student's page

At this point, almost halfway through the semester, I was beginning to doubt that Anika would move beyond the literal. Once again, I had to confront my own feelings and doubts. My mind surged with questions. In what other ways could I demonstrate visualizing abstract ideas? Did I, as her teacher, fail? Had I given myself too much responsibility? Conversely, was I overconfident that my efforts could make a difference? Had I projected too much of my own hopes for her onto her work?

Logic Lock-down

In her reflection of Eisner's (2005) *The Misunderstood Role of Arts in Education*, Anika writes:

"The more we feel, the less we know." What? That can't possibly be true. It is true, however that emotions often times get in the way of logic and rationality. But I like to believe that the more you feel, the more you can understand.

Here she has described emotion as an obstacle, revealing her belief that logic serves feeling. While there are many instances in life and school where logic is necessary for learning and understanding, a mind that prioritizes it in the midst of creativity becomes locked down. Think back to her earlier comments highlighting the emotions of joy, happiness, release, and ownership within creative experiences. Now recall her literal interpretations of the Milne and O’Keefe quotes. In the above reflection she describes emotions as ‘getting in the way’ of thinking, yet states, “the more you feel, the more you understand.” Therefore, in this mindset, when she is presented with an opportunity for interpretation, she does not know how to bridge her logical (literal) understanding to the emotional content associated with an abstract concept.

No need to explore

The color and poetry assignment began with the creation of color metaphors as connected to the five senses. For example, what does purple taste like? Once all of the associations are written, the student uses them as a word bank to create a poem. After the poem is written, the students are asked to sketch four possible ways to visually represent their poem. For the final assignment, one design is chosen and combined with the poem in a mixed-media journal page.

Anika chose yellow and most of her word associations are unsurprisingly literal. Yellow looks like the sun, feels warm, and tastes like nectar. From this she quickly connected the sun to summer and a beach. Her first sketch (Figure 35) is of a girl (partial) in a swimsuit top. It is her only sketch. She was adamant that she did not need to make another design. This is an instance of her deciding the finished product at the onset of the activity. She had the words, and she had a definitive image that connected logically with the words. Her connection is factual, something she knows to exist and therefore must be *correct*. Therefore, she saw no reason to extend the explore other ideas.

However, when I take into consideration her struggles at coming up with ideas in general, I understand her attachment to the one idea she is pleased with. But her conviction that she knows what she wants creates a problem because it generates resistance. No other possibilities are investigated. I asked her to do the other three sketches even though she was already decided on the first. Although her finished work (Figure 36) was well done and met the criteria for the assignment, I was discouraged that she could not, or would not, try to expand on her original design.

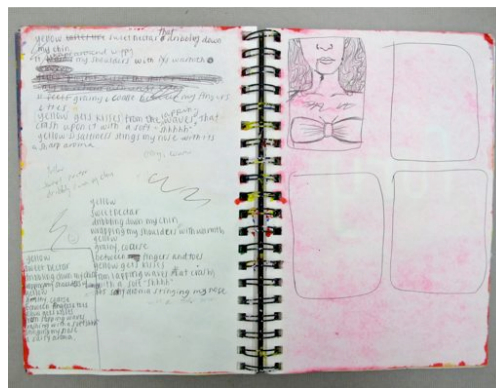


Figure 35. Anika's color poem design draft

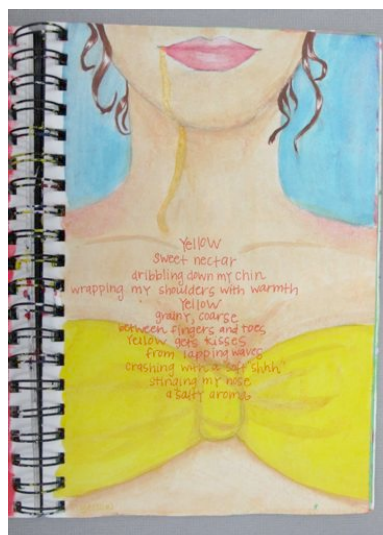


Figure 36. Anika's finished color poem

Impeded Movement

“One sees great things from the valley, only small things from the peak.” - G.K.

Chesterton. This quote led to a philosophical conversation at the beginning of our class. But it started off slowly as I pushed my students past the literal and into the abstract. Even this far into the semester, this type of thinking was not easy for them to do without scaffolding. To prompt their ideas, I asked them what words stood out to them and what images, ideas, memories, or associations did those words bring to mind. Here are some of the comments. In parentheses are my notes categorizing their ideas

Kylie: “trees are bigger up close than at the top” (literal/size perspective)

Jenny: “it’s more important to be closer to things and people” (value perspective)

Reagin: “When you’re on a journey you see all of the adventures ahead of you. When you’re at the top; it’s all over” (experiential perspective)

Barbara: “If people are friends with you when you’re in the valley, it shows they are better friends. Anybody can be with you when you’re on top.” (relational perspective)

I share the comments from other students for two reasons. First, to illustrate the way they think through an abstract prompt. And, secondly, to demonstrate what I thought was sufficient preparation for all of the students to be able to dig deeper into the quote, and more easily visualize it.

Figure 37 shows Anika's response to the quote:

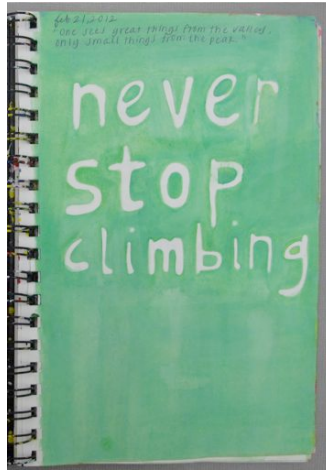


Figure 37. Anika's 'Valleys & Peaks' visual journal page

Anika was careful, taking her time to neatly paint the mint background and white lettering. Yet, even after our class discussion, she was not unable to visually conceptualize the quote. She mentioned wanting to draw a mountain (literal representation), but decided against it when she had heard the other girls talking about possibly drawing a mountain. Anika wanted to be different. Unfortunately, her difficulty in generating ideas, along with a resistance to exploring alternative designs, impeded her movement. Her creativity block remained in place.

However, Anika's perspective differs from mine. Before I show you her reflection on her own creative journey, I want to clarify something. I did not collect the journals during the semester. Nor did I read their journal reflections during class. I wanted them to have this space to freely and openly reflect without fear of judgment. They were left with me (temporarily) at the end of the semester. The purpose of Creative Journey prompt was as a check-in. I asked students to reflect *on* their experiences in the class, the way they felt *about* those experiences, and the way the experiences made *them* feel.

Here is Anika's reflection:

I found out I love watercolors and oil pastels. They're so fun. everything is great... the weather is great. this class is great. I love this class. I've encountered several roadblocks on my creative journey but the nurturing environment helped me to push past or work around them. I plan on sharing these activities and philosophies in my classroom to make it a more enriching environment.

I was not privy to Anika's praise of the class until the week after our final class. While it is nice to hear that she liked the class, I wish she been personally introspective. Moreover, it would have been helpful to have more detail. What did she think were the roadblocks? How was she helped to push past them? Yet, this surface assessment approach is similar to her responses in other reflections.

Don't Ask Questions

One of the assigned readings examines the use of Rembrandt's art as a tool to teach critical thinking. I have gazed in awe at his work in museums and was excited to find the article, *Rembrandt's art: A paradigm for critical thinking and aesthetics* (Conn, 2008). I assumed everyone had heard of him. He is a famous artist, right? Except Anika had not heard of him:

Funny thing; the article mentions that Rembrandt is a world renowned artist that is universally recognized, but I have no idea who he is, and am not familiar with his work. I even looked up some of his work on Google, and none of it looked familiar.

Anika's statements provide compelling evidence pointing to the gulf of privileged knowledge between those in the art world and general elementary education students. This is not an anomaly. It reminded me once again that what I take for granted remains unknown to *outsiders*. Does it surprise you that Anika had never heard of Rembrandt? It surprised me.

Once we established who Rembrandt was, the two groups shared their understandings and questions with each other. As usual, conversations can branch off into unexpected areas.

Here are some of the comments I overheard:

Reagin: “This class has made me so daring.”

Macy: “I’m not afraid to mess up.”

Anika: “I was taught not to ask a lot of questions.”

It is amazing what you hear in class and what you can learn about your students when you really listen. With that one comment, I suddenly had a new lens with which to view Anika, her classroom participation, her processes, and her art. If you are taught not to ask questions, it impacts your creativity. I had taken for granted that she knew how to question herself. Think back to her color poem. I wanted her to generate three more designs. I realize I had left out a crucial part of the process, one up until that moment, I had yet to identify. What I needed her to do was ask questions of her design. For example: What would it look like if I used X instead of Y? or Can I replace X with B? or How can I rethink this idea and use numbers instead of letters? While Anika had demonstrated the technical ability to draw, and the willingness to work, the missing piece was a *habit of inquiry*. A habit is a practice that is so ingrained, it requires no conscious thought or planning. It just *is*. As an artist, I continually ask myself questions. It is a conversation in which I inquire of the art, and as I immerse myself in the process, it answers me. It is automatic, so automatic in fact, that it had not occurred to me that Anika was not inquiring in the same way. But as with any habit, they occur through repetition over time. I could not give this to Anika, I could only facilitate opportunity. To teach her how to question, I began by asking questions *with* her when she was in the designing stages of her work.

My epiphany did not seem to make a big difference. Even though I tried to model art-inquiry, I saw no evidence of it her practicing it. She continued gravitating directly towards literal representations and not deviating from them in any way. For the journal page below (Figure 38), the prompt directed students to create a metaphor of themselves using a bird. One student wrote, “She cares for her flock like a mother hen,” and filled the page with the image of a hen and baby chicks beside a barn. Another girl painted a flamingo and wrote, “Oh to be able to stand tall and strong all day, on one foot.” Anika drew and neatly colored two birds with speech bubbles full of things birds like, such as a nest, birdseed, rain, a birdhouse, and a worm. Underneath, she wrote, “birds sing of the loveliest things.” This is not a metaphor, nor is there any connection to Anika.



Figure 38. Anika’s bird metaphor

No matter how I approached it, I was unable to overcome the “Don’t ask questions” mentality ingrained into her since by her family. In the Lyric Art assignment, students select a song they believed to be meaningful and create a mixed-media, visual interpretation of the song’s essence.

The word “interpretation” is used to encourage broad possibilities beyond an illustration of the lyrics. Below on the left is Anika’s one design sketch (Figure 39). On the right is her finished Lyric Art panel (Figure 40), with real sand glued onto the painted sand.

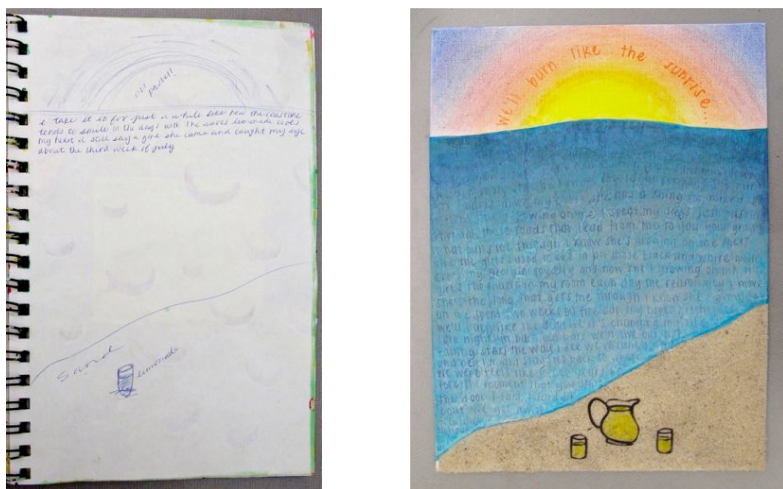


Figure 39. Anika’s one and only sketch Figure 40. Anika’s finished canvas

Her response to the work reads, “It’s lovely. I’m quite proud of my work.” Anika’s song choice was *Holiday Parade* by Gone. The lyrics talk about: the coastline, waves, lemonade, and sunrises. As you can see in Figure 40, Anika illustrated the lyrics.

Still Fascinated by Wet Paint

After an introduction and demonstration of mono-printing, students were invited to take turns making their own prints while the rest of the class worked on their visual journals.

At one point, I looked up and saw this (Figures 41, 42, 43):



Figures (left to right): 41. Anika painting her hand, 42 the first handprint, 43 her reaction to the paint on her hand

Anika had painted on her hand and used it to make the print. When she finished, she looked at her hand with an expression somewhere between a grin and a grimace. I'm sure the grimace was from the "messy wetness." I watched from the front of the room as she repeated the process several times. While her shyness had abated over the course of the semester, she was not talking to the girls next to her because she was completely focused on her own experience. This reminded me of her initial reaction at the beginning of the course, to the feel of paper soaked with paint. Now, even though we were nearing the end of the semester, Anika was still fascinated with the media itself. I could tell she was testing what it could and could not do.

Do you recall my earlier frustration, that Anika was not pushing her ideas and designs enough? After watching her play in the paint, again, I felt abashed at my unreasonable expectations. As trite as the saying may be, it remains true: You cannot run until you learn how to walk. Thinking back to the growth and development of my own four children, I contemplated what it took to for them go from walking to running. It involved bodily awareness, balance, strength, stamina, and a relational understanding of where they were relevant to their environment. It was gradual and took practice. Anika is, like the majority of my students, an *emergent* artist. Her starting point is just at a different place.

How could I expect someone in the onset of a creative journey to conceptualize and explore design possibilities (running) when she was still at the stage of familiarizing herself with the physical materials (walking)?

Words and Pictures

How does “the process of combining words and images develop?” This is the question Anika asked in her reflection of an article paralleling the processes of writing and illustration. I hoped that practicing weekly visual-verbal prompts would, over time, make that process more explicit for her.

One of the first things to stand out to me was the phrase, “You cannot see process.” I thought, “Wow, that’s really profound.” But then I realized I only thought that because it was underlined. Of course you can’t see process. Not the entire thing, anyway. But how exactly does one go about showing a child how to make decisions in a new way? And how exactly does the process of combining words and images develop? ... I remember struggling to write a story in elementary school, but struggling less to illustrate it, because I then had words to base my images off of.

The most telling thing in her words is her admission that even as a child she struggled less to illustrate when she had the story first. She needed to “base” her images on something. Illustration stems from an existing story or concrete idea. Visualization flows from an abstract conceptualization. They are not equivalent. This is another reason why she has struggled with the prompts; she tries to illustrate an abstract.

A subsequent article went deeper into the correlation between tones in words and images. These are the nuances that convey meaning beyond the surface. Anika responded:

I'm still trying to understand how illustrations can teach tone effectively, but I do understand the vague, general idea of it. Some colors and lines are softer than others, just like tone, and others are bolder and stronger.

While small, this disclosure is a step in the right direction. Understanding the meaning and emotion that color conveys moves her further along her creative journey.

A Broadening View of Creativity

After, an entire semester's worth of reading, the comment below shows little shift in Anika's definition of creativity beyond idea generation. Had nothing changed?

I feel that many people will associate creativity only with the fine arts such as painting, music, and dance. However, creativity is less of an artistic form that you can see, and more of an ability to come up with novel ways of thinking over and over again.

Yet, the following section of the same reflection indicated her understanding *had* expanded beyond novelty and fluency.

Everyone is blessed with a different sort of creativity. Not everyone can be an artist, or a singer, or a dancer, or an engineer. Some of us are dreamers. Some of us are givers. Some of us are cooks. But everyone is creative. Not everyone knows it or acknowledges it.

She wrote, creativity is "an ability to come up with novel ways of thinking over" then followed that with "everyone is blessed with a different sort of creativity." My question is this: Did Anika understand that she had just challenged her own definition? Several times in the beginning of the semester, she indicated creativity as the ability to come up with new ideas.

Now at the end of the semester, she has expanded creativity to include: artist, singer, dancer, engineer, dreamer, giver, and cook. Too, she asserts that everyone is creative but not everyone knows it. I wonder if she considers herself creative. While her writing does not convey an explicit reevaluation of creativity, the seed had been planted.

The final prompt asked students to visually represent spirituality then write a reflection to accompany it. In retrospect, having a serious subject at the end of the semester was not the best plan. It was a warm, sunny spring day, and they were ready to finish class and head into their weekend. Half of the class was very talkative. I had doubts they were reflecting on the assignment. Anika was one of the students working quietly on her page. Because she identified herself as a religious person, I expected to see a literal representation in her book, perhaps a church or religious symbol. I was thrilled when I saw what she was making (*Figure 44*). It was interpretive imagery *and* it connected to her personally.



Figure 44. Anika's spirituality journal page

Here is her written interpretation:

I think of spirituality as a guiding light, hence the colors yellow and orange. And the explosion of red and orange represents the fire that fuels one's faith. The stripe down the middle represents your own moral compass of right and wrong.

Considering her work throughout the semester, it seems she would have painted the literal objects, a fire and a compass. Instead, she pushed deeper into the design and came up with this vibrant visual metaphor. This was the creative movement I had been hoping to see her make all along.

I am Creative: Anika's Journey in Her Own Words

It was through the post-class questionnaire, final essay on creativity, and follow-up interview that I began to understand the nature and extent of Anika's movement. The first question on the questionnaire asked, Do you consider yourself creative? Anika answered, "After this class, very much so, yes. Everyone is!" Another question asked, What do you think you've learned in this class personally? Her response, "Don't be afraid to try, and don't be afraid to play." The last question asked, Is there anything else you would like to share or want me to know? She wrote, "Thanks for reigniting my creative spark and inspiring me to go beyond the standard and ordinary." I was glad she now considers herself creative. Equally encouraging was her courage to try and to play. Yet, these short responses only scratched the surface, so I hoped the essay would provide more depth.

The final written assignment required a two-page essay on creativity. In it I asked students to contemplate their experiences during the semester and their understanding of creativity. My phrasing was carefully neutral so as not to presuppose the outcome. I also stressed being honest and not writing something they thought I wanted to hear.

For my research purposes, in addition to my position as their teacher, I truly wanted to know what they thought was important. In the paragraph below, I have paraphrased the highlights from Anika's *four*-page essay:

On the first day of class, I remember being convinced that creativity was limited to fine arts. I thought we would make art, and that this class would be an easy 'A.' I never thought I'd walk away with a completely different outlook of myself as a creative being. Another thing that stands out is that when we wrote, you didn't grade us on our writing abilities. You were more concerned with our understanding and interpretations of the article. When I have my own classroom, I want it to be a space for creativity and art. And, I won't allow myself to dictate the way children think. Also, I'll be looking at my visual-journal for ideas. Thank you for helping me rediscover myself and my abilities. I had almost completely forgotten just what I was capable of, and that is everything.

Although the essay did provide more detail, it was through the interview that I really came to understand her experience and her thoughts within them. One month after class ended, I emailed my students to see if any of them would be still be in town during the summer, and if so, did they have time for an interview. Anika volunteered. I conducted a fifty-minute interview with her. It was recorded and transcribed. Because I am a friend of the owners of a local coffee shop, I was able to conduct the interview in their office above the café. Before the interview began, Anika and I spent a few minutes reconnecting and drinking coffee. With her answers to my questions, Anika surprised me one last time. She had gone further in her creative journey than I realized.

The following section shares highlights from Anika's interview. Her comments are paraphrased and I have grouped them into themes: personal creativity, comparison and judgment, open-ended processes, play and experience, and implications for teaching. Within these themes I draw attention to the movement of her implicit beliefs and her navigation of the tangles.

Personal Creativity

The first theme centers on her implicit beliefs on personal creativity. As she reflected on her mindset at the start of the course, we see the tangle of confidence. For Anika, this involved technical ability, issues of comparison, and a strong preference for order. Then she comments on how her views have changed. Specifically, she has reassessed her identity and now considers herself more creative. Additionally we see the tangle of perception. These comments speak to the way she connected art and creativity. In the beginning we see the typical view of creativity equals fine art. This changes to an acknowledgment of multiple manifestations of creativity.

I started this class with a negative perspective. I was really shy and did not believe I was creative. In my mind, creativity was strictly art, like if you can paint a beautiful mural, then you're an artist. I wasn't confident in my abilities and I kept to myself in class. I remember being very structured and wanting that in our assignments. Looking back, I am more creative than I gave myself credit for, and I know there are many ways to be creative.

Comparison and Judgment:

Digging deeper, we find that her 'negative perspective' emanates from measuring her work against others, and always finding hers to be inferior. Additionally we see her sensitivity to teacher judgment. As her comments progress we see why and how her views evolved.

First, she expresses the importance of encouragement that moves away from right-or-wrong and to individuality in interpretation. Then she recognizes that her comparisons were unfair to herself. Next, she admits that as her awareness and appreciation of uniqueness grew, her views on her own creativity improved. Moreover, her last comment reveals her change in perspective regarding the practical and emotional navigation of mistakes.

During the semester I kept wondering why my stuff didn't look as pretty as the other girls' stuff. Now I can look back and see what I didn't see at the time, which is I was doing my own thing. I was creative in my own way. Now I know those comparisons weren't fair. People have different skills and ideas. But so many times a teacher will tell students "that's not the way to do it" or "this is wrong." So a student thinks they are wrong. It was nice in this class to be reassured that my work wasn't wrong. And that it's okay for it turn out differently from how I planned it. I've learned to just remind myself that I can try it again or do it differently. When I think about it, I realize I'm more of a relaxed person now. I'm unique. This class changed my perspective. I think everyone should have this experience.

Open-ended Processes:

The next segment probes her thoughts on open-ended assignments, and her feelings about those experiences. Art making within the course was structured so that both the approaches and objectives were open-ended. Although I sensed her frustration in class, here she delves into the way she felt when faced with multiple options. Next, she goes into the authoritative way she was raised in regard to single options (lack of choice) and expectations that the first attempt be 'right.' From there she admits being unaware of the concept of process until the end of the semester. Open-ended processes contribute to "art-problems."

Options have to be examined and evaluated in order to find the “answer,” which is the decision you make regarding your design and or design execution. Anika simultaneously asserts problem-solving as an important aspect of creativity, and her biggest obstacle. This is in alignment with her tendency to stick with the first idea she gets. However, she does come to a place of recognizing the idea of multiple “right” answers. Even more significant is the final comment in which she declares the need to “dig deeper” into your own thinking.

Having so many choices really overwhelmed me. There were so many decisions to make. I was used to being told by parents, ‘This is how you do it ... do it like this ... I’ll show you once ... Get it right the first time.’ But you showed us different ways for I think every activity that we did. Before this class, I had overlooked problem-solving as a creative thing to do. I’m not really good when faced with problems. I’m just like, ok, what’s the answer. Now I know there can be more than one answer to a question or problem. Because sometimes you don’t know what you’re really thinking or how you really feel about something and you have to kind of have to dig deeper. It’s a process and I wasn’t aware of this concept until the very end. That’s when I noticed my perspective had changed.

Play and Experience:

One thing I wanted to discuss was her curiosity about the physical feel of paint. First she describes the sensation, but then she jumps directly into play. This triggers a very vivid memory of playing in the mud when she was a child. Moving the conversation back to play, I understood *why* she liked to play in the paint. First, there was no risk of making a mistake. Second, she got to experiment with the properties of the paint itself in relation to how it responds to her actions. Still, I wanted to hear why *she* enjoyed playing with the paint. Her comments point to freedom, tactile sensation, and exploration.

In comparing play to purposeful design, she alludes to previous comments on broad choices. Yet, the next thing she says spotlights her newfound courage to push creative boundaries. I remember actually laughing, happily, at her enthusiastic claim that she did not “have to stay on the paper” because she wants to “paint the floor.” When compared to her restraint and hesitation at the beginning of the semester, it is clear that she has untangled those early issues of confidence.

I liked the paint when it was watery and I could play in it. It felt like I was a kid again. Like when you play with mud and squish it. I could draw and paint, and if I didn’t like it, I could just wipe it off, or paint over it, or smear it. Paint can be splattered, dotted, whatever I wanted. It was so liberating. It’s like you were letting me do this, and I thought maybe I can go farther. When I asked you if I could put my hands in it, you let me. I liked playing. It’s really just trying stuff out and seeing how it feels in your hand physically. Sometimes it’s coarse and grainy, or other times smooth and creamy. And I could make different lines and blend colors, but some stuff doesn’t blend well, I you put the colors side by side. It’s freeing but overwhelming. I would wonder, where am I going with this? I didn’t know. But at the same time, it’s like well, who says I have to go anywhere with it? Who says I have to stay on the paper? I want to paint the floor.

Implications for Teaching:

When the interview progressed to teaching, I was curious to see if there were any specific understandings she believed could be transferred to her future classroom. I thought she would gravitate towards practical things like specific assignments. Instead, her first remarks focused on the qualities in the class environment. My follow-up question asked her explain what she meant by ‘nurturing.’ The fact that she intends to redirect a student’s focus from self-criticism to positive traits has important implications.

She will have the opportunity to avert potential tangles in confidence. This leads to multi-modalities and her new philosophy of obtaining knowledge. On the surface, her comment is about the insufficiency of linear knowledge in a textbook. The reason I said it is a ‘new’ philosophy is because of *how* she explained her thinking. She models questioning! Even though I devoted a lot of time coaching her through the process of inquiry, I never felt, based on classroom observations, as if she understood it enough to do it on her own. Her phrases, “delve deeper,” “why,” and “what else,” were echoed from our class, but she is practicing inquiry as applicable to history and math. This is an example of how her shifts in creative thinking and problem-solving have the potential of transferring forward.

I want my class to be free of judgment like yours was. I want it be a nurturing and open environment. I liked that you encouraged us even when we thought our stuff looked bad. You’d point out good things and make us focus on that. You’d ask questions. Now if I had a student in history for example, I would tell a student they can’t know everything from the book they read. They have to think about it, and delve deeper, and ask why, and what else.

Reflecting back on her art, I had no idea of the shifts that were gradually taking place in her mind. Anika was averse to the lack of structure, and frustrated by open-ended processes throughout the semester. Subconsciously she maintained a tension between order and experience. Because of this, her art continued to be restrained until the last visual-verbal journal page, the spirituality prompt. There was nothing special about that prompt. She had been taking small steps all along, except they were all internal. Once she was able to navigate the tangles of confidence and perception, her self-expression was freed.

Artistically speaking, did she move as far as Bailey? No, but that is not a fair question. What matters is that movement occurred. They are each on their own journey, which means each will be different. Bailey's shifts occurred midway through the course. Anika's didn't happen until the end. Without the interview, I would have doubted that it had happened at all, much less to the extent that it did. My hope for Anika is now that she is aware that she is capable of thinking differently, she will be better equipped to reach deeper into her future art making and creative endeavors. What I hope that you, the reader, will take away from this story is a better understanding of the way non-artists think and the very real difficulties they face when encountering open-ended art processes.

PostScript

At the very end of the interview, Anika told me she went out and bought a lot of art supplies. She shared how much she enjoyed it. That spilled into an almost childlike enthusiasm for introducing her friends to “playing” with art. I hope it will bring a smile to your face as you read her words.

Anika said:

With art, it just makes me want to do it more. More often. I want to incorporate it more into my daily life. And I told myself I was going to do that this summer....

I did go out and I bought some oil pastels. Because I like them so much. And I think I might have gotten some cheap watercolors, too. And a lot of times I'll invite people over to just hang out and I always pull them out and I say, do you want to play? Do you want to play with these colors? Because I have a lot of stuff. I have markers. I have colored pencils. I've got pastels and watercolors. And well, you can do this. It's like a resist. It's really cool. And, um, you know, not everyone says yes, of course. Because not everyone wants to do that sort of thing. They're like, I just came over so we could watch a movie. I'm like, okay, but this is fun.

Emily: A Gentle Creative Becoming

Emily's Journey

Emily was soft-spoken but not shy. She walked into class the first day with a sweet smile that never left her face the entire semester. A natural nurturer, she was often the first to offer encouragement to the other students at her table. In many ways she was an exemplary student who was attentive, actively participated in class, and carefully completed all of her assignments. Yet, as the weeks passed, I wondered if her creative movement was hampered by proclivity for verbal expression. Overall, she offered no resistance to any art-making experience I presented, yet, she was tentative in her use of materials. However, the hesitation related to an unfamiliarity with the media, not the confidence or courage to try. Additionally her visual representation tended towards standard symbolizations, thus hovering in stage four, the development of visual schema, of the stages of artistic expression (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964). In contrast, while Bailey struggled with unstructured art-making, and Anika with idea generation, both had relatively moderate drawing skills. Emily was content to “just make art” and did not seem aware of any art-making or creative-thinking blocks.

During the semester, it was difficult to reconcile the minimal growth in her art with the growth she spoke of in her reflections. In order to frame her movement, I had to re-think my thinking. Until Emily, I had conceptualized creative becoming as an interweaving of three aspects of the self: including expression, cognition, and awareness. In my classes, I observed creativity and tangles as revealed through student art. With Emily, her movement was in the areas of cognition and awareness but she never quite connected it through her art. One of my questions going into her story was, How does minimal creative movement in one arena impact the movement in another?

Through her art and writing, I examined her disconnect involving visual and verbal elements. There was some movement in regard to art making but it was small. However, through her writing I found other types of movement in the areas of implicit beliefs and self-confidence. But these were not as apparent to me during the semester. In my field notes, there were no notable moments, experiences, or interactions with Emily over the semester. Like Emily, her creative becoming was gentle and soft-spoken.

Tangles of Perception

Emily's answers in the pre-class questionnaire illuminate her creative starting point in my class. Her views are typical of previous students, who as non-artists try to make sense of the art world and where they may or may not find entry into it. In answer to "When you think of art, what comes to mind?"

Emily wrote, "I think of nature and beauty; also paint, drawing, and photography. My definition is anything that is perceived as beautiful to the viewer."

Here we get a glimpse into her implicit beliefs and the first strand of the triadic tangle, which speaks to perceptions: What is art? With this answer, we see she defines art as a fine art product that has the quality of beauty. When asked how she describes creativity, she answered, "When someone uses their gifts, talents, and abilities in a unique way." This is the second strand of the triadic tangle, which addresses issues of permission: Who can make art? With the words *talent* and *gift* she is implying something bestowed. Some people have talent and some do not, and by extension, people that have talent make art. The next question asked if she considered herself creative. She responded, "To an extent yes. Often times I feel like I compare myself to others though and I wish I was more creative like them."

This is part of the third strand, which tackles issues of confidence: How do I make art *right*? For Emily, that implies the need to navigate issues of risk and comparison.

Very quickly, we see that art, beauty, talent, and creativity are enmeshed in Emily's mind. This perspective often leads to comparison, which in turn affects confidence. Another question asked her to describe an art project or experience that she remembered from elementary school. She recalled making a clay cup and being "able to make and mold it however I wanted." I have learned to pay attention to students' memories. I am curious what lingers with them from many years in the past. Based on Emily's earlier statement that she compares herself unfavorably, it is not surprising that the memory she chose is one where comparison was limited and personal expression was encouraged. The opportunity to create an individual design prevented a classroom full of homogeneous clay projects. This heightened the feelings of success and satisfaction in the experience. This made it memorable. But that is not something she explicitly understands yet. However, implicitly it is apparent when she explains the role of art teachers, "[They] should encourage students to be imaginative." Imaginative, like creative, is an elusive concept, yet each emphasizes individuality. The aim is for Emily to find ways to understand this at a more concrete and personal level.

An Open Mind

Although she answered 'yes' in the pre-questionnaire regarding her belief in her own creativity, we now begin to see why she qualified it with "to an extent." In this reflection on *The Nature of Art* (Preble & Preble, 2006), she describes three things that lead to the alienation of non-artists from the art world: lack of technical experience, belief that others (artists) make art (tangle of permission), and a lack of specialty knowledge regarding critique and appreciation. However, her evolving perspective indicates openness and optimism.

Emily writes:

The concept of Art is very new to me. Besides the general art class in elementary school and some in middle school, I haven't had much experience with mediums, creativity, or artsy elements; however, I have always taken "visual delight" in the artwork of others. Many times, more complicated pieces confuse me, and it frustrates me when I don't understand what the artist was thinking. By reading Chapter One in our reader though, I am beginning to understand that art is a much broader and more beautiful concept than I realized.

In the Journal Wreck activity, this openness is further revealed. While Bailey vividly protested the *chaos* of this activity, and Anika became focused on the *feel* of the messiness, Emily simply enjoyed it. She wrote:

This activity was different from anything I've ever done in a classroom setting. I love the Freedom! It is so different from my obsessive ways... to just Let Go & scribble outside the lines. ... it shows me that I don't have to be perfect or go in the right order all the time.

The reactions to this the process, coupled with the written responses, is the reason I continue to do this journal page with my students year after year. It provides so much insight into where they are, where I need to meet them, and where I need to gently push. Emily welcomed the experience and scribbled the word 'freedom' across the page when she was finished. Her receptive attitude was encouraging to me at the time, in the sense that I did not have to "worry" about her. Emily was not hesitant or resistant. In contrast with many of her classmates, she seemed happy to go along with anything.

An Emerging Awareness

Her next reflection is a response to *Awareness, Creativity, & Communication* (Preble & Preble, 2006), and offers the first indication of explicitly recognizing the existence and value of personal interpretation when looking at or creating art. By realizing an individual's lens is unique to, and reflective of, that person, Emily has opened up space for her own opinions. This places her views next to instead of subjugated under art professionals. While her opinions are not informed, they are no less valid. In essence, she has begun closing the codified gap between artists and non-artists. Emily writes:

After reading this chapter, I am realizing that whether I am creating, seeing, or experiencing, I make a lot of assumptions... I don't even realize I am making. Each individual person looks at a particular piece of artwork and interprets it, based off of what they know, what they have experienced, and what they value. I am now more aware that when we "see" a specific piece of art, each individual views it through a different lens... The same concept applies to the process of creating."

Her last statement indicates an intellectual connection of this awareness to creativity. What was puzzling to me was that I saw no manifestation of these shifting perspectives in her visual journal. Her confidence and growing awareness were not extending to her work.

Verbal Dominance

Within her early visual-verbal journal work I began identifying a heavy reliance on text paired with minimal visuals. She was responding to all of the prompts in words. Any visual imagery was employed as a filler for the background, and often consisted of simple motifs or symbols. I began wondering if this was an issue of not having ideas, having ideas but not knowing how to visualize them on the page, or having ideas that were not visual.

The following two images are from early in the semester, ranging in order from the weeks two to six. The visualizations are all very simple. In the first one (Figure 45), Emily has responded to the quote: “Life is the art of drawing without an eraser.” The page consists mostly of words. In the background, she has filled the space with swirls and line work. This swirl motif recurs throughout her journal. Below the paragraph explaining her meaning of the quote, she has written the word ‘Life’ and filled it with more words.

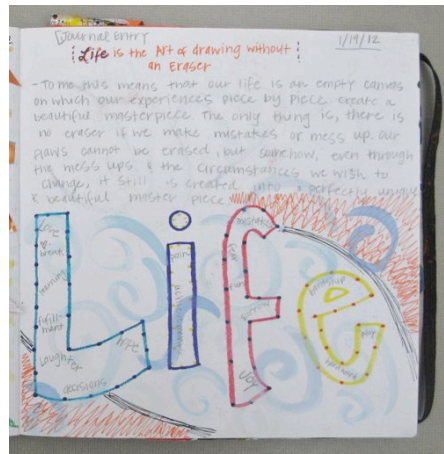


Figure 45. Emily's response to 'Life Without An Eraser'

The next example, Figure 46, is Emily's response to the quote, "Rivers know this: There is no hurry, we shall get there someday." Again, we see words and quotes disconnected from the imagery. The line-work does not correspond to the additional phrases she used (Nothing happens instantly) and (We learn so much in the process we call life). The 'rivers' are suggested through branching wavy lines of blue. The background space consists of dots and a light washed of blue stripes. My observations and concerns are not in regard to talent. The way she drew the river does not matter any more than if she had chosen not to draw a river at all. The issue is nothing about the visualization communicates any meaning or connection to her words. In contrast, recall that the line-work on Anika's river page was similarly simple, but she placed trees and signage next to the river to communicate the concept of a journey.

Figure 47 shows another one of Emily's classmate's responses to the river quote. In it, she has drawn a turtle in the river and a fish in a connecting pond. This aligns with her interpretation of the quote in which she describes the necessity of planning, enjoying the journey, and doing your best. She is represented in the turtle, which has the advantage over the fish, even though the turtle moves more slowly.

The prompts I use are chosen for several reasons: one, they invite philosophical introspection; two, they are open to personal interpretation; and three, they have a visual anchor (i.e. river) that serve as a springboard. This springboard is important for emergent artists who are often intimidated when asked to generate images from abstract concepts. However, the prompt is not intended to be illustrated literally. The challenge is for students to reflect on what it means to them; i.e. where does the prompt *take* them. With Emily, I wondered if she was: A. not reflecting personally on possible connections or meanings; or B. unable to connect the verbal to the visual. Since her all of her writing was thoughtful, I concluded that it was most likely an issue of connection. Specifically, it occurred when extrapolating imagery from ambiguous ideas. This differs from Anika who, in looking for the best idea, often shuts down all ideas.

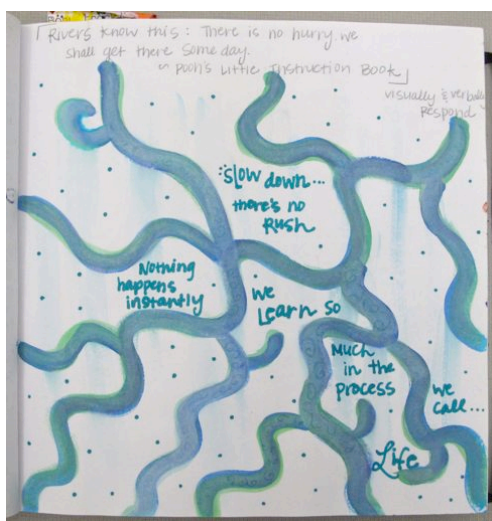


Figure 46. Emily's river prompt response

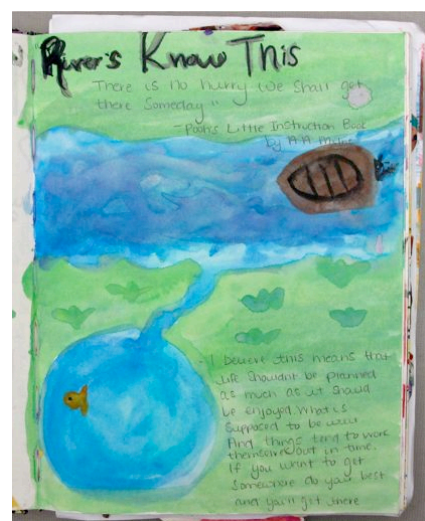


Figure 47. Another student's river response

In analyzing Emily's journal, I found that out of 50 visual-verbal prompt responses, there were only nine in which the image filled the page and visually outweighed the text. The more open or abstract a prompt was, the more likely the visual would be a pattern behind or around the words. Based on the nature of her visuals overall, I believe she is not able, at this time, to generate visual interpretations unless she has a concrete word association, for example river. However, I need to point out that this is not due to an underactive imagination. The paint blot exploration is one example of her imagination. As described in the previous portraits, it is something the students really enjoy. Emily made nine of them. What I found intriguing was *what* she saw in the blots. Amid plenty of flowers, insects, animals, and funny people, Emily saw complete scenes. Below is one of her blots (Figure 48) with her written description: "White horse drinking water out of a rippling river; red leaves in the back ground."

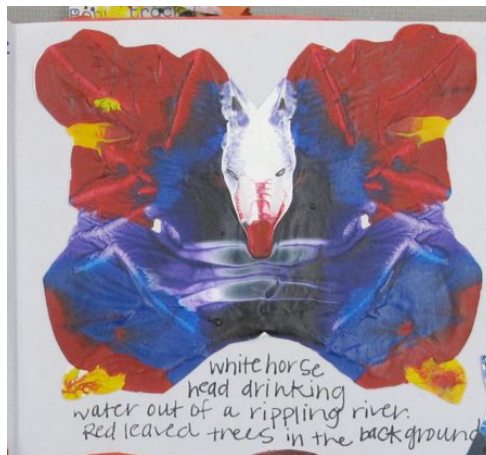


Figure 48. Emily's paint blot

Reconceptualizing Creativity

Emily's reflections from the first half of the semester tell a different story than her art-making. While one is not advancing, the other is evolving. This, the verbal, is where Emily is encountering and grappling with old beliefs and new understandings.

She is actively untangling the strand of perception, as demonstrated by her comment, “I have never really previously considered ...” Her writing uncovers how she is reconceptualizing creativity beyond her initial, self-stated definition which limited it to talent and artifacts. First, she admits to not previously considering the possibilities of more than one answer in regard to learning. This is attributed to her experience in school. In response to reading *The Misunderstood Role of Arts in Human Development* (Eisner, 2005), Emily writes:

Many of Eisner’s theories are things that I have never really considered previously.

Subjects like math, science, and even grammar often stress the significance of finding and comprehending the one answer for each of the problems given in class.

Also, in response to Eisner, she moved towards the idea of expression as necessary for human growth. This is set forth as a balance to logic, by which she means traditional reasoning and problem solving according to strict principles of validity. Even so, I would have liked to know what *she* meant by “expressing freely?” She also wrote:

... I feel that if logic was all there was, we would be limiting ourselves as humans and creating a wall that would prevent anyone from expressing themselves freely or uniquely as an individual.

Following that, after reading *Teachers’ Biases Toward Creative Children* (Scott, 1999), it is apparent that Emily recognizes and supports creativity in the classroom. However her statements are general; i.e. ““I have always thought creativity to be a good thing, especially in the context of the school.” Creativity is still a good *word* and a good *idea*. Because it is early in the semester, she has yet to clarify any aspect of it more specifically.

In *More ways than one: Fostering creativity in the classroom* (Cropley, 1992), Emily identified *process* as being important. She did not expand on her understanding of what that might entail. However, linking creativity with process is a step towards making the *idea* of creativity more tangible. She writes:

Another thing that really caught my attention is the fact that creativity in the classroom is a process, so in order for it to be effective, all areas of the curriculum must prompt creative thoughts.

Thus, by the midpoint of the semester, Emily has embraced new ideas that inform her perception of creativity. These include: multiple solutions to a problem as opposed to limiting it to one right answer; the implications of strict interpretation on free expression; the benefit of creativity in schools; and the relation of creativity to process. Her intellectual understandings were expanding.

Identifying as Creative

A reassessment of conceptual assumptions is vital. However, I am interested in how this translates to the individual. How has Emily's expanded perception influencing her personally? Has she related it in anyway to her own creativity? If so, is it beginning to influence her art? At the midpoint of the semester, students created a visual-verbal reflection of their creative journey from the beginning of the class until now. I asked them to consider where they were, what they had encountered (both positives and negatives), and where they thought they would go. Emily wrote:

"I have learned so much about my personal creativity in this class. To think I 'decided' years ago that I wasn't creative is a crazy thought now. I used to think you had to be a great drawer in order to be an artist or 'artistic.'

The journey of this semester has ... restructured my thinking. I feel that I will continue to try new things because of this and not be afraid to take creative risks any more.

From the beginning, I emphasize to my students that they do not have to draw like an artist. I am glad this has eased Emily's mind within the artistic risks she takes. Yet, in spite of her being "not afraid to take creative risks," she continued to struggle with imagery. Her visual for this prompt, Figure 49, consisted of a line drawing of a spiral sun with the word 'shine' to one side. It was not the simplicity that bothered me. It was the disassociation. She often draws suns and sun symbols, so I am doubtful the sun represents anything specific to her journey. In Figure 50 another student represented her earlier self as a straight brown line, and added the description "beginning -> steady." At the end of the brown line, she drew seven large zigzag lines, each in a different color. The added description reads, "now Free." This simple visual correlates with her written response:

At the beginning of class ... I was hesitant.... I always felt that everything had to be a masterpiece... I have learned to embrace a little 'chaotic' thinking ... Sometimes creativity appears best when you just start a project and see where it takes you... I use to stick to my comfort zone ... now I like watercolors.

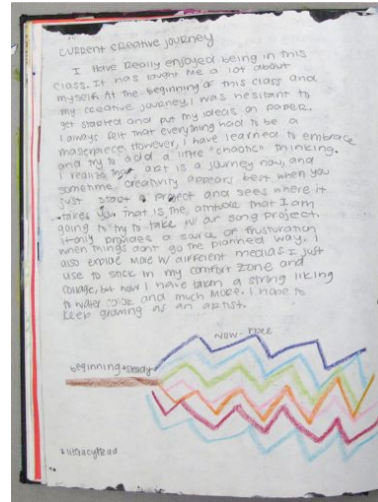
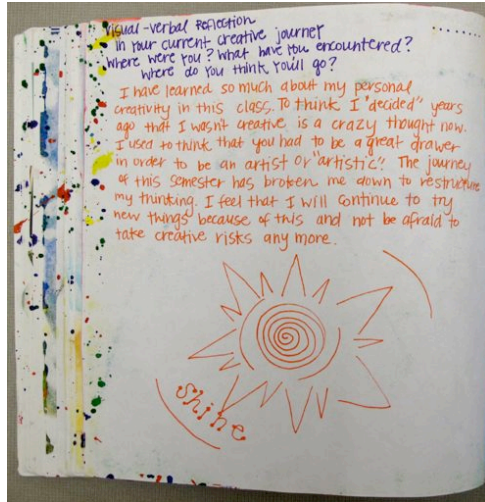


Figure 49. Emily's creative journey response Figure 50. A classmate's response

What is interesting is the juxtaposition of her views and my own. The movement I looked for was based on how I have learned to 'read' my students' journeys through their art. Because of her visual-verbal disconnect, Emily's journey has not been apparent in her work. In her reflection, she identifies a change in beliefs, thinking, and confidence in the midst of risk. However, her art gives no evidence of the things she wrote. Although I was happy to read her self-assessment, I still wonder if and when this will impact her art-making. She has "learned a lot," but what is she personally *experiencing*?

Appreciating Small Steps

In this section, I highlight the first time Emily created a visual-verbal page where the image was the sole focus. What is interesting is the contrast in the joint processes. In this color-poem assignment, the colors are metaphorically associated with the five senses. Those word associations become the basis for a poem, and then the poem is visually interpreted into the journal. The purpose, as always, in requiring visual and verbal responses is to encourage both while simultaneously allowing space for students' preferred way of approaching an art 'problem.' Emily was able to quickly generate a lot of words.

Words are where she is comfortable, and while some students took a week to write their poem, Emily had a rough draft of hers by the end of class. Here is her poem:

Red

Red drips from chins
Leaks on picnic blankets
Tastes sweet
Refreshing as it trickles down.

Red radiates laughter
and sun-kissed songs
It jumps and skips
and sings, unafraid.

Red crackles and explodes
LOUD sparkles
Glowing brightly in the night
Painting the sky scarlet
Freedom for All.

Emily's creative process can be traced and analyzed by looking at the finished journal spread (*Figure 51*). In her mind she jumped from words to a scene: i.e. red = watermelon = summer picnics = Fourth of July. The resulting art depends on known imagery already connected to a familiar holiday. She did not have to visualize the scene because she had already lived it. Therefore, the poem and image are very literal instead of an integrated metaphor. Additionally, she physically separated the poem from the image.

Looking closer, I can see her go-to swirl pattern behind the fireworks. However, instead of leaving the pattern, she changed her mind and drew fireworks on top of them. Although her “poem reads painting the sky scarlet,” she chose to imply this with wide swaths of a red wash instead of literally painting the sky red. In the sand, she drew stylized footprints for three people. The larger footprints on each side of the smaller set allude to the presence of a family. That is a level of detail not present in any of her earlier work. The picnic is represented by a simply drawn bowl and blanket, and black eighth notes symbolize music. For the poem on the facing page, she added line drawings of watermelon slices, more notes, and the American Flag.



Figure 51. Emily's poem, Red

Although I want to see even more stretching, I cannot allow my expectations of what she *might* be able to do influence what she is *actually* doing. Emily addressed this visual problem with care. She smiled happily when she completed it and was quick to show it to me. She was proud of her work. Pride comes from satisfaction derived from one's own achievement, and I decided to look more closely into what she had achieved. Emily took a creative risk by going beyond her comfort zone and exploring the visualization of her words. This suggests an emerging self-confidence in art-making. Even though the symbolism she used is common, she did make design decisions for the placement of the individual elements in relation to each other.

A Persisting Shift

From that point forward, Emily embraced the visual component in her journal. However, it proceeded via a succession of small steps. The introduction of this quote, “One sees great things from the valley, only small things from the peak,” sparked a lively philosophical debate. Students argued the superiority of an expansive mountain top view against a more intimate valley view. One student would cite the top view as a metaphor for success, while another would quickly counter it as arrogance. At one point religion came into the conversation, i.e., Was one closer to God on the mountain top because you could see the a larger scale of beauty, or was one closer to God in the valley because the detail in the smallest of creation could be appreciated? That fed into the interpretation of the quotes as a metaphor for relationships. If you get to far away from the other person, i.e. by physical distance or selfishness, you are unable to see the things that matter, i.e. being a part of their daily life, or whether they are falling in or out of love with you. Relationships segued into to a debate on greatness, ranging from caring for your fellowman to the undervaluation of self-care. It was a toss up as to whether the mountain or the valley represented humanity. At that point, I had to close the discussion so they could create their own visual interpretation in their journal.

In spite of the wealth of images and metaphorical associations, Emily’s art did not show her personal thoughts or an alternative interpretation. Her page is a straight illustration of the two concrete images in the quote. In Figure 52, the mountains covers the majority of the page. It has an angular outline, white ‘snow caps,’ and blue pastel filling the shape. The second layer of blue consists of scrolled line-work. To the left of the mountain, the valley is drawn with scrolled green lines and pink and purple 5-petal flowers. Also, to the left, a sun peeks above the valley.

This is an example of Emily's visual cognition age level (age 9-12) (Malchiodi et al, 2003, p. 97). This transitional stage between schematic (symbolism and flat perspective) and realism (naturalistic) contains schematic characteristics and intentional use of overlapping. Emily's stylized sun, flowers, and mountain-valley overlap to indicate perspective, are all reflective of the transitional stage. In Figure 53, another student, who also is in the transitional stage, responds with a personal interpretation of the Peaks & Valleys quote. In her valley, she identifies struggles and loss: applying to college, driver's license test, academic tests, stormy weather, and a family member's death. Next to a stick figure representation of herself, she wrote, "In the valley all problems seem huge." In the mountain peaks, the signs are too small to read. However, a sun is shining on her stick figure, and the words read, "From the mountain those problems were just stepping stones."



Figure 52. Emily's Peaks & Valley response

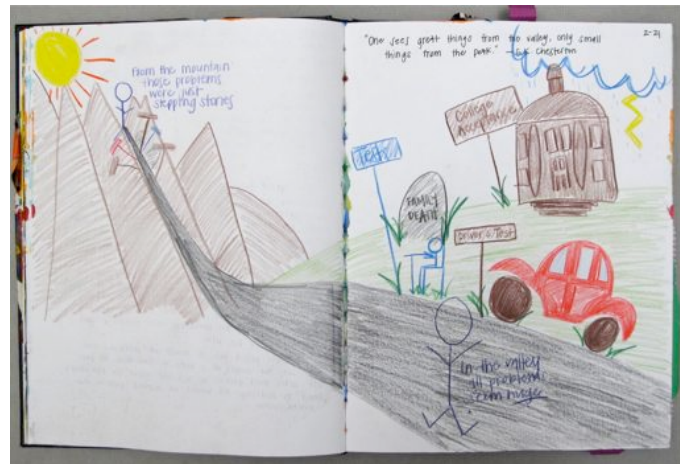


Figure 53. Another student's response

The next step in Emily's creative movement involves adding the verbal elements into the imagery. However, they are now reintroduced in a way that integrates with the image instead of dominating it. For the Secret Dreams prompt, Figure 54, she painted the earth to represent her dreams of travel. The earth begins in the bottom left corner and extends up and outward, covering $\frac{3}{4}$ of the page.

It is painted in shades of blue and purple, with irregular shapes drawn in green pastel to represent the continents. A tiny envelope that she made from a map is glued on top of the earth. Radiating from the around the earth are blended strokes of yellow and orange that represent the sun. The design integration is seen in the way all of the words she associates with her dream are written in the sun's rays. This intentionality demonstrates a growing awareness of how words and images can work together.

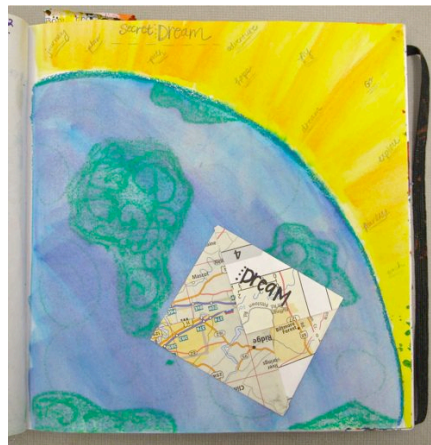


Figure 54. Emily's Secret Dreams response

In the next example showing Emily's movement, Figure 55, she responds visually-verbally to the prompt that asks students to conceptualized their understanding of spirituality. Emily was very forthright in class about her beliefs. In response, she chose a Bible verse. This verse provided her with concrete imagery: i.e. "be like a tree planted by water, which spreads out its roots by the river" (Jeremiah 17: 7-8). The base layer covering the entire page is painted in a medium blue. On top of this, the wind is painted in thin horizontal lines that end in wispy scrolled curves. The focal point is a tree growing at an angle from a small bank in the bottom right corner. The trunk is a solid brown with the added details of light brown strokes plus a small swirl indicative of a hole in the tree. The roots branch downward over the grassy bank and into the water. Green airy scrolls form the top of the tree, and the blue sky shows through them.

The scrolled 'leaves' are not connected directly to the trees trunk. Scrolled blue lines define the water. Emily's stylized sun shines from the top left corner. Continuing with her 'new' verbal integration, she writes key words on the suns rays. The actual verse is not integrated but neither is it distractive. It is written in thin black ink, and follows the horizontal lines of the wind.

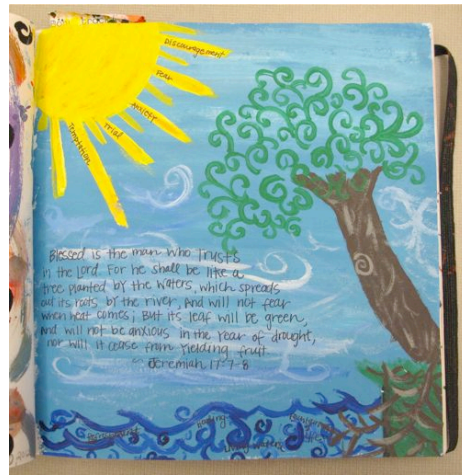


Figure 55. Emily's Spirituality response

In the written segment of the response, she wrote, "Because I am a Christian and find such purpose in following Jesus, I can't help but think about bright splashes of color and Freedom." Yet, there is nothing written or drawn relative to 'freedom' in either her picture, or are there bright splashes of color. The finished page is an illustration of the verse, but it is disassociated from the written portion of her response.

Nevertheless, the disconnect does not take away from the new step she took. In this final visual-verbal response, there are more details here than in any other page in her journal. There are no flat areas of empty solid color. She also added texture to the tree trunk and the sky. The open and energetic line-work is done with the intent to enrich the imagery, instead of just filling space. I believe this is reflective of her growing courage to take artistic risks, which in turn indicates an untangling of the confidence tangle.

Revisiting Both Perspectives

When I first saw that Emily had placed the sun in the corner again. I remember thinking, “This looks like something an elementary school student made.” That assessment is not far from the truth. Yet it is not the whole truth, nor is it the relevant truth. It is true that her visual-cognitive age is at an elementary school level. But there is a charm to her work, and her gradual journey is no less significant because of her starting point. Emily had little to no opportunity for art-making beyond elementary school and that shows in her work. However, she is not in my class to be transformed into an artist or art educator, especially in the space of three months. It is here that she is being reintroduced to art.

In my literature review, I discussed the long history of troubles with this course. Most of these stem from two points. One, the instructors overwhelmed the students with an enormous range of specialized content for which the students had no prior experience or knowledge. Two, the instructors failed to understand the nature of their students. Instructors remained teachers *of* art, and students remained non-artists. At times, I was discouraged by what I perceived as Emily moving so little, but that was an indication of slipping into unrealistic expectations and a teacher *of* art perspective. Working with Emily reminded me to teach *through* art, and to appreciate the steps of significance made by each student.

Connecting Processes

Although the visible movement was made in small increments, it does not mean there was less overall transformation. In search of what other understandings she was developing, I looked deeper into her writing. In it, I realized she was beginning to relate to art *through* writing. The connection was her understanding that each utilize a process. Both art and writing implement a series of actions or steps in order to achieve a particular end.

Focusing on art-making as a process makes the work of creating more manageable. Too, it makes space for appreciating the interim accomplishments. In her comments below, Emily explains that she had never made the connection before because society focuses on the finished product. As she continues, she recognizes that both “morph” into being. By definition, morph means taking small gradual steps to undergo a steady process of transformation. Even though the concept of process was discussed and modeled in class, it did not click for Emily until it was linked with writing. However, once she did associate the two, she asserted that process might be the “most important part of creating and designing.” In light of this, it is very important to note that the integration she demonstrates in her visual journal pages occur in the weeks following these readings and new insights. When considered together, her journal work did show significant progress. This functions as a caution to instructors not to dismiss student art when it appears childlike or unsophisticated. There is likely more going on intellectually than the student is able to show. Emily writes:

Before reading this [chapter] *Writing & illustration as parallel processes* (Ray, 2010), I had never really thought about the connection between the writing process and the process of creating art. ... because our society usually contrasts and examines the ‘end result’ of art and literature, which *is* very different. ... our culture never really considers comparing the processes, which are actually very similar. Because the process is not visible to onlookers, many times it can be overlooked. I would dare to say though that the process could very well be the most important part of creating and designing (as we’re learning in class). Both writing a composition and making a piece of art involve morphing nothing into something.

The following week, after reading the chapter on *Teaching writing through illustration* (Ray, 2010), Emily realized that both words *and* images could convey the flavor and essence of a work. Just as word choice is more than definition, imagery is more than illustration. From this she became aware that she can ‘speak’ to the viewer in dual modes.

I love the discovery about the intricate connection between illustrations and words.

Once again, I had never really thought about the way both pictures in a book and the words themselves send a certain vibe, or “tone” to the reader.

Since reflections to readings are posted in the class’s online forum, students are able to read and comment on each other’s thoughts. One of the threads that surfaced was the metaphor of journey for process. A journey is the act of traveling from one place to another. It can also be understood as a long odyssey of personal change and development. This transition of meaning alters the intent of creating. Where process strives to complete a goal, journey aspires to flourish along the way. A meta-understanding of this evolution places the value within (growth) versus without (product). In this way, regardless of the physical (i.e. artifact, composition) outcome, an individual can embrace their unique experience. Emily’s comment is indicative of her newfound appreciation of process as journey. Emily’s reply to another student’s post:

I love that you talk about celebrating the process or "journey" instead of focusing so much on the end result. I feel that we could all learn this not only in the areas of art and writing, but also in life. The journey is where we often learn the most about ourselves and how we grow. The end result is always nice, but there is power in the process :)

Applying It Forward

The educational goal for art methods students is that they be able to implement creative and artistic opportunities for their students into their general curriculum. To demonstrate the ability to apply what they have learned in class to their teaching, students create a lesson plan from a children's picturebook of their choice. Partners build the lesson and art project from the meaning residing underneath the storyline of the book. Projects like this provide a 'doable' alternative for teachers to use instead of templates. Emily and Marsha's lesson for third graders springs from *Crocodile's Tears* by Alex Beard. The goal for students was to "recognize that individuals have the ability to protect wildlife and their habitats by "exploring" to gain knowledge, conserving, and advocating."

Their corresponding art project was an animal mask. Instead of using a pre-existing model, the masks were constructed using recycled materials (learned in the construction of Whoville). The combination of choice of animal and the use of diverse materials ensured no two student masks will be the same. Furthermore, the odd shapes and sizes mean realism is not a viable option. Comparison is minimized. Emily and Marsha created a way for students to experience individual, artistic and creative expression. Figure 56 is a picture of Emily and Marsha wearing their animal masks. Emily is wearing the crocodile mask. In Figure 57, the close up of Emily's mask, you can see where a plastic water bottle was used to form the snout.



Figure 56. Emily & Marsha wearing their masks

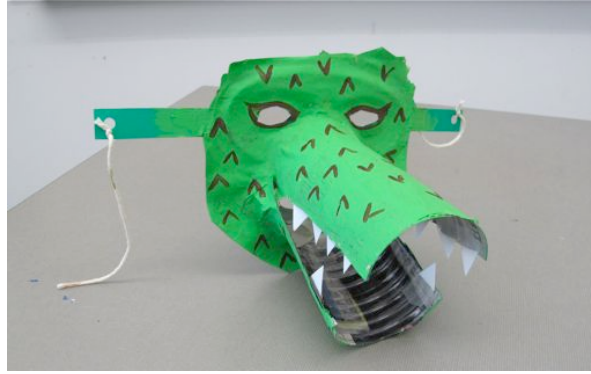


Figure 57. Emily's crocodile mask

Realization of a Creative Self

Emily's answers from this questionnaire provided further information in regard to her creative movement and where it occurred. They speak to the shift in her implicit beliefs regarding personal creativity and how she relates that to her art making and future teaching.

In the pre-class questionnaire, she described creativity as “when someone uses their gifts, talents, and abilities in a unique way.” Talent points to the tangle of permission. Now, at the end of the semester, she described it as “the way in which someone uniquely expresses themselves.” This is a fine, yet significant distinction. In the first answer, there is a degree of separation from the self; creativity is an object employed like a tool by the self. In the second, creativity is an extension of the self. Explicitly recognizing this is part of a metacreative becoming. In validating individual expression, she untangles the issues of permission.

In answer to ‘Do you consider yourself creative?’ Emily wrote, “I didn’t at all really before this class, but I have come to realize that I actually have many creative qualities.” It is important to note her language: creative *qualities*. A quality is a distinctive attribute possessed by someone. She now sees creativity as intrinsically belonging *to* her self. It is distinguished from what products or ideas may ensue *from* her creativity.

The next question pertains to art-making experience. “Out of all the projects and activities that we have done, which project(s) was you least favorite and/or not meaningful?”

“It is honestly hard for me to choose a least favorite. Even though the processes for some projects were frustrating (weaving, Whoville), they were still meaningful.”

It is encouraging that she was able to find meaning in the projects that frustrated her. However, *what* she found frustrating was enlightening to me. The projects mentioned, the weaving and Whoville, were ones that had no verbal component leading up to, or concurrently with them. Furthermore, they had no visual anchor. They were 100% hands-on, thinking in and through the media. This is consistent with the struggles noted in regard to her journal.

The final question relates to teaching: What do you think you have learned in this class as an educator?

“I have learned so much. I have learned that even though standardized tests are inevitable, creativity can still be a major part of the classroom. That excites me :)”

This realization is pivotal. One of the main barriers to integrating creativity and art into the general classroom is the assumption that there is no time. Emily has learned that art and creativity can be interlaced into the curriculum in small but significant ways. Sometimes it is as simple as substituting a coloring sheet with an open-ended visual-verbal prompt.

Evolution of Beliefs

Emily’s creativity essay opens with a reflection on her initial understandings of art and creativity before coming into the class. Her statements are consistent with both the literature and the majority of my students’ views documented over the six years of teaching this course. What she writes describes two strands of the Triadic Tangle that work as barrier to creativity. The first is permission, involving issues of exclusivity (talent and giftedness).

The second is perception, involving issues of qualifying attributes (restricted materials). In this comment, Emily revisits her starting point. She writes:

my understanding of creativity and art was skewed ... I thought only certain people were considered to be 'creative.' ... I strongly felt that I was not one of those people...had always associated creativity with drawing and painting...The skill level of experienced artists always intimidated me.

In the next statement, we see how she has reconceptualized those earlier beliefs. They have become internally regulated instead of comparatively judged. Furthermore, she sees creativity as an individual expression that can be articulated in a wide variety of materials and arenas.

Now, I am able to realize that creativity ... is something that looks different for everyone and shouldn't be compared... For me personally, I have come to realize that I am creative...anything that I do will look different from anyone else Creativity is simply the way that one uniquely expresses him/herself. This could be outwardly articulated through drawing or painting, but it could also be displayed through mediums like music, sports, writing, building things, communicating verbally, and the list goes on.

The last segment of her essay shows how she plans to project her experience into her teaching. She begins this paragraph with an acknowledgement of individuality. Following that, she lays out specific intentions to foster creativity by building student self-confidence, giving them opportunities for expression, scaffolding creative cognition, and planning lessons that reduce comparison.

As a teacher, I feel that it is important to realize that creativity will look different for every student. ... set up the foundation for students to first of all see themselves as creative, but also to give them a chance to express themselves in the classroom.

This can be done ... by planning lessons that slowly guide students toward creative thought processes. ... We should also try to include exercises that make it much more difficult to compare end results.

Emily's Journey in Her Own Words

A group interview took place following our last class of the semester. All students were invited to stay if they wanted to and if it fit with their schedules. Emily was one of the eight students who participated. The interview was informally conducted at one of the tables in our classroom and lasted for 27 minutes. During this time I asked questions to the group but allowed the discussion to evolve based on student responses and interactions with each other. The excerpts focus on Emily's comments.

When talking about initial class expectations versus looking back at their actual experience, Emily speaks to her idea of art in the classroom. By reconceptualizing and expanding her understanding of what art and creativity are, she no longer limits it to pretty things to decorate the classroom. This is an untangling of perception. Emily states:

I thought we would [do] classroom decorations and stuff, like bulletin boards and some more things like that. ... I'm glad that it wasn't though because this way, like, I know I grew more as a creative person than I was before.

Next, her comments address the fear of failure, which, in turn, leads to pressures to be perfect. This is the tangle of confidence, "How do I make art right?" By allowing herself the freedom to take risks and navigate mistakes, Emily has navigated the third tangle.

Before I was wondering about making mistakes and everything has to be perfect. And now I realize that that's not really what it's about. It's just about expressing yourself creatively.

In next segment, students talked about their visual journals, their initial expectations for the journals, and their journey in and through them. Unlike major art projects, journals offer students a sustained, reflective encounter with their own creative expression. Even with the visual-verbal disconnect, Emily was able to grow. Her first assumption was that the journal would be a perfect portfolio that she “did not really want to wreck.” In hindsight, that page is no longer viewed as something that ruined her journal. Instead, she explains that mistakes are something to be worked *with*. In a continued description of her journal, Emily again acknowledges its imperfection but indicates that its value is in the growth it represents. Specifically she speaks of “letting go of control.” Although Emily did not self-identify as an ordered thinker in her reflection of Finke’s (1996) article, she has implicitly made the connection. The explicit connection occurred in the post-class interview where she said, “... because I know that I have an organized mind”

Emily recounts:

Well, I just kind of looked at it like as this is going to be my portfolio and it’s going to be perfect ... And I remember [the “wreck”] yeah, I don’t really want to wreck my journal. But now like, looking back, that page doesn’t even bother me... before I would have been like, this page is ruined because I made a mistake ... and now I’m like, well, let me work with that mistake and try. And [the journal] is not like perfect and pristine. But it shows real growth and how I can just let go a little bit of that control and it helped me to realize that there are certain things that I’m really good at that I didn’t know I was good at before. ... and how I can just let go a little bit of that control.

A Metaphor for Options

One of the areas that Emily struggled with was pulling personal metaphors from the weekly visual-verbal journal prompts. Instead of identifying with them on some level, they were illustrated literally. In the interview, when she was asked to share a moment when she recognized some of her growth, she cited the ‘Bird Metaphor for Self’ journal prompt. This page was made about three-quarters of the way into the semester, and in it, Emily responded visually and verbally. The words and color choices are integrated with the feeling she sought to express. In her written response, she admits that at the beginning of the semester she would have depended on a picture in an effort to draw a perfect bird. She goes on to explain how, near end of the semester, she understood that things did not have to look realistic to be representative. What she is referencing is the myriad of personal interpretations that are explorable when an individual is given the opportunity to do so. Her comment concludes with tangible examples she can use to demonstrate this to children.

... we did a bird metaphor, and if we'd done that the first day, I would have had to pull up a picture of a bird and draw it out perfectly and get the color exactly right. But by the time in the semester when we did that, we had talked about how things don't have to look like it to represent it. There can be lots of different examples of it. And I think it's important to show kids Show an abstract bird. Show a feather that represents a bird. Show a real bird. Just all different kinds to show that there's different options.

This page was done before the assigned readings on words and pictures. As such, there is a disconnect from the prompt. While Emily has applied bird attributes (fly, sing, soar) to a bit of ‘life wisdom,’ the bird is not a metaphor for her personally.

I did not know, until the interview, that this single page was a different type of metaphor; it was the point where she first experienced creative awareness. The page itself, Figure 58, shows a large silhouette of a bird in flight. Instead of trying to create realism, which would have been technically difficult for her, Emily fills the bird with a rainbow of pastel areas of color. On top of the pastel, she drew eighth notes. The background space is filled with diagonally drawn green lines. Below and to the right of the bird is a small brown nest with eggs. Above and slightly overlapping the wing of the bird, are the words fly, sing, soar. These three words are carefully drawn and filled in with color. Below and to the left of the bird Emily wrote: “Live your life to sing melodies even in cold seasons, fly in the midst of heavy burdens, and nurture those who are weak and broken.”



Figure 58. Emily's bird metaphor

Re-examining Movement

In my art methods course, creative journeys can be traced through the developments in journals and reflections. During the semester, I could see Emily's difficulties in visualizations and interpretations; yet saw little evidence of her navigating through them. My presumption at that time was that she had moved very little relative to her starting point.

After re-searching her journey I discovered evidence that she had moved, but the movement that I had labeled ‘little’ was instead gentle. One of the definitions of gentle refers to a degree of action that is moderate or gradual. That is how I characterize Emily’s movement in her creative journey.

My retrospective reevaluation of Emily caused me to question my methods for examining the creative journeys of my students. Foremost was the realization that movement in the areas of visual expression, verbal expression, and awareness are not as tightly interlaced as I originally thought. They are relational in the sense that they can inform and modify each other. But, they pertain to different areas within movement.

For Emily, the less visible movement (awareness) was where the more monumental transformation was occurring. It is interesting that she could grow through the visual journal, to the extent that she shared, without more observable signs. Digging deeper into this quandary, I tangled with my own expectations when contemplating student art. It is easy to fall into old habits of qualifying successes and failures, but that is a slippery slope that risks falling into issues of talent. This caused me to reexamine my personal expectations for my students versus the realities of what they can realistically learn and do in one semester. My conscious approach going forward is as follows: Regardless of a student’s capacity for visual expression, if care and intent are observable in student demeanor (in the midst of process), it suggests the possibility of internal movement that should be investigated via alternative means (i.e. written or verbal). I believe this internal movement, catalyzed through art-making, has significant value. However, to see this movement, I encourage instructors to provide opportunities for other modes of reflection concurrently with art-making.

CHAPTER 6



Figure 59. A student's Creative Journey response in her visual-verbal journal

CHAPTER 6 – IMPLICATIONS OF CREATIVE BECOMING

Summary

Arriving at my research questions has been a journey in itself. In the beginning of the study I searched for a way to improve the art methods curriculum so preservice teachers would gain the confidence needed to teach art in their classrooms. Although I always considered creativity to be important, my emphasis was directed outward. It was all about the content and understandings I wanted to impart to students. While conducting the study, I realized I could not give them what they needed. This caused my questions to evolve. My next set of questions looked at foundational issues and teacher beliefs. This moved the attention from the course to the students. However, while writing this dissertation I found a clearer direction that finally reached the core of the issues and experiences I had documented. This deeper analysis moved the focus to the inner journeys of my students. It involved a reexamination of the origin and nature of their beliefs, which led to the development of the Triadic Tangle. Another outcome was a more critical evaluation of the teaching objectives for emergent artists. Therefore, the three research questions central to this research are: What occurs when the art methods course focuses on expressive outcomes of personal creativity awareness instead of instructional objectives? What is the nature of the implicit beliefs that trouble preservice elementary teachers in the art methods course? How do implicit beliefs and past experiences impact expectations and present experience in an art methods course?

To seek answers to these questions, I determined narrative inquiry to be the most authentic method for studying my students' creative journeys. This is because narrative opens up space for the whole of the experience to be examined inside of the context that shaped it. Within narrative inquiry, I followed Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) portraiture model because it "blurs the

boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience” (p. xv). Furthermore, portraiture assumes goodness and flaws but shifts the examination to what and why something happens.

The purpose of the art methods course is two-fold: to prepare future teachers to integrate art into the general elementary classroom and to teach art in the absence of an art specialist. Yet, the literature shows a disconnect between preservice and in-service teachers’ understandings of creativity, dispositions conducive to art processes, technical abilities, and basic art knowledge. Consequently, teachers are not prepared. Deniston-Trochta (2001) asks two important questions: “What problems do our students face that act as obstacles to including art in their classrooms once they are teachers? and Is there something we can do or teach that actually supports the beleaguered classroom teacher, rather than adds to his/her existing burdens?” (p. 97). My study reveals new insights and possible answers, to Deniston-Trochta’s questions

This research examined the foundational issues of art and creativity from the perspective of pre-service generalists elementary teachers within the art methods course at two separate locations. It revealed how implicit beliefs and past experiences impact student engagement in the arts. These beliefs consist of both conscious and subconscious ideas and understandings. In order to describe the complex nature, interactions, and resulting effects of these beliefs, I designed the Triadic Tangle. Within this conceptual structure, implicit beliefs are differentiated into three strands, each with a subset of specific traits. The three strands are perception, permission, and confidence. The degree of tangles within these strands dictates the willingness and extent to which students involve themselves in various types of art experiences.

Teaching for Creativity

The students within this study were taught using a multi-modal curriculum that included visual-verbal journals, academic readings with reflections, and classroom art-making activities. What is pivotal is the *nature* of these curricular aspects. As Vygotsky (1967/2004) reminds us, “When we attempt to foster children’s creativity, including in visual arts, we need to observe the principle of freedom, which is generally an essential condition for all kinds of creativity” (p. 84). I used open-ended prompts, which necessitated the student figuring out the prompt, arriving at a personal interpretation, visualizing their understanding, and writing a response supporting the meaning they made. This is what I term an “art problem.” To “solve it,” students ask themselves, “Where can this prompt take me and how might I visualize my understanding?” These open-ended prompts are exercises in divergent thinking because you are using the prompt as a starting point and then developing the idea in different directions. This is usually a challenging process for students whose creativity is emerging. Likewise, the fluency, or number of ideas, is limited and connections tend to be literal.

However, because the meaning and imagery is arrived at individually, the results are novel for that student. Boundaries, preventing ‘anything goes’ answers, are in place because the student’s reflection needs to show how and why they arrived at their interpretation. This is important because “originality is not sufficient for creativity,” ideas must be original and effective (Runco, 2008, p. 94). The prompt functions as a framework for effectiveness, while still encouraging student novelty. From start to finish, the conceptualizations originate from the student. Recurrent engagement in this type of open-ended exercise supports the growth of students’ creative potential.

This approach aligns with Dewey's (1934/2005) philosophies on experience, knowledge, and education as rejecting a spectator view of knowledge, appealing instead for an active knowing. I do not tell my students *what* to know, I initiate experiences in which they can learn. This is one way I understand and incorporate Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backwards design model. I present questions and assignments with no definitive answers so as to provoke inquiry. My 'big idea' is for students to engage with their own creativity. Consequently, my outcomes focus on a student's inward understandings: Has the student's concepts of creativity and art been re-educated? What has the student learned about his or her own creativity? Is the student aware of their implicit beliefs? Has the student experienced creative movement? Has the student encountered a creative becoming?

Limitations of Study

This study was limited in the following ways: participation was based on a convenience sample (students who signed up for the course); it did not address urban populations; and students were not culturally diverse,

Understanding My Approach Relative to the Standards

There are differences between my use of backwards design and the NCCAS's use. The standards, in spite of the document's creativity language, have outcomes focusing on content knowledge and skill acquisition. Space for open-ended interpretations is fenced in by assessment objectives and exemplar work. In these circumstances open-ended functions to allow choices, but not full a full range of creative practice. Too, my construct of open-ended differs from that proposed in the art standards. Their use allows multiple ways for a student to create art but it is within a specific, structured assignment. For example, the NCCAS 5th grade model for a lesson

on Investigating Places of Personal Significance, describes the following key traits to be assessed:

1. Choose content, style, or technique and demonstrate craftsmanship in creating a work of art about a place that has personal significance.
2. Create a work of art that communicates personal significance of a place.

Number 2 would form an ideal prompt that is open to personal interpretation of place and what constitutes significance. In order to avoid tangles of confidence, number 1 should be restated to allow choice of technique in visualizing the response, but remove the connection to a specific content or style. Additionally, “demonstrate craftsmanship” should be clearly differentiated from skill. Nor would I state it as “doing your best work.” Instead, I would describe it to the students as caring; i.e. taking time to work through the process. The problem, from a creativity perspective also arises in the following traits:

3. Describe how personal artwork reflects inspiration obtained through observing and analyzing artworks.
4. Use art vocabulary in artist statements to explain the choices made to visually communicate ideas about a place that has personal significance.
5. Discuss various ideas about places presented in works of art.

This assignment begins with an introduction to exemplar works of art. In asking the student to reflect on “inspiration obtained through observing and analyzing artworks,” the idea of what constitutes place is established. In an attempt to successfully complete the assignment, the student will gravitate towards these ideas. By requiring the artist’s statement to use specific vocabulary, the student will further mold their ideas to fit those words.

There is nothing wrong with lessons on different styles of artwork, composition, and associated elements, principles, and vocabulary. These are all components of art content knowledge. The issue is expecting this type of curricular approach to develop or improve creativity. A tangle of perception occurs as students are presented with “real” art and then asked to make art in response. It does not matter if the teacher assures them that it does not have to be similar, or as good as, the exemplar. That perception is already subconsciously planted. Entwined with this are potential tangles in confidence as students face issues of anxiety and ability as part of *correctly* completing the assignment. To teach for creativity, the exemplar lesson should be separated and repositioned to follow the personal art-making.

Suggestions for Elementary Art

The standard for Creating reads: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

These three anchor standards will support creative development, but only if they are framed within open-ended exercises and assignments. The following suggestions are within this distinct context. These exercises should be incorporated frequently and repeatedly throughout the year. This allows for low-risk engagement which effectively neutralizing issues of anxiety and ability. These should not be graded, only checked for completion. Teachers should be very careful when positioning an exemplar in a lesson. Discussions before creative exercises can be helpful if they assure students there is no right answer(s). It is important for teachers to manage a discussion so that multiple concepts and ideas are questioned. No student should be required to draw or realistically represent his or her ideas.

Along those lines, this is why it is important to include a variety of abstract ideas in the discussion. Students should be able invited to use words in their creative artwork. For creatively emergent artists, this helps them express or describe what they cannot draw.

For example, *Figure 60* shows Samantha, one of my preservice teacher's, interpretation of the quote, "Some painters transform the sun into a yellow spot, others transform a yellow spot into the sun" (Attributed to Picasso). Her interpretation is "some people turn really huge issues into minute ones, while others turn insignificant problems into monumental ones." What is important about this example is that her interpretation is not literal, unlike Anika's response, which showed a colorful sun and grassy hill. However, while the disgruntled figures in the Starbucks' scene are clear, the top scene is not. Because Samantha's drawing skills are rudimentary, the words allow her to fill out the visual thus better expressing her full meaning. *Figure 61* shows another preservice teacher, Tabitha's, interpretation of the same quote. Part of her description reads, "We have to instill in young kids that the world is at your fingertips." The remainder describes being told you can't do something, but then being encouraged to turn small gifts into beautiful contributions. Without the words, the connection between the figure of the girl and the world is unclear.

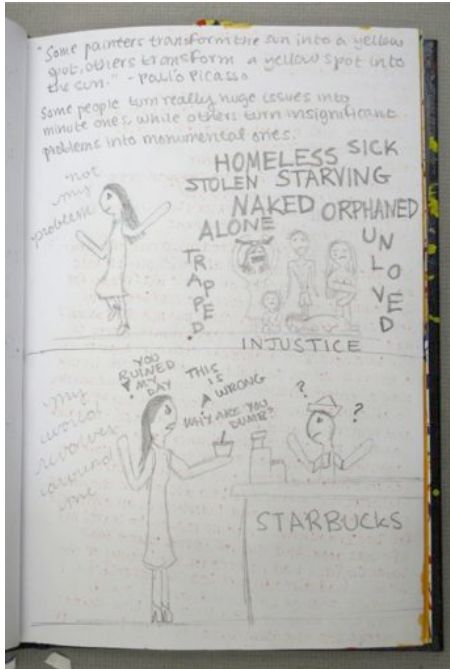


Figure 60. (Left) Samantha's interpretation of the yellow spot quote



Figure 61. (Right) Tabitha's interpretation of the yellow spot quote

For grades 3-5, it is equally important to incorporate brief, written reflections following each art-making experience. This is not the same as connecting artwork to specified art elements, principles, styles, techniques, or exemplars. Instead, it requires students to: consciously think about:

1. How they felt during the experience and to speculate why, i.e. frustrated, free, relaxed
2. What choices were made and why, i.e. subject matter, design, and media.
3. Consider the overall outcome, i.e. what aspects contribute to their interpretation, how and why did they contribute

This type of awareness, evaluation, questioning, and consideration is a natural part of an artist's self-dialogue in the design and art-making processes. An emergent artist has to discover it. For it to be authentic and not forced, response parameters need to be very loose. What you want students to learn is the process itself.

In the beginning of the term, students will probably not know the answers to the whys. This is because you are challenging them to think about their thinking. As they become consciously aware of their processes, they will be more able to make deliberate design decisions. The resulting art is not the priority; neither is skill acquisition. What is important is that:

1. All students realize they have creative potential.
2. Art is broadly conceptualized.
3. The emphasis is on creative thinking.
4. All students believe they have permission to make art.
5. The talent bias is mitigated.

Runco (2003) posits, “Children are not professional artists ... it is creative potential that is the primary concern, rather than unambiguous creative performance” (p. 317). The majority of children will not grow up to be artists. However, they can grow up with the confidence to participate in art-making if they choose. Even more important, they can value their creative ideas and efforts irrespective of their technical aptitudes.

What My Students Learned

The fundamental problem is of the mind, specifically what is believed. Therefore, when entrenched and or mis-indoctrinated ideas about creativity collide with new knowledge and experience, a student’s self-awareness grows. In growth lies movement, and it is here that metacreativity can be cultivated. As my students were consciously challenged to navigate the border between what they thought creativity was, and what they learned it could be, a shift occurred.

Towards the end of the course, students demonstrated growth in the following overarching areas: willingness to explore ambiguous assignments; confidence in the validity of their own ideas; and an increased ease with adapting or modifying their work when faced with perceived mistakes or unexpected outcomes. The extent of development varied; therefore, each student's progress was considered relative to that individual student's starting point.

Suggestions for Art Methods Courses

The first step to realizing more creativity in elementary classrooms begins with teacher education. Going forward, this research recommends that the art method course change from its typical focus on traditional art education content knowledge and production to one that prioritizes creative growth. We must remember that teachers cannot teach what they do not know. I firmly believe that coaching students towards a threshold of creative transformation requires instructors to proactively address this recalcitrant problem of secondary ignorance (Eisner, 2002). Additionally, consideration needs to be given for appropriate curriculum content. This needs to be adapted in order to recognize the unique creativity struggles that pre-service teachers encounter in the one semester methods course. An alternative approach is proposed that explicitly educates students on cognitive traits of creativity. Finally, instructional outcomes should seek to help students identify and navigate through their own implicit beliefs.

Additionally, art-making should be tailored for emergent artists. This involves low-risk, open-ended explorations of self-expression and media techniques. In essence, this prioritization of process presents the opportunity to work “in the middle” instead of towards an end product. Within this context, teaching for a creative becoming introduces students to creative practices that inform all of educational practice. This lies at the heart of an attitude toward inquiry: a metacreative foundation. It is a pedagogical approach that can be incorporate into existing

programs. This research submits that creative thinking and creative confidence *can* be developed, as long as the course is reshaped in a way that opens students' minds; changing convictions of "I am not creative" to "I *am* creative."



Image 62. A student's visual-verbal response to a Picasso quote

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APPENDIX A

Data Inventory

1. Study Title:

IRB Title: Transferring Creative Confidence from Preservice Teachers to the Elementary Classroom

Dissertation Title: Creative becoming and the Triadic Tangle: The influence of implicit beliefs and expressive outcomes in the art methods course

2. Researchers:

Tammy Cline and (Richard Siegesmund listed on IRB but not involved)

3. Study Description:

a. Research Purpose: To examine the creative beliefs, creativity blocks, and creative experiences of preservice teachers in the context of the art methods course. To investigate the possibilities of reshaping implicit beliefs. To explore potential implications of implicit beliefs on future arts and creativity in elementary classrooms.

b. Research Question [IRB]:

IRB Question: Can building and implementing a curriculum that emphasizes visual problem solving and creative thinking increase creative confidence in preservice teachers in such a way that they are better able to transfer and facilitate those same attributes in their students?

c. Research Questions [Dissertation]: What occurs when the art methods course focuses on expressive outcomes of personal creativity awareness instead of instructional objectives? What is the nature of the implicit beliefs that trouble preservice elementary teachers in the art methods course? How do implicit beliefs and past experiences impact expectations and present experience in an art methods course?

d. Definition of Terms

i. meta-creativity

1. Meta-creativity as defined by Bruch: "The study of such internal observations of creative processing and personal characteristics is proposed as a field of inquiry called 'metacreativity' (p. 112). Bruch, C. B. (January 01, 1988). Metacreativity: Awareness of Thoughts and Feelings during Creative Experiences. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 22, 2, 112-22.

2. Metacreativity as defined by Runco: "[Metacreativity] ... suggests that assumptions made when studying creativity also be questioned in order to find new perspectives on creativity" (2014, in print).

3. Metacreativity as defined by me: "In a holistic sense, metacreativity describes a growing awareness of one's self as being or becoming a creative individual."

My use of this term differs from Bruch's use of metacreativity as a field of inquiry focusing on creative characteristics, and Runco's description of it as a purposeful shift leading to a more creative result. Whereas Bruch focuses on identification and Runco on a change in cognitive perspective, I am looking at metacreativity as a the awakening of the creative self that does not measure against outside markers.

ii creative confidence

1. Creative confidence as discussed by Deniston-Trochta: "A classroom teacher, already beleaguered with responsibilities, is not going to freely engage in activities in which s/he has the least confidence" (p. 99). Deniston-Trochta, G. (2001). Teacher Training: A Wrinkle in Time. *Visual Arts Research*, 27(53), 96-101.
2. Creative confidence as intimated by Loveless, Burton, and Turvey: "[During art-making activities], one of the feelings feelings articulated was "anxiety and reluctance to make mistakes at the beginning of the activities and frustration and irritation when things did not go smoothly" (p. 8). Loveless, A., Burton, J., & Turvey, K. (2006). Developing conceptual frameworks for creativity, ICT, and teacher education. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 1, 3-13.
3. Creative confidence as addressed by Beghetto: "Teachers' conceptions and implicit theories may facilitate or inhibit students' creative behaviour because the ways in which teachers organise the classroom practices are primarily influenced by what they know and believe" (Beghetto, 2006). Beghetto, R. A. (2006). Does creativity have a place in classroom discussions? Prospective teachers' response preferences. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 2(1), 1-9.
4. Creative confidence as defined by me: "Creative confidence is demonstrated when the willingness to engage in art-making, especially open-ended processes, outweighs fear of failure." I believe this emergence occurs when a student's implicit beliefs shift regarding what constitutes art and who has permission to make art.

iii. Multi-Modal Problems

1. Multi-modal texts as used by Pantaleo: Multimodal texts are a combination of the modes of image and writing. Pantaleo, S. (2013). Matters of Design and Visual Literacy: One Middle Years Student's Multimodal Artifact. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 27(3), 351-376.
2. Multi-modality literacy as defined by Albers and Sanders: "No particular symbol-system mode carries the entire message."

"Literacy is entangled."

"That is, modes, media, and language systems are in symbiotic relationship and offer humans the potential to express what they want to say in innumerable ways, forms, and combinations."

Albers, P., & Sanders, J. (2010). *Literacies, the arts, and multimodality*. Urbana, Ill: National Council of Teachers of English.

3. Multi-modal problems as defined by me: "Multi-modal problems are inquiries into a visual prompt, comprised of imagery and or language, that entail a combined visual-verbal response."

iv. Creative Becoming

1. Becoming as defined by Deleuze and Guattari:

"Becoming is neither a progression nor a regression."

"Becoming produces nothing other than itself."

"Becoming is a verb."

"Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative."

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1988). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

2. Creative becoming as defined by me: "Creative Becoming is both a conscious and subconscious emerging understanding of the self as a creativity entity."

4. Study Design and Methods

a. This is a pilot study with IRB approval.

- i. IRB: PROJECT NUMBER: 2010-10265-0
- ii. First approved for Location 1 10/2009
- iii. Amended to include Location 2 PROJECT NUMBER: 2010-10265-2
Amended approval given 07/2011

b. Method of inquiry was teacher research for original and amended studies

c. Participants

- i. Location 1: Private college in north Georgia
Location 2: Large university outside of Atlanta
- ii. Demographic breakdown by date and location:
 1. Fall 2009 L-1 - 18 students; all female; all Caucasian; [student ids: 1-18]
 2. Fall 2010 L-1 - 11 students; 9 female, 1 male; all Caucasian [student ids: 19-29]
 3. Fall 2011 L-1 -14 students; 12 female, 2 male; all Caucasian [40-53]

4. Fall 2011 L-2 - 10 students; all female; all Caucasian
[student ids: 30-39]
5. Spring 2012 L-2 - 16 students; all female; all Caucasian
[54-69]

iii. Demographic Totals

1. Total number of participants: 69
2. Total from L-1 = 43
3. Total from L-2 = 26
4. Gender: Female 66, Male 3
5. Race: all Caucasian

iv. Recruitment

Participants registered for this course as part of their degree program requirements. The study involved the regular course material. Student participation in the study was optional. Participants were not revealed to classmates. No different materials or treatment was given to participants.

d. The duration of study was 4 years (2009-2012).

e. Data Description

i. Interviews

	# Interviews	Duration	# Transcribed	Length of Transcription
Fall 2009 L-1	1	7:46 mins	1	4 pages
Fall 2011 L-2	1	1 hr 5 mins	1	14 pages
Spring 2012 L-2	2	50.91 mins 27 mins	2	17 pages 10 pages

ii. Documents & Archival Material

Date and Location	Documents (i.e. student essays, reflections)	Photos of archival materials (i.e. artworks) (no physical art kept)
Fall 2009 Location 1	198	97
Fall 2010 Location 1	208	107
Fall 2011 Location 1	239	256
Fall 2011 Location 2	240	702

Spring 2012 L-2	248	857
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iii. Field Notes

f. Research context

i. Location 1

1. Location: Rural; North Georgia Mountains
2. Specifics of the course: Class met once per week for 2:45 hrs
3. Job acquired: Networking

ii. Location 2

Date and Location	pages
Fall 2009 L-1	15
Fall 2010 L-1	15
Fall 2011 L-1	30
Fall 2011 L-2	70
Spring 2012 L-2	30

1. Location: Outer suburbs, North Georgia
2. Specifics of the course: Class met twice per week for 2:45 hrs
3. Job acquired: Graduate assistantship

5. Appendices

a. Chart with summary of data for suggested use with case study

Pseudonym	Research Theme	Supporting Data	Number of Each
Bailey	creative becoming; risk aversion	field notes; photos of projects and visual journal pages	6 pp. field notes; 7 photos
Amber	generosity to self; permission	field notes; photos of projects and visual journal pages	2 pages of field notes; 4 photos
Callie	looking vs seeing; experimentation	field notes; photos of projects and visual journal pages	2 pages of field notes; 4 photos

Melanie	struggle with confidence	field notes; photos of projects and visual journal pages	2 pages of field notes; 4 photos
Jane	loosening control; embracing attitude of play and discovery	3 page essay; field notes; photos of projects and visual journal pages	1 essay; 2 pages of field notes; 4 photos
Laura	finding more than one right answer	3 page essay;	1 essay
Group	self discovery; creative becoming; classroom application	interview; 10 pages	1 interview

b. Data samples

- i. 1 transcript of group interview (students with myself as interviewer)
- ii. 2 photos of visual journal pages: paint spilling/play/generosity (student)
- iii. 2 photos of visual journal pages: tree observation (student)
- iv. 1 photo of lyric panel (student)
- v. 2 pages of field notes
- vi. 1 essay (student)

APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board Application

Check One

New Application: ☒ X
 Resubmission*: ☐ Revision *(All changes must be highlighted)*

Human Subjects Office
 University of Georgia
 612 Boyd GSRC
 Athens, GA 30602-

7411

*NOTE: A new application is required every five years.

(706) 542-3199

IRB APPLICATION					
MAIL 2 COPIES OF APPLICATION TO ABOVE ADDRESS					
(Check One) Dr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>			(Check One) Dr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
(Check One) Faculty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/>			(Check One) Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Richard Siegesmund		810 040 0301		Tammy Cline	
Principal Investigator		UGA ID – last 10 digits only		Co-Investigator	
UGA ID – last 10 digits only		UGA ID – last 10 digits only		UGA ID – last 10 digits only	
Art Education, Lamar Dodd + 4102			Art Education, Lamar Dodd + 4102		
Department, Building and + Four			Department, Building and + Four		
(Include department even if living off campus or out of town)			(Include department even if living off campus or out of town)		
Lamar Dodd School of Art			Yantai University, Shandong, China		
270 River Road			Mailing Address (if you prefer not to receive mail in dept.)		
Mailing Address (if you prefer not to receive mail in dept.)			Mailing Address (if you prefer not to receive mail in dept.)		
706-542-1647		rsiege@uga.edu		770-714-9685	
Phone Number (x)		E-Mail (REQUIRED)		Phone Number (x)	
E-Mail (REQUIRED)		E-Mail		E-Mail	
**Signature of Principal Investigator			Signature of Co-Investigator (use additional cover sheets for more than one Co-Investigator)		
UGA Faculty Adviser:		Name		E-Mail (REQUIRED)	
		Dr. Robert Siegesmund		rsiege@uga.edu	
		Department, Bldg+ Four		Phone No.	
		Art Ed, Lamar Dodd+4102		706-542-1647	
**Signature:		Date:		UGA ID – last 10 digits only	
				810-040-0301	
**Your signature indicates that you have read the human subjects guidelines and accept responsibility for the research described in this application.					
If funded:					
***Sponsored Programs Proposal#					
Name of Funding Agency					
***By listing a proposal number, you agree that this application matches the grant application and that you have disclosed all financial conflicts of interest (see Q6a)					
TITLE OF RESEARCH:		Transferring Creative Confidence from Preservice Teachers to the Elementary Classroom			
NOTE: SUBMIT 4-6 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR START DATE					
APPROVAL IS GRANTED ONLY FOR 1 YEAR AT A TIME					

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

Investigational New Drug Exceptions to/waivers of Federal regulations

If yes to the above, provide details:

Data Sets Existing Bodily Fluids/Tissues RP Pool Deception

Illegal Activities Minors Moderate Exercise Audio/ Video taping X

MRI/EEG/ECG/NIRS/Ultrasound/ Blood Draw X-RAY/DEXA Pregnant Women/Prisoners

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH APPLICATION**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Type responses to all 11 questions (all parts) listed below (12 pt. font only).
2. Do not answer any question with "see attachments" or "not applicable".
3. Submit original plus one copy to the Human Subjects Office.
4. We will contact you via email if changes are required. Allow 4-6 weeks.

IMPORTANT: Before completing this application, please determine if the project is a research project. Check the federal definition of research at <http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/fags/hso.html#7> or call the Human Subjects office at 542-3199. The IRB only reviews research projects.

1. **PROBLEM ABSTRACT:** State rationale and research question or hypothesis (why is this study important and what do you expect to learn?).

I have been involved in previous courses for Creative Arts in Education where the curriculum was designed with an emphasis on acquiring basic art knowledge in addition to art making activities. The goal being to help preservice teachers learn to make their classrooms a more creative environment for students.

However, through studying other research, I have come to believe that learning to think creatively is the cornerstone of training preservice teachers to more fully integrate creativity in their future classrooms. I want to research how building and implementing a curriculum that emphasizes visual problem solving and creative thinking can increase creative confidence in preservice teachers in such a way that they are better able to transfer and facilitate those same attributes in their students.

2.	<p>RESEARCH DESIGN: <i>Identify specific factors or variables, conditions or groups and any control conditions in your study. Indicate the number of research participants assigned to each condition or group, and describe plans for data analysis.</i></p> <p>This research is being conducted at Location 1 GA. The research will take place over the course of the fall semester. All students will receive the same curriculum. There is no control group.</p> <p>This is a qualitative research study, and is both phenomenological and teacher research. It is phenomenological because we are concerned with the processes, examination of meaning, and wish to understand the individual's personal perspective. It is teacher research because Tammy Cline will be conducting research in her classroom with efforts to find improved ways to teach preservice educators to structure more creativity into their classrooms. The center of the study is based on active participation and significance of the subjective experience.</p> <p>Data Sources: Primary data sources include classroom observations (field notes), students (interviews), and students (reflective writing). Other data includes student artifacts (artwork and writing) and photos (students at work and the actual student work).</p> <p>Data Analysis: Personal field notes, reflections, and categorizing will be used to analyze observations and identify patterns. All students will be interviewed and information will be utilized for comparison as to levels of engagement, comprehension in relation to in-class lessons, and level of progress and improvement in artistic confidence. Peer interviews will be voluntary, they will occur verbally and then summarized in writing.</p>
3.	<p>RESEARCH SUBJECTS:</p> <p>a. List maximum number of subjects 18, targeted age group 19+ <i>(this must be specified in years)</i> and targeted gender Female. MALES ARE NOT PURPOSEFULLY EXCLUDED, THE CLASS MAKEUP IS, BY CHANCE, ALL FEMALE.</p>

	<p>b. Method of selection and recruitment - list inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the recruitment procedures (including all follow-ups).</p> <p>The research will involve Tammy Cline's class taught during their regularly scheduled class. The students will be informed that Mrs. Cline will be collecting data for the research project and will give their assent to participate. An introduction letter will be given to each student along with the CONSENT form</p> <p>c. The activity described in this application involves another institution (e.g. school, university, hospital, etc.) and/or another country. Yes X No If yes, provide the following details: 1) Name of institution: 2) County and state: Location 1 Georgia 3) Country: USA 4) Written letter of authorization (<u>on official letterhead only</u>) IRB approval: Attached: X Pending:</p> <p>d. Is there any working relationship between the researcher and the subjects? Yes X No. If yes, explain.</p> <p>The co-investigator, Tammy Cline, is the professor of the Creative Arts for Educators class at Location 1 . The students in the study are students in her class.</p>
	<p>e. Describe any incentives (payment, gifts, extra credit). <u>Extra credit cannot be offered unless there are equal non-research options available.</u></p> <p>This study does not involve incentives</p>

4.	<p>PROCEDURES: <i>State in chronological order what a subject is expected to do and what the researcher will do during the interaction. Indicate time commitment for each research activity. And detail any follow-up.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will participate in classroom discussions and artistic activity sessions. The research aspect of the project will be Mrs. Cline collecting data on the project. - The projects will include both visual arts and writing. The student's art and writing will be collected as data. - Mrs. Cline will take field notes on the students engagement, progress relative to confidence levels - The students will share their art, illustrations, and visual responses with the class and notes will be taken on their presentation. They will share aspects of the project that they enjoyed the most and/or found the most helpful. Mrs. Cline will take notes and photos of the presentations - Students will be interviewed by their teacher, Mrs. Cline. The question will be an open-ended request to reflect on their personal experience and what they found to be the most encouraging to them personally and what they think will be important aspects to carry forward into their own classrooms. <p><i>Duration of participation in the study:</i> Weeks Months 3</p> <p><i>No. of testing/training sessions:</i> 12 <i>Length of each session:</i> 2 1/2 hours</p> <p><i>Start Date:</i> September 23, 2009</p> <p><i>Only if your procedures include work with blood, bodily fluids or tissues, complete below:</i></p> <p><i>Submit a MUA from Biosafety:</i> Attached Pending</p> <p><i>If you are exempted from obtaining a MUA by Biosafety, explain why?</i></p> <p><i>Total amount of blood draw for study:</i> ml <i>Blood draw for each session:</i> ml</p>
5.	<p>MATERIALS: <i>Itemize all questionnaires/instruments/equipment and attach copies with the corresponding numbers written on them.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. normal art materials used in art class 2. teacher journal 3. digital camera <p><i>Check all other materials that apply and are attached:</i></p> <p>Interview protocol Debriefing Statement Recruitment flyers or advertisements</p> <p>Consent/Assent forms</p> <p><i>If no consent documents are attached, justify omission under Q. 8</i></p>

6.	<p>RISK: Detail risks to a subject as a result of data collection and as a direct result of the research and your plans to minimize them and the availability and limits of treatment for sustained physical or emotional injuries.</p> <p>NOTE: REPORT INCIDENTS CAUSING DISCOMFORT, STRESS OR HARM TO THE IRB IMMEDIATELY!</p>
	<p>a. CURRENT RISK: Describe any psychological, social, legal, economic or physical discomfort, stress or harm that might occur as a result of participation in research. How will these be held to the absolute minimum?</p> <p>No risks are foreseen. There is no change in the students normal classroom curriculum.</p> <p>Is there a financial conflict of interest (see UGA COI policy)? Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X</p> <p>If yes, does this pose any risk to the subjects?</p>
	<p>b. FUTURE RISK: How are research participants to be protected from potentially harmful future use of the data collected in this project? Describe your plans to maintain confidentiality, including removing identifiers, and state who will have access to the data and in what role. Justify retention of identifying information on any data or forms.</p> <p>DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION WITH "NOT APPLICABLE"!</p> <p>Anonymous Confidential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Check one only and explain below.</p> <p>Students may be visually identifiable in the photos or videos but will not be identified by name in in photographs or video clips. Their names will be kept confidential via coding or the use of pseudonym. In addition, there names will be removed from or covered on their artwork. Non-participants will not be photographed or video taped. In the instance of an image of a non-participant being in the image of a participant (i.e. in the background), any non-participants will be deleted/edited out of any photographs or video recordings using editing software.</p> <p>Audio-taping Video-taping <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X</p> <p>If taping, how will tapes be securely stored, who will have access to the tapes, will they be publicly disseminated and when will they be erased or destroyed? Justify retention.</p> <p>Students will not be identified in in photographs or video clips. In addition, there names will be removed from or covered on their artwork. Non-participants will not be photographed or video taped. In the instance of an image of a non-participant being in the image of a participant (i.e. in the background), any non-participants will be deleted/edited out of any photographs or video recordings.</p>
7.	<p>BENEFIT: State the benefits to individuals and humankind. Potential benefits of the research should outweigh risks associated with research participation.</p>

	<p><i>a. Identify benefits of the research for participants, e.g. educational benefits:</i></p> <p>This research has the potential to inform other professors in both the fields of Education and Art Education about how integrating aspects of creative cognition with visual problem solving and art into teacher training can lead to an increased confidence in preservice teachers in regard to transferring these same aspects of creativity to their own students. Students may benefit from the more hands on applications thereby improving engagement and confidence, which in turn may increase rates and degree of success.</p>
	<p><i>b. Identify any potential benefits of this research for humankind in general, e.g. advance our knowledge of some phenomenon or help solve a practical problem.</i></p> <p>The benefits include the development of innovative methods for college professors in understanding and assisting general classroom preservice teachers with a more successful awareness of their own creative potential which in turn could promote classroom environments that recognize, support, and facilitate the creativity in children within the educational setting.</p>
8.	<p>CONSENT PROCESS:</p> <p><i>a. Detail how legally effective informed consent will be obtained from all research participants and, when applicable, from parent(s) or guardian(s).</i></p> <p>Legal CONSENT will be obtained from all research participants.</p> <p>Will subjects sign a consent form? Yes X No If No, request for waiver of signed consent – Yes <i>Justify the request, including an assurance that risk to the participant will be minimal. Also submit the consent script or cover letter that will be used in lieu of a form.</i></p> <p>b. Deception Yes No X <i>If yes, describe the deception, why it is necessary, and how you will debrief them. The consent form should include the following statement: "In order to make this study a valid one, some information about my participation will be withheld until completion of the study."</i></p>
9.	<p>VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS: Yes No X Minors Prisoners Pregnant women/fetuses Elderly Immigrants/non-English speakers Mentally/Physically incapacitated Others List below. <i>Outline procedures to obtain their consent/assent to participate. Describe the procedures to be used to minimize risk to these vulnerable subjects.</i></p>

10.	<p>ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES: Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X</p> <p><i>If yes, explain how subjects will be protected.</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: Some ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES must be reported, e.g. child abuse.</i></p>
11.	<p><u>STUDENTS</u></p> <p><i>This application is being submitted for :</i></p> <p>Undergraduate Honors Thesis</p> <p>Masters Applied Project, Thesis or Exit Exam Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X</p> <p>Doctoral Dissertation Research</p> <p><i>Has the student's thesis/dissertation committee approved this research? Yes No Pending <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X</i></p> <p><i>The IRB recommends submission for IRB review only after the appropriate committees have conducted the necessary scientific review and approved the research proposal.</i></p>

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval

IRB Approval - Siegesmund

7/7/10 8:45 PM

IRB Approval - Siegesmund

Kim Fowler [kfowler@uga.edu]

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2009 9:54 AM

To: Richard E Siegesmund

Cc: Tammy C Cline

PROJECT NUMBER: 2010-10265-0

TITLE OF STUDY: Transferring Creative Confidence from Preservice Teachers to the Elementary Classroom

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Richard Siegesmund

Dear Dr. Siegesmund,

The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your above-titled proposal through the exempt (administrative) review procedure authorized by 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, /unless:(i). the information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; /and/(ii). any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You may now begin your study. Your approval packet will be sent by mail.

Please remember that no change in this research proposal can be initiated without prior review. Any adverse events or unanticipated problems must be reported to the IRB immediately. The principal investigator is also responsible for maintaining all applicable protocol records (regardless of media type) for at least three (3) years after completion of the study (i.e., copy of approved protocol, raw data, amendments, correspondence, and other pertinent documents). You are requested to notify the Human Subjects Office if your study is completed or terminated.

Good luck with your study, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Thank you,

Kim Fowler, CIP
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606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7411
kfowler@uga.edu
Telephone: 706-542-5318
Fax: 706-542-3360
<https://www.ovpr.uga.edu/compliance/hso/>