

What Does it Mean to be a Culturally Responsive Educator?

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Co-Editors.....**Martin Merchant & Mary Wolf**
 Layout & Design Editor.....**Amanda Donovan**
 Proofreader.....**Jo Merchant**

Guest Contributors: Robert Wood, Samantha Nolte-Yupari, Heather McCutcheon, Donnalyn Schuster, James Haywood Rolling, Jr., Thom Knab, Megan Cavanaugh, Rachel Lyons, Susan Rudy, Nick Napierela, Rebecca Schwarz, Anna Castellani, Shane Heller, Danielle Kennedy, Jennifer McLean-Bove, Anna Mack, Ashley Todd, Jasmine Weiskopff, Lauren S. Reinert, Laura Minor, Lindsey Kranz

Photos: Marty Merchant and article authors.

President's Message from Valerie Savage



As the end of the school year approaches, administrators and teachers reflect upon the past ten months and begin to plan for the coming year. There is hope that a 2021-22 school year will begin with a sense of normalcy. Teachers are optimistic that students will attend classes in person, students' faces will be visible, and lessons will once again be created with a wide range of media and with an increased timeframe. Yet learning loss is on everyone's minds. Remediation is meant to fill in a gap, to remedy something. But, how, and can we remedy the unusual and intense learning experiences wrought by COVID 19?

Educational practices moving forward will look different than before the pandemic. Students will enter the new school year with substantial learning gaps, and with new social emotional needs. Additionally, there is an increased awareness of the necessity to address topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The new school year will require educators to make additional adjustments and modifications.

My principal recently shared his idea of hiring an art "teacher on special assignment" who would push into classrooms and address problem solving skills, creativity, social emotional learning, and culturally responsive sustaining educational practices in the 2021-2022 school year. Why did he come up with this idea? The U.S. Education Department has recognized the need to address academic and social emotional needs of students as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, funding has been designated to support these needs and New York State school districts are creating plans to determine the use of the funds. Offers such as this one from my principal may create more jobs for arts teachers, potential for an increased arts presence in schools, and an opportunity for advocacy. So how can we, as art teachers, recommend, contribute to, and maximize this work?

Leverage the Arts Content Standards

Shorter class periods, make-and-take projects with limited supplies, and at-home on-line learning have stymied the student centered, play and imaginative based learning that are the foundations of our learning standards and our curricula. Learning loss in art is real. Time constraints and a lack of room and surface area to work has limited students' ability to "experiment with various materials and tools" (VA:CR2.1.2). Limited materials and the temporary necessity of make-and-take projects has made it impossible to "combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for artmaking" (VA:CR.1.1.5) or "explore and invent artmaking techniques and approaches" (VA:CR.2.1.4). Low student engagement and attendance on Zoom has made it difficult for students to "generate and develop artistic work in a self-directed manner" (VA:CR2.1 HSI). Regardless of the grade level you teach, learning gaps need to be identified and used to develop others' understanding of the needs of art students. Reference to the performance indicators in the NYS Learning Standards for the Arts and evaluation of the goals written in district curriculum will support such an analysis.

Advocate Regarding the Connections between the Arts and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Districts will emphasize social emotional wellness in the coming school year and will wish to target strategies to support students. The arts will continue to play a vital role in strengthening SEL. A quick look and subsequent reflection on the SEL goals established by NYSED, will provide you with a list of SEL skills already incorporated into your lessons. Self-awareness and self-management especially are developed in VA:CR2 while answering the essential questions "how do artists and designers care for and maintain materials, tools, and equipment, "what role does persistence play in revising, refining and developing work?" and "how do artists grow and become accomplished in art forms?" Coming together in a studio community and engaging in discussions and critiques support the development of interpersonal skills, while responsible behaviors connect easily to gallery work, show development and navigating responsible behaviors as artists like dealing with intellectual property and image copyrights. There are natural connections between art education and SEL goals that art educators can support without detracting from the central goals of a rich art education.

Lead the Implementation of the Culturally Responsive Sustaining (CR-S) Education Practices

Districts will continue to place essential emphasis on CR-S practices this fall, with the goal of creating student-centered learning environments. A number of the performance indicators in our art standards directly align with the CR-S framework. When creating student-centered learning environments, the CR-S framework establishes that educators need to, "affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change."

Connections between the CR-S framework and the art standards can be found throughout the artistic processes and across the grade levels. Lessons include opportunities for students to focus on community, cultural traditions and to “make art collaboratively to reflect on and reinforce positive aspects of group identity.” (VA:Cn10.1.8a). Time is allotted for students to reflect on both personal experiences as well as the experiences of others, “select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of one’s self and others.” (VA:Re7.1.1a) The study of cultures, provides students with the opportunity to, “investigate ways that art and design from one culture or time period can influence artists and designers from a different culture or time period.”(VA:Cn11.1.HS1a). Art students also learn to use art as a means to have a voice and to “generate ideas and plans for creating art and design that affect social change” (VA:Cr1.1HSIII). Referring to the CR-S goals and taking time to find the connections for the classes you teach is necessary. Once the connections are made you will be prepared to provide examples of how you are addressing CR-S goals in the art classroom and consequently lead colleagues in CR-S conversations.

Action

School districts must create plans on how to spend the Federal COVID-19 Stimulus funding. Stakeholders such as parents and educators are required to be part of the process. Administrators and colleagues outside of the arts, may lack a full understanding of the rich content in the NYS Learning Standards of the Arts. A focus on learning loss, SEL and CR-S practices may result in administrators taking time away from the art classroom instead of looking to art instruction as part of the solution. It is imperative that administrators acknowledge that the arts should be a vital component to the plan. I encourage each of you to identify ways you can become part of the solution to address learning loss in a meaningful manner, and lead SEL and CR-S initiatives in your district.

The last year has been hard. You have had to transition from your normal teacher practices to a variety of non-standard pedagogy. And yet, through it all you have found ways to support and connect with your students. This is an immense accomplishment. I hope you take time to celebrate your successes and the lessons learned this year! You have shown personal strength, courage and resilience. Wishing you a restful and restorative summer!



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 - The work will be hung anonymously (artists are asked to sign the back or we will cover the signature with a post-it).
 - There will be no fee to participate and all members are eligible to submit up to 2 pieces of quality work.
 - The work will be sold for a flat \$20 each on Saturday afternoon and throughout the evening.
 - As with previous Members Exhibits there will be prizes awarded for excellence.
 - Contributions will be tax deductible as the proceeds will go to the scholarship fund.
 - All unsold work will be returned to the artist/member.
- Questions? Contact Beth Atkinson: bethatkinson12@hotmail.com

About the News

The Association shall focus on the following purposes in support of its mission:

- Secure wider recognition of the importance of art education for all
- Develop and implement strategies for statewide advocacy
- Research, analyze, and inform the membership about current trends and other legal, educational, health-related, and economic issues that affect art education
- Provide high quality professional growth opportunities for the membership
- Recognize the achievements of students and art educators in New York State
- Foster leadership among members of the Association
- Monitor and influence policies and legislation that affect art education at state and local levels.

NYSATA News Mission Statement

The *NYSATA News* desires to bring informative content in an easy to read and understand form to the art teaching professionals of our New York State Art Teachers Association membership.

Written by art teachers from pre-K to college level, this newsletter seeks to present meaningful and helpful narratives about the challenges, failures, and successes in art classrooms. The editors feel that there are valuable resources for educational theory and practice available elsewhere – and that this publication showcases authentic classroom experiences, where art teachers reveal their insights, frustrations, discoveries, mistakes, and triumphs – personal and instructional.

Our mission is to be a platform for teachers' voices. We believe that our pages are a valuable place to share experiences, and that the honest, informal quality of the writing provides realistic inspiration and a genuine sense of community in our profession.

The mission of NYSATA is to promote and advocate for excellence in art education throughout New York State.

The *NYSATA News* publishes official announcements for NYSATA as well as commentary and research on topics that are important to art educators. The opinions expressed in editorials and articles are those of the authors and do not represent NYSATA policies. The *NYSATA News* encourages an exchange of ideas, and invites submission of news or articles for publication. To submit news or articles, please contact Editor, Marty Merchant, at merchantmartin@gmail.com. Advertising inquiries should be sent to sponsorship@nysata.org.

Inquiries about receiving the *NYSATA News* should be directed to the Membership Chair Terri Konu, 9200 Sixty Road, Phoenix, New York 13135, (315) 695-2500, e-mail: tkonu@nysata.org. To change your address, please log into the NYSATA website and update your own address and contact info in your profile.

Photo Submissions: Graphics should be in jpeg, tiff, or pdf format, 150ppi. Photographs and print-ready art are always welcome in jpeg or pdf format. For purposes of accurate identification and acknowledgement, photos sent to the *NYSATA News* must be accompanied by the following information: your name, phone number, and e-mail; name and address of photographer; and first and last names of persons in the photo (in order from left to right, front to back). If art work is presented, the artist's name, school name, teacher name, and NYSATA Region must be included. Additionally, any photos that depict students under 18 must have parental permission to be printed.

An award winning publication, The *NYSATA News* has been named winner of the National Art Education Association State Newsletter Award Category 3 in 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021. Chosen by a panel of visual arts educators from across the nation, this award honors art education publications that demonstrate outstanding achievement and exemplary contributions to the field of art education.

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Co-Editors.....Martin Merchant & Mary Wolf
Layout and Design Editor.....Amanda Donovan
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Sagamore Summer Institute.....Beth Atkinson & Michelle Schroeder
Advocacy Committee.....Dr. Samantha Nolte-Yupari

NYSATA members interested in serving on this board or contributing articles are encouraged to contact Martin Merchant at merchantmartin@gmail.com

Digital publication by AGLAIA SOFTWARE/ePageView

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5000 Parkway Calabasas, Suite 300, Calabasas, CA 91302



Letter from the Co-Editors

Martin Merchant & Mary Wolf



I am especially proud of this latest issue of the *NYSATA News*. In answer to our request for submissions, we had an unprecedented response from art teachers, museum educators, college professors, and leaders in our field. This issue focuses on how to be culturally responsive in our art classrooms – a topic that is critically important in America today, and forces us to navigate challenges in the way we use language, how we explore cultural movements, what we show as artwork, who we celebrate as artists, and most importantly – how we give space and opportunity to our students as they investigate themselves and their worlds. This issue is full of examples, advice, instruction, confession, celebration, success, and reflection.

I want to specially thank Dr. Mary Wolf, who embraced co-editing this extended issue. In addition to teaching her classes and grading students at the end of her college semester, she brought forward exemplary teachers, personally coached several of our writers, and elevated editorial quality with her close-reading eye. She was always analytical yet sensitive, attentive to the challenges of culturally responsive art teachers presenting their stories in thoughtful, equitable, and inclusive language. This would not have been an insightful, balanced, and rewarding issue without her. - *Martin Merchant*



As art teachers, we are notoriously eager to learn, curious, open-minded, and motivated to make our world a more just, beautiful, and inclusive place for everyone. We are all works in progress. When Marty Merchant asked me to co-edit this newsletter, I thought, certainly there is someone better to do such work. But then I thought, even though we are all in different places on our personal journeys or even on different paths, we can still learn from each other. My students and I are in different places but still learn from each other. We use Journey Journals as spaces to (1) reflect on readings related to culturally responsive pedagogy, (2) interrogate ourselves, our pasts, our privileges, our biases, and our society, and (3) reflect on and identify what has contributed to who and where we are today and what has challenged us along the way. We use them to envision ourselves as more asset-focused, equity-minded, and inclusive art teachers who will work with our students and their families, our

colleagues, administrators, school board members, and policymakers to make progress toward justice in our schools and society. We use them to ignite conversations – sometimes uncomfortable ones – in which we listen to and learn from each other and move further along in our journeys of becoming. After all, these journeys do not end for art teachers who are also lifelong learners.

Being co-editor has taken me even further on my journey. This opportunity allowed me to learn from the inspiring authors presented in this newsletter and my astute co-editor. In these articles are insightful stories, practical examples, and helpful advice from vulnerable art educators who were willing to share how they are being culturally responsive and becoming more culturally responsive through action, interaction, and reflection.

They represent a variety of perspectives including:

- Elementary, middle, and high school art teachers
- Art teachers who work with students who have special needs and advanced arts students
- Urban, suburban, and rural school art teachers
- Student teachers, graduate students, and college faculty
- Museums educators
- Leaders in NYSATA and NAEA

No one can or should take this journey alone, which is why I am so grateful to the NYSATA leaders for dedicating this newsletter to culturally responsive teaching, for creating a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee, and for understanding that these steps need to ground our organization and weave throughout everything we do. We do not move forward individually or collectively by reprimanding or chastising someone who is in a different place. It is through sharing, listening, teaching, and supporting each other that we move forward. We hope that no matter where you are in your journey that this newsletter inspires you and helps you take your next steps. - *Mary Wolf*

Your participation in our community is valued and important!

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In Memoriam

Bruce Adams

Many of us go back to the early 1980's when NYSATA was beginning to change as was art education in the state. I'm attaching a memory of Bruce Adams written by Michael Parks.

Bruce not only was an amazing teacher, a NYS Art Educator of the Year, a Region 1 member and advocate, taught at Buffalo State after retiring and an amazing artist and arts advocate in the Western New York area.

Cindy Wells



Bruce with granddaughter Molly in front of one of his paintings

Bruce Adams' extraordinary life ended on March 5, 2021. A true renaissance man with a sharp, active mind, Bruce was, first and foremost, an art educator. He retired from teaching high school and spent the following years as an adjunct instructor at Buffalo State College. He was also a gifted and successful painter. His work is housed in a number of museum collections around the country, and collectors from as far away as China visited his studio. He was a talented and entertaining magician in his younger years, a humanist and skeptic, a gardener with an exquisite koi pond, president and board member of the nationally recognized art center *Hallwalls*, union president, curator, columnist for *Buffalo Spree* magazine, and occasional critic for *The Buffalo News*. He was a husband, a father of two sons, and a grandfather.

Bruce was one of the first people I met when I moved to Buffalo in 1981. A longtime member of NYSATA, he was, at the time, chairing "Section One Western" and representing the region on the NYSATA "Representative Council." He later went on to serve as Convention Manager for then-President Cindy Wells' convention "Art as Idea," my convention "Art Education in a Post-Modern World," and the 50th Anniversary convention in Buffalo for then-President Lisa Lawson.

In the mid-90's, the NYSATA board decided to combine two separate NYSATA publications, the *NYSATA Bulletin* (a journal) and the *NYSATA News* (a newspaper) into the improved publication that members receive today. The intent was to produce a publication with articles and news in a format more like an *ArtNews* magazine. In the first few years of publication, without the use of desktop publishing software, Bruce spent countless hours doing all the layout and paste-up work the tedious, time-consuming way. The payoff was a more visually appealing and readable publication that started, and has continued, to win national awards from the National Art Education Association and has served as a model for other states' publications.

Always an active member of NYSATA, he was clearly one of those members willing to work tirelessly on important assignments, receiving little personal recognition but impacting many.

But again, Bruce was, first and foremost, an art educator. After retiring from high school teaching, Bruce remained in contact with many of his former students. He curated a show in 2016 at a local Buffalo gallery showcasing the work of four of his former students who had gone on to art school after graduation. He was also a recipient of NYSATA's *Art Teacher of the Year* award.

Bruce was 68 years old. He was the best man at my wedding and on a personal level, I will miss his sharp creative mind and his friendship. On a much larger scale, the Buffalo Arts community is mourning the loss of his presence, his insights, and his support. He lived a life that mattered.

Michael E. Parks

In Memoriam

Jill Karen Accordino

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news that our friend and colleague, Jill Karen Accordino, passed away on Tuesday, March 9. Jill was a treasured NYSATA member and Region 4 Board of Trustees Representative. She always brought a smile to the BOT table.

Jill Karen was an important member of the Legislative Exhibit Committee, involved in every aspect of this NYSATA Program: registration review, hanging, brochure review, reception, dismantling . . . always accompanied by her best friend, Gere Link. Jill's dedication to exhibiting reflected her passion for quality art education programs and the importance of the public display of student artwork in our communities. Jill's presence at this exhibit will be greatly missed and her friendship, missed even more so. (Carol Pinkans)

Jill Karen's close friend, Gere Link, shares a few thoughts with us about Jill's beautiful spirit and giving heart:

Jill was an amazing friend and colleague. She was kind, caring, giving, and creative. She loved her students and loved to share her knowledge to help others. No job or challenge was too large for her to conquer.

Jill had a huge heart, constantly giving to her students/school, community, NYSATA, friends and family. From the Empty Bowl project to craft fairs to raise money for breast cancer, to last spring sewing and donating masks, Jill was always helping others. She made the most amazing cards that were works of art to bring a smile or comfort to those she bestowed her lovely creation to. She and husband, Rick, were on the Pinder's Corners Firehouse Board donating time by running/cooking pancake breakfasts and in addition to other fundraisers.

She was an amazing person to go to when help was needed to figure out a lesson or problem. Jill was certified to teach Art Ed K-12 and High School History. We would share lessons, tools and supplies to advance our students' creative opportunities. We would tweak each other's lessons for our situations then share what we did with each other . . . the lessons seemed to evolve.

She had great joy when attending NYSATA conferences to bring back wonderful stash for her students. We had such fun on Art/craft supply shopping trips with friends and the best deals always brought her great joy,

When it came to work, she could make everything fun. She loved to tell a good story whether it was about teaching, traveling, or just about everyday activities . . . and loved to make people laugh. Her favorite saying was "you just can't make this stuff up!"

She was wise beyond her years, had abounding knowledge and skills in the arts/crafts, gardening/cooking, history and more – she amazed me.

I will miss her company and quick wit; will miss her every time I step into Michaels and Joann's or go to a NYSATA Conference . . . I could go on and on.

Thank you, Gere for sharing these beautiful memories with us. This is truly the Jill we all love.



Notes from Albany



David Seligman

Associate in Instructional Services, Visual Art, New York State Education Department

The [NYSED Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework](#) defines culturally responsive education as: “Culturally responsive-sustaining (CR-S) education is grounded in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple

expressions of diversity are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning.” A culturally responsive arts educator, then, is an educator who regards art and art making as a culturally situated practice where difference and diversity are celebrated and acknowledged.

The history of the visual arts contains many examples of the uses, understandings, and privileging of certain voices within the visual arts and arts institutions. From the birth of our nation, Americans have struggled to define ‘American’ art. Michael Kammen, in his book *Visual Shock: A History of Art Controversies in American Culture* (2006) reminds us that even our most recognizable historical monuments, such as John H. Duncan’s *General Grant National Memorial*, or Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as but two examples, were subject of controversy, contestation, and protest at the times of their creation. A young America was aghast by a neoclassical marble statue of George Washington completed in 1841 by Horatio Greenough. In a Platonian pose and wearing a chiton, the baring of Washington’s chest was too much for the public, and this statue was moved from the rotunda of the Capital to the [Smithsonian](#) in 1908.

However, what nineteenth century Americans believed they were appropriating from the Greeks and Romans was incorrect. Modern scholarship points to research that demonstrates these sculptures were not, in fact, white, but rather painted to look like people of the classical world. Margaret Talbot had an article a few years ago in the [New Yorker](#) entitled “The Myth of Whiteness in Classical Sculpture” (2018) and art historian Mark Abbe, quoted in Talbot’s article, has been writing about this topic for some years; as example, see [Polychromy of Roman Marble Sculpture](#). Misunderstandings, contestations, and confusion within art history help us to understand that some of what we take as objective is far from it. Whose story is told, whose is excluded?

Thus, as twenty-first century arts educators we must examine that which we take as objective. Are there both mirrors and windows – that is opportunities for students to see their own lives reflected while, also, learning about another’s experience, in your classrooms? What role do contemporary

art and artists play within your arts room? What community artistic practices can be celebrated or included in your curricula? Many contemporary artist’s work involves social practice and social justice yet, many of us have had the experience of working with students who live close to museums, galleries, theatres, and performance spaces – but have never been inside. We cannot ignore the exclusive history of the arts; that is, who decides what artwork, what cultural artifacts are worthy of collection and study? Who views these collections and why? Concurrent with concerns about racial justice are concerns about the repatriation and ownership of art and artifacts. Stories on these contestations can be found on [NPR](#) or in [ARTNews](#), and [Foreign Policy](#) among many other publications. Culturally responsive sustaining education prepares students for the professional and cultural worlds they will inhabit.

Work continues on the development of the Individual Arts Assessment Pathway (IAAP). This 4+1 pathway assessment, once approved, will be student and teacher propelled as students design, in consultation with their arts teachers, a research based creative portfolio that demonstrates their growth in relation to the Learning Standards for the Arts at the HSII Accomplished level. The IAAP Development Committee continues our work virtually, and we are planning for a pilot in early 2022. Please stay tuned for more information!

Additionally, the NYSED Arts Content Advisory Panel (CAP) is meeting monthly and has just completed work on an Arts Assessment Think Document, and a CRSE in the Arts resource. These initial resources are forthcoming on the [NYSED Arts webpage](#) and will be complimented by more extensive materials soon.

A [quote](#), from the Black artist Kehinde Wiley seems apt in closing: “If you look at the paintings that I love in art history, these are the paintings where great, powerful men are being celebrated on the big walls of museums throughout the world. What feels really strange is not to be able to see a reflection of myself in that world.” Let us work so that all our students, our colleagues, neighbors, and fellow citizens can see a reflection of themselves in the beauty, history, and ~~David Seligman~~ *is the Associate in Instructional Services, Arts, in the Office of Curriculum & Instruction at NYSED. David taught Visual Art to elementary age students for over a decade in Districts 2 and 20 in New York City and in the White Plains City School district. Additionally, he was an Adjunct Instructor in the Visual Art teacher preparation program at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University.*

Painted Story Quilt

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A visual story on fabric, based on the art of Faith Ringgold.

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Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

The NYSATA Board of Trustees unanimously voted to approve the formal creation of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Committee at the March 2021 Board of Trustees meeting. The establishment of this committee confirms NYSATA's recognition of the need to place topics and concerns pertaining to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as a priority.

To develop a plan for the NYSATA ED&I work, volunteers from the BOT referred to the National Art Education Association (NAEA) creation of an ED&I Commission, NAEA ED&I resources and the NYSED Culturally Responsive Sustaining (CR-S) Framework. Members of the group were also able to use knowledge from serving on CR-S teams in their districts as they identified areas of focus for equity, diversity and inclusion topics.

NYSATA's ED&I objectives are:

- To better serve students and support educators – including those who are often marginalized due to their identity including but not restricted to cultural identities, race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, special needs, and other characteristics
- To assist art educators in incorporating an equity and inclusion lens in all facets of their work
- To identify, guide, and support opportunities for professional development in NYSED Initiatives such as CR-S educational practices
- To consistently work with program chairs to evaluate NYSATA programs to provide teachers and students with equitable opportunities for success
- To establish goals by targeting and identifying areas for improvement regarding equity within the NYSATA community in order to create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

This timely work preceded the New York State Board of Regents' announcement of intent and timeline for the creation of a Framework on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in New York's Schools. The Board of Regents advanced the DEI proposal on May 10 and launched a DEI [website](#). This website focuses on the following categories: DEI Framework and Policy Statement, Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education, Digital Equity, and Professional Learning. The Board of Regents is calling on all school districts to develop DEI polices "with fidelity and urgency". As a result, the NYSATA ED&I Committee will also be examining how the NYSED DEI initiative impacts our work as art educators.

This issue of the *NYSATA News* is a testament of how NYSATA members are already providing the answers to many of these questions and are currently focused on ED&I topics. NYSATA recognizes the path of continued learning in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion requires constant personal, community and organizational reflection and a willingness to change. As the ED&I Committee continues to determine the most effective ways to identify the needs of NYSATA members, we are calling for your assistance. We will be looking for answers to questions such as:

- With a focus on ED&I topics, what is your greatest area of need?
- What CR-S educational training has your district provided?
- Would you attend professional development workshops, lectures, or book study groups designed specifically for art educators?

Please share your stories, successes, needs, and thoughts about DE&I with the NYSATA leadership in your region and/or with our committee. To contact the committee directly please email us at equity@nysata.org

Current Committee Members: Christine Attlesey-Steger, Lindsay Kranz, Pearl Lau, Susan Rudy, Valerie Savage, and Janice Wiggins
Consultant: Thom Knab

BIG INK



BIG INK IS ON for the 2021 NYSATA Conference!

Get those woodblocks ready! BIG INK printed 16 large scale woodcuts at our 2019 conference, and it was a huge hit! We are looking for 16 more for the 2021 conference. New and past participants are welcome.

BIG INK was founded by Lyell Castonguay and Carand Burnet. Their mission is to teach large scale woodblock printmaking and promote public awareness for the art of the form.

BIG INK hosts large scale woodblock printmaking events across the United States. Interested artists are invited to carve a woodblock that ranges from 24" x 36" to 40" x 96". **BIG INK** will be bringing their custom designed giant mobile press, "The Big Tuna", to our conference and will print three impressions of each woodblock which the artist can take home. Only 16 spots are available for our NYSATA 2021 Conference. No experience is necessary. After each participant pays their participation fee, Lyell will send an instructional package that has information about what kind of wood to buy, tools, and carving technique. Participants can do one as an individual, as a class project, collaborate with a friend, or even better – do one as a Region collaboration!

The fee to participate is \$325 for individual/small group participants or \$350 for large multi-block (A block cut up in more than 4 pieces).

Register at www.nysata.org/big-ink or contact Beth Atkinson at artchallenge@nysata.org

Remember:

- There are only 16 spots, so if you're interested, sign up right away. Plus, it will give you more time for carving!
- Images must be between 24" x 36" up to 40" x 96"
- our image must be completely carved and ready to print by the time you arrive for the 2021 NYSATA Conference.
- There are only two multi-block spots available (a multi-block is an image that consists of more than four small blocks that are put together to create one image)
- Printing takes place on both Friday and Saturday of the Conference. The day and time will be assigned after registration.



Re(Considering) Advocacy Part II

When It Comes to Advocacy, Where's the Efficacy?

Dr. Samantha Nolte-Yupari

Recently one of my graduate students, a middle and high school teacher in a regional district, presented her vision for her art program to the school board. She did everything our current literature on advocacy said to do: she had a list of talking points, and she considered her audience and time limit. She was enthusiastic and ready to explain how contemporary curriculum meets the new standards. Yet, after the meeting she felt underwhelmed. The school board gave her no feedback, just a, "thank you, you can log off now." No questions, just a check box on their agenda list and a "be on your way." Kerry reported frustration and tiredness that she was excited to talk about something the school board did not seem interested in. This is by no means an uncommon experience for us as art educators. But what are we actually to make of this situation? Why is it such a ubiquitous occurrence? While I am not sure I have answers, I have located a couple of conversations that provide clues: Project Zero's (2009) conversation about teacher-efficacy and quality and Mary Erickson's (2002) conversation about beliefs that policymakers carry about the arts.

Self-Efficacy: Who's in the Room?

Often, I think advocacy is tricky because it feels disempowering (even though it's supposed to feel empowering?). Our efficacy feels non-existent. The decisions always seem to be made by someone else who knows little about art education. But are we really so powerless? In a radical re/consideration of who has the most power for decision making, Seidel, et al. (2009), a research team at Harvard's Project Zero, point out that teachers actually have the most power of decision making when it comes to their programs. They identify three levels of decision makers affecting art education: those in the room, those just outside the room, and those furthest away from the room. "Those in the room" include teachers and students inhabiting art rooms every day (Seidel, et al., 2009, p. 61). It is those bringing arts education to life that in fact hold the most power over quality experiences (p. 61). "Those just outside the room" include other teachers, parents, and administrators who can easily come by the site where art education occurs (Seidel et al., 2009). Policymakers then are "the furthest away from the room" and thus have the least power over arts education decisions, even though they often

hold the purse strings on a budget (Seidel, et al., 2009, pp. 60-61). This is a radical repositioning of teachers at the center of power as those that co-inhabit lived curricular spaces with students because it makes the unit of measure "the room," rather than a top-down hierarchy of federal-state-district policymakers with teachers and students at the bottom (Seidel, et al., 2009).

While this point likely does not remove the frustration we feel as art educators when policymakers do not provide funding and access, it does remind us that our efficacy exists. Interviewed educators identified "...issues of resources as critical, persistent, and frustrating, [but] there was also a strong sense that the lack of resources did not fundamentally cripple [arts teachers] in their quest for quality" (Seidel, et al., 2009, p. 63). Having a good art program comes then from a range of decisions that require art teachers to know what is most important to them: what is most important for students to learn, what ideas to focus on, what critical skills and habits to foster (Seidel, et. al., 2009). The implications for advocacy could be significant. If in fact, the most power happens "in the room" then, art educators can advocate more successfully with a focused sense of mission and vision for their art education program. A lack of cohesive vision can tax our sense of efficacy across these concentric circles as we head out of our rooms.

Policymaker's Beliefs

Still, at some point we have to directly advocate to policymakers. When we go furthest from our rooms to engage with policymakers, we may feel less efficacy because their responses bewilder us. Mary Erickson (2002) points out that stakeholders often carry one or more beliefs about the arts/art education that significantly affect their perception of an art education program. First, policymakers may have belief of universal art learning. This belief is that art learning, like walking or eating, is completely inborn and that humans develop art ability naturally (Erickson, 2002). While this seems at first like a belief that is in line with TAB and other contemporary approaches that position children as artists, this belief actually means that policymakers do not believe that art needs to be taught all: "why teach what comes naturally?" (Erickson, 2002, p. 12). This is different than

contemporary curriculum approaches which presume that the child is a natural maker of art but one whose potential for growth and learning needs support and developments via art education.

A second reason policymakers might resist art education is a belief that what we need to know about art is already taught or passed on culturally because it is available and ubiquitous like the *Mona Lisa* or Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (Erickson, 2002). This perspective presumes a narrow definition of what art constitutes – beauty and realism. Thus, art forms do not need to be taught, and instruction about beauty and realism are unnecessary. This makes it difficult for them to support something they do not understand (Erickson, 2002).

A third belief is really less a belief and more a lack of exposure. Many policymakers have little to no opinion about art because they never took art classes (Erickson, 2002). This means they do not support the arts because they cannot see the benefit for students. They themselves turned out just fine without it, didn't they?

A fourth belief that policymakers hold is that art is a specialist field that requires specific advanced education (Erickson, 2002). While this might feel like it works in our favor because it seems to support the need for art education, ironically, this belief often means that policymakers do not believe that the arts belong in general education at all and are instead the domain of specialty, extra-curricular and summer programs (Erickson, 2002).

Finally, some policymakers believe that the arts are extremely valuable but only when one of those one-in-a-million geniuses comes along and changes what art is and how we engage with it (Erickson, 2002). This policymaker appreciates the arts, but because that one-in-a-million artist will find a way to make art regardless of access to art education in schools, most students just do not need art education because they are not destined to be the Van Gogh, Picasso, or Basquiat of their generation.

While not so encouraging, identifying these five beliefs can increase our efficacy as we head out of our rooms because it allows us to focus our advocacy efforts. If we can figure out what beliefs policymakers hold, then we can figure out how to myth-bust their beliefs and re-educate. It may seem tempting to play to their beliefs but part of our work is to counter common misconceptions. Erickson (2002) calls upon us to “accept the challenge of breaking the cycle of ignorance and providing stakeholders with fundamental understandings of art” (p. 15).

Questions for Reflection for You and/or Your Art Department

- How do you determine quality every day in your classrooms?
- Where do you feel the most efficacy? In your room? Or in your program/department? Somewhere/way else?

- Where do you feel the least efficacy and what steps might you take to increase that efficacy? (e.g., building relationships by opening dialogues? Communicating with the public?)
- What's your mission/vision for your art education program?
- What are your priorities for your program?
- Of these priorities, which ones need monetary support and which ones need other kinds of support (e.g., time, professional development, different schedule, that you might also successfully advocate for)?

Questions for Reflection about Policymakers

- What approaches/arguments have you already tried with your local policymakers? What was the response?
- What beliefs about art/education have your local school board/policymakers revealed to you?
- Do your current/past advocacy arguments directly address and counter policymaker's limiting beliefs that you have identified?
- Do they hold limiting beliefs not on this list? What are they?
- In what ways can you (diplomatically) address the limiting beliefs of your policymakers as you make your case for your art program?

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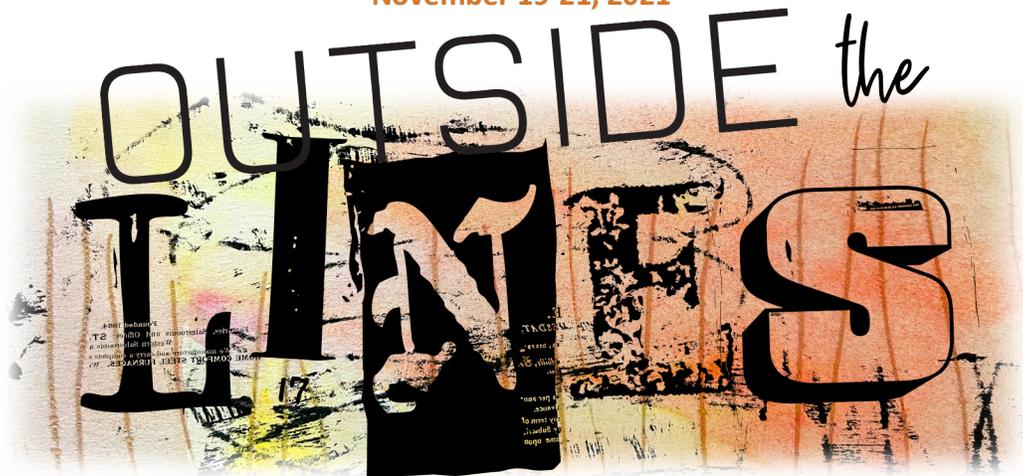
Samantha Nlte-Yupari, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Art Education at Nazareth College. She is a graduate of Penn State University. Her research interests include beginning art teacher experiences, place, story, and visual methodology. She recently won the Arts & Learning of SIG of AERA's National Dissertation Award for her research about first and second year art teachers.

NYSATA Conference 2021

save THE DATE!

NYSATA 73rd Annual Conference

November 19-21, 2021



**CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS, Redrafting Priorities,
& Reinventing Practice in Art Education**

NYSATA has partnered with the Doubletree Hotel in Binghamton, NY to explore a hybrid format for this event, including both virtual and in-person access to workshops during our conference weekend of November 19-21, 2021, and access to recorded events after the event. Watch your email and the NYSATA website for more information.

OUTSIDE the LINES is the theme of the 2021 NYSATA Conference

Workshops will address

- Teaching under constraining conditions
- Using new platforms and methods for teaching in a digital world
- Fostering the social emotional health and well-being of students and/or educators
- Connecting to a diverse body of relevant contemporary artists and work
- Encouraging student choice and developing student voice
- Challenging assumptions about race, class, and social structure and developing culturally responsive practice
- Engaging in artistic practice to inspire and refresh teaching and promote self-care
- Utilizing art-focused professional learning communities to revitalize and reconceptualize teaching and learning in the Visual and Media Arts
- Generating advocacy strategies for prioritizing the arts as essential curriculum and retaining funding for arts programs in schools



Registration and Meal Rates

Member Early Bird.....	\$149 (\$119 virtual)
Member After November 1.....	\$179 (\$139 virtual)
Student/Retired/Unemployed Member Early Bird.....	\$110 (\$89 virtual)
Student/Retired/Unemployed Member After November 1.....	\$140 (\$109 virtual)
Non-Member (No Early Bird Rate).....	\$225 (\$199 virtual)
Full Meal Package (Save \$10).....	\$188
Friday Lunch	\$25
Friday Dinner Buffet.....	\$50
Saturday Lunch.....	\$25
Saturday President's Reception & Plated Dinner.....	\$60
Sunday Brunch.....	\$38

Keynote Speakers Include



Dr. James Haywood Rolling, Jr.

Dual Professor, Arts Education & Teaching and Leadership
Affiliated Faculty, African American Studies
College of Visual and Performing Arts/School of Education, Syracuse University

President, National Art Education Association (NAEA)
Founding Chair, NAEA Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Commission

Nicolas Bruno

Fine Art Photographer
Northport, NY
BFA Photography, Purchase College

Additional Keynote Speakers to be announced soon...

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Youth Art Month Goes COVID-CREATIVE!

Heather McCutcheon & Donnalyn Schuster, YAM Co-Chairs

March 2021 was unlike any other! We virtually celebrated Youth Art Month with excitement and exhaustion. Due to COVID almost every YAM event was virtual with some fun pop ups of in-person art shows and school district fun days! Art teachers thought outside the box and created some amazing and unique opportunities for their students and communities. We are very excited to share some of these innovative events from every corner of NYS with you!

The teachers in Herkimer County worked together to put on their Reflections exhibit at the Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts. There were over 50 art pieces from several schools in the county. Traditionally, there is a big reception and the gallery is filled with parents, students, and friends of the arts. However, COVID forced the event to pivot! This year, our reception was held using staggered times for families and school communities to view the work.

Jane Malin, Director of the MVCA, even requested that the show continue for an extra month this year!

Another long-standing advocacy event

in March, the 2021 Legislative Art Show, was one of the biggest we have seen in years. As our flagship event for Youth Art Month in New York State, we were so excited to see artwork from all over NYS and many thanks to Carol Pinkans for creating an extensive virtual gallery.

Out in Region 1, Fredonia High School art teacher, Connie Lavelle, held a grant-funded, virtual painting night. In the spirit of true community service, her National Art Honor Society students created pack-up kits of art supplies to go home, made posters and videos to promote the event. As a result, in this novel approach, many families signed up and made it a point to enjoy creating collectively, while in the safety of their home. Take a look at the instructional video for the event, created by the National Art Honor Society students! <https://youtu.be/fS1ewuYTOb0>

The highly successful social media promotion, Make Art Monday, remained an important event, for Tamarac High School in Region 6. Art Teacher Jill Sheffer made sure to highlight works in progress, and share them on social media.

Overcoming the fact students were in and out of school, in various learning configurations proved challenging for all, and the fact that art had become a push in class did not deter Monica Schor of Region 7 with her annual Art Trivia Daily challenge! COVID did not keep her elementary students from feeling ART SMART throughout March.

On Long Island in Region 9, Patty Krakoff also facilitated a similar paint night with students from her school, East Lake Elementary in Massapequa. Over 140 households participated via Zoom.

Tim Needles, from Smithtown High School, focused on a YAM/STEAM



concept of artwork for the Mars Rover. Students created visuals for the Mars Rover landing and Mars helicopter that had just touched down and shared them via NASA and *National Geographic*. His students also produced a collaborative project, Art Together Now Animated Music Video Collaboration, with OK Go Sandbox

Up in St. Lawrence County, Edwards-Knox Elementary School and Jennifer Impey had their own version of March Madness . . . with an online voting challenge for art brackets! <https://www.facebook.com/Edwards-Knox-Central-School-District-215063095238368>

In the Southern Tier, under the direction of Matt Wilson, Chenango Valley High School held a similar event! Great way to capitalize on the arts version of the Final Four and provide an event that not only students, but faculty and staff, can take part in. What a wonderful way to build unity, at a time when so many feel isolated.

Hats off to all our intrepid art educators, who continued to find creative ways for art advocacy to remain successful in these unprecedented times. Art, no matter what, truly connects us!



NYSATA Art Challenge #3

Wow! We got some fun entries for this one!

Our guest juror, Kate Sydney (www.Katesydney.com) had a hard time choosing from the entries submitted.

It was wonderful to see the variety of work submitted for this challenge. There were so many different ideas of what wearable art could be.



Here are the three winners Kate selected:



Corey Fong (Region 6)
Bristle

"For this piece, I wanted to create a playful interaction between recycling and the human body. Recycled paintbrush bristle, ebony wood, and a hand fabricated silver chain adorn the neck and extend outward resembling the hairs of a caterpillar, highlighting the elegant curvature of the neckline."

I loved the mixed media and innovation of using recycled paintbrush hairs in combination with the wood and silver in Corey Fong's necklace, "Bristle".

Sarah Zakalik (Region 2)
And The Universe Expands



*"Necklace made of Book Pages, Book Cover, Elmer's Glue, Sterling Silver Clasp"
I loved the interaction of the words and the structure of the necklace and how she transformed old books to make something so beautiful and wearable.*



Mary Brodersen (Region 9)
Evening Jacket

*"Sample tapestry squares redesigned into jacket pattern."
"Evening Jacket" is exquisite. I was drawn to the intricacy of the design and the craftsmanship in the pattern.*

You can see most of the creative entries we received on our Padlet site at <https://padlet.com/mschroeder68/vb4q9mybj62c43wb>.

Get ready for Art Challenge #4: Working with Stencils

Stencils are a fun way to create with so many different mediums. Use with paint, ink, molding paste on paper, fabric, most any material. We invite you to use your imagination to make a hand-cut stencil to create a hand-stenciled piece of art of your choosing. The final piece can be 2- or 3-dimensional just as long as stencils were used in the creation of the piece. Remember, this might be a fun entry for the 10" x 10" NYSATA Conference Members Exhibition!

The rules:

- Create your own original hand cut stencil out of any material that you see fit – cardstock, mylar etc. Use it to make your own original piece of art.
- Your entry can be 2-or 3-dimensional but the stencil design must be evident in the work.
- Submit a high-resolution digital image (minimum of 1000 pixels in any direction, maximum file size 10 Mb) of your finished piece as well as one of your hand-cut stencil by September 30, 2021 at www.nysata.org/art-challenge-4
- Our juror will select three winners. The three winners and additional entries as space allows, will be published in the next issue of the *NYSATA News* and the winning artists will receive a Blick Art Materials gift card.
- There is no entry fee for this challenge, but the work must be created by a NYSATA Member.
- By entering the challenge, you agree to allow NYSATA to publish images and information about your work.

Deadline is September 30, 2021

Questions? artchallenge@nysata.org.



Noteworthy Guidance for Summer Curriculum Development

Robert Wood

NYSATA Curriculum Committee Chair; NYSED Content Advisory Panel for Media Arts; NYSED Learning Standards for the Arts; Media Arts Writing Chair; NYSATA Past President
rwood@nysata.org

Standards roll-out continues with full implementation in the Fall of 2021. Despite navigating the challenges of this past school year, the Arts educators of New York continue with the next phase of revising and developing local curriculum. As you move forward this summer with curriculum development in your district, NYSATA is here to support you.

Useful reference materials for starting are already available on the NYSED website. Think Documents offer summaries of guiding principles and transformational steps in curriculum design.

VA: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/think_va_2020.pdf

MA: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/think_ma_2020.pdf

Although the Arts may foster connections with other disciplines, Arts courses must be recognized as an academic area in itself, and developed for the Standards and processes unique to the Arts. The Visual and Media Arts Flowcharts provide a detailed path of course offerings with descriptions in grades Pre-K to 6, grades 7 and 8, and in High School Proficient Comprehensive Foundation Level (HSI), High School Accomplished Level Electives (HSII), and High School Advanced Level Electives (HSIII).

Comprehensive foundation courses (HSI) must meet all 11 Visual Arts and/or Media Arts standards at the HSI Level, and must be taught by a certified Visual Arts educator. Students in grades 9-12 must be given an opportunity complete a unit of credit in the Arts; which may include Visual Arts, Music, Dance, or Theater to satisfy Regents diploma requirements (CR100.5(a)3(v)). Students should also have the opportunity to begin a sequence in the arts in grade nine (CR100.2(h)).

http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/final-va_ma-course-flowchart-2020.pdf

Regarding many statewide, who have been grappling with questions about Design and Drawing for Production, it is hoped discussion will take place regarding a possible updated version of DDP to reflect the NYSED 2017 Arts Standards. In the interim, noteworthy requirements include a DDP course of study for art credit must use the State developed DDP syllabus in its entirety, must meet all 11 Art Standards at the HSI level, and vendor-provided curriculum may not be used to award art credit. NYSED does not endorse any vendor provided curriculum.

NYSED's DDP FAQ's, available at: <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/arts-frequently-asked-questions>.

The NYSED Independent Arts Assessment Pathway (IAAP/4+1) is in the final stages of local development guidance with a potential piloting in 2022. NYSATA Portfolio Project will soon begin work on updating and modifying Commencement, Elective, and Major Sequence portfolio adjudications as a potential exemplar for local IAAP implementation.

The NYSED Content Advisory Panel for the Arts (CAP), comprised of Arts educators from the five Arts disciplines, volunteered this past year working virtually to complete content for soon to be released self-guidance on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRSE) in the Arts and assessment in the Arts. NYSATA will keep you abreast of its forthcoming release.

The process of NYSED reviewing courses for approval is no longer in practice. It is vital the above guidance is utilized as new courses are developed to address the Standards. NYSATA remains committed to advocating for effective, quality Visual and Media Arts education for all students and is here to assist you. Please reach out to the Curriculum Committee if you have any questions as you move forward with your curriculum writing this summer!

The Call and Response of Culturally Responsive Education

James Haywood Rolling, Jr.
President, NAEA

Making art renders the everyday artifacts of human cultures as we interact and respond to one another. It is also the essence of altruism. Altruism is not concerned with the “survival of the fittest,” but with the “survival of the patterns” sustaining us. Hence, the arts and design in education is a much more significant endeavor than classes promoting specialized technical skills for the talented. This misses the point. The arts and design in education is about the big picture of culture creation, not the single brushstroke, but rather cultivating mutually advantageous human achievements. What happens in our classrooms are the first instances of young learners discovering the agency to design the world they’d like to live in. Simply by reframing critical thinking – not as a skills outcome of the art classroom, but rather as a primary vehicle for altruistic sociocultural interventions – art + design education practices are poised and at the ready to respond to the calls of a world that still needs perfecting (Rolling, 2013).

In order to be a culturally responsive educator, one must begin with the recognition that children do not enter our classrooms as empty receptacles. Like adults, they come to us possessing knowledge to contribute to a world that is a work in progress – knowledge about the world and their place in it that has been discovered by happenstance, or which has been passed down to them by family and community, or that they have created for themselves through rounds of experimentation and play. Yes, they have much more to learn, but they have also learned much more in the short span of their lives than is often

recognized (Rolling, 2016).

In other words, a culturally responsive educator opens up space for children to do what comes naturally – offering their own responses to the world as it cries out for change. As a species, our critical thinking skills have evolved as a natural response to our sense of responsibility to one another as human beings (Barber, 2004). Consequently, critical thinkers exercise the *moral* reasoning that has helped our species as a whole to survive and thrive (Joyce, 2007). Learners who are already equipped to make such critical and moral choices – are also equipped to distinguish right from wrong, to opt in or opt out of systems that exert power over them for good or

I wanted to see what ideas students had already consumed from general media awareness and family discussions and how those ideas had catalyzed their critical awareness.

for ill, and to express their opinions distinguishing the advantageous from the merely acceptable, and the acceptable from the unjust. A culturally responsive educator freely fosters the call for learners to respond, expecting the most of their students.

When the 4th grade-level teaching team at my former school all agreed on a third trimester theme of Social Justice

one year, I became interested in viewing the opinions of my students both on matters we had been talking about in our classrooms and also on matters important to them which were invisible to me. Since we were still in the wake of the 2004 presidential election and the buzz of conversation about the candidates amongst the children and families at home and at school, I proposed the idea of having each student create his or her own political cartoon. I explained a political cartoon to be a commentary on current events that expresses an opinion and serves to persuade others by its appearance in the public conversation. I further explained that political cartoons are drawings representing current public figures or important social issues symbolically and often satirically, and that art was very much about the ideas my students thought were important. My conception of this political cartooning project depended a great deal on my conception of my job as a teacher – to open the pedagogical space for students to be as critical, as perspicacious, and opinionated as they choose to be.

As a precursor to their political cartooning exercise, I asked each 4th grader to name and pictorialize an injustice in the world today that he or she wanted to help make better. In doing so, I was asking each student to delve into the first pedagogical site and to draw out and unpack visual cultural texts already rooted in mind, apart from any intervention on how to best represent their thinking. I wanted to see what ideas students had already consumed from general media awareness and family discussions and how those ideas had catalyzed their

critical awareness. One youngster named Ian was given the pictorial space to be himself and express his point of view.

Ian was a daydreamer, a quiet child with a crackling imagination who reminded me of myself when I was his age (Rolling, 2020). Sometimes when Ian was drawing, I could audibly pick out his soft voice in the murmur of the busy art studio, rehearsing to no one in particular the dialogue he had placed in the mouths of the characters he had created along with the sound effects of their interactions. Ian was full of tacit and carefully observed knowledge about the creatures of our natural world as well as the fire-breathing creatures he would concoct and personify within his imagination. The portrait/self-portrait image depicted in Figure 1 represents a collaborative project Ian and I created together in one of the afterschool classes he signed up to take with me, a visual translation of some of the things he knew and vividly daydreamed but was not yet adept at verbally telling (Rolling, 2015).



Figure 1.

In Figure 2, Ian represents his affection and concern for wild animals as their space is invaded. Those who wield

weapons and hunt for sport also cause the home of these forest creatures to be engulfed in flames. But from Ian's point of view, humans can do better – can be better (Rolling, 2008).

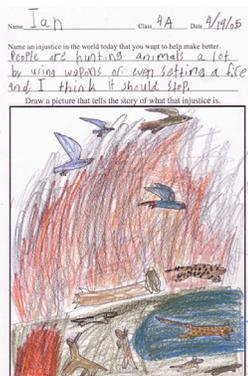


Figure 2.

In Figure 3, Ian expresses what needs to be done to establish a new order where, under the watchful eye of animals, men hose down the conflagration they have ignited. Inhumanity is confronted. Ian's anatomically and proportionally correct renderings of these animals suggest his fluency in a contemporary visual culture abounding with opportunities to observe nature, nature photography, nature media programming, and even the animation of creatures of the wild.



Figure 3.

In their agency to oversee and manage their own domains, the animals in this image take on the power to resist the encroachments of inhumanity. In the lower right-hand corner, as a wild spotted cat speeds to overtake what will likely be its next meal, one notes that in the midst of the more obvious focal points in any given spectacle, other important transactions are taking place. Ian sees life unfolding. Do I see what he sees? Do I value it as he does?

In Ian's foray into the realm of cultural responsiveness as situated within our 4th grade art class, I was not in a position to tell Ian what to draw, or what to draw upon. My curricular objective was to have students render political cartoons, using pen and ink, and to learn something about the historical relevance of political cartoons. And yet, in the midst of my curricular objectives, other important transactions are taking place. In this case, Ian's personal interests govern his art-making and I sought to learn from Ian what Ian alone could teach me. As a teacher, to conceive of Ian in a position of power over his own domain of ideas, a domain that does not require my cultivation to "ecologically" thrive, posits a student identity that transgresses adult assumptions about 4th grade learners.



Figure 4.

In the earliest of the pictorialized iterations of his social justice concerns which would ultimately culminate in Ian's final political cartoon, one views a large spotted cat in a position of domain authority looking down from a tree branch and confronting a man holding a chainsaw with the words "What are you doing?" (Figure 4). Coincidentally, this drawing also characterizes the willingness of educators to undercut what students already know how to do and are familiar with in deference to the industry of public schooling. We recklessly clear-cut the old growth individual curricular trajectories emanating from student lives in favor of more predictable classroom curricular projects, denuding the learning landscape of opportunities for students to explore the agency to critically innovate apart from our incessant, albeit well-intentioned, teacherly interventions.

Name: Ian, Class: 4A, Date: 5/2/05

Political Cartoons

Sketch a political cartoon that persuades others to see the value of your opinion about an injustice in the world or in your community.



Figure 5.

In the next images, we view the position of the large cat validated by a diversity of animals, presenting a representative majority in opposition to the lone man with the chainsaw – while the cat’s cubs, arrayed with black belts, noisily practice their martial arts repertoire in the tree’s protective canopy (Figure 5); we view an impending war against the machines of hegemony, all the animals stolid in their preparation to defend their domain (Figure 6); and finally we view Ian’s finished cartoon, titled “Stay Away From The Tree” (Figure 7). The dialogue from one of the cubs in the tree changes from the posturing statement, “Don’t make me come down there!” in Figure 5, to the more confident “Can we get the man with the chainsaw?” in the final rendering.

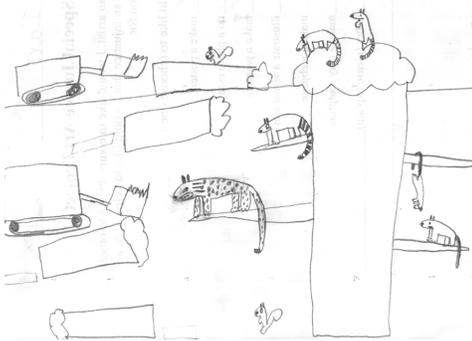


Figure 6.

Ian’s selected title for his final political cartoon, “Stay Away From The Tree,” serves as a caution to educators who carry their own undercutting curricular equipment so dangerously near the site of children’s opinions; the roots of Ian’s mental imagery stem from domains of personal experience which are likely far removed from the classroom’s formal boundaries. To protect the domain of their burgeoning opinions



Figure 7.

and perspectives, students often keep them secret – scribbling only sparse indications of a forest of mental images and meanings in the margins of their notebooks and the covers of their binders.

Visuality has alternatively been defined as “how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein” (Foster, 1988, p. ix), and as the subjective “quality or state of being visual” in an “everyday space [that] is increasingly dominated by visual images” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 370). Is it so surprising that children growing up in such a world are able to envision solutions to problems that I as a teacher cannot? Moreover, how can our students learn to exercise such agency if the reigning conception of children does not afford opportunities for them to demonstrate the power to envision better worlds while they’re still coming to our classrooms?



James Haywood Rolling, Jr. is a Dual Professor of Arts Education and Teacher and Leadership in the College of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Education at Syracuse University, and chair of the Arts Education programs. In his earlier education, Rolling earned his MFA in studio arts research at Syracuse University while studying as a Graduate Fellow in the Department of African American Studies. In March 2021, Rolling became the 37th president of the National Art Education Association (NAEA).

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The Anti-Bias Visual Arts Educator

Thom Knab

Identify and acknowledge privilege

As a white educator I recognize that my white privilege is not racist. However, this white privilege exists, a consequence of persistent historic racism and enduring biases. A bias is a belief of what a person or group can or cannot do and alternatively what a person or group is like or is not like based upon their identity. It can be a conscious or unconscious prejudice.



Bias Balance, Thom Knab

Systemic racism happens when structures or processes are carried out by groups with power, such as governments, businesses, or schools, structures and processes which produced and reproduced racial inequalities.¹ According to 2017-18 data, the percentage of teachers and principals who identify as white hovers slightly below 80%.² Those creating the curriculum, developing the structures, and enacting the processes have been overwhelmingly white. They have created the foundation of the education system, where more than half the students identify as non-white.³

Those with privilege can use it to correct disparities, to examine structures and processes, and tear down racial inequalities. We must also acknowledge that having privilege does not suggest that one has not struggled or worked hard for what they achieved. Rather white privilege – as well as other privileges – should be viewed as a built-in advantage possessing more access to power and resources than people of color (or other groups) have in an equivalent situation.

Our society has been designed by white people for white people. It was, and in many ways is, an inculcation of what it means to be of value in the US. Change has been slow



Crayons, Thom Knab

and has taken far too long. Crayola changed the color “flesh” to “peach” in 1962, Band-Aid launched a range of bandages in multiple skin tones in 2005, the names of sports teams are changing (the Washington “Redskins” football team temporarily changing to the Washington Football Team in 2020), and the rebranding of food products (Aunt Jemima, Mrs. Butterworth, and Uncle Ben’s).

Change is occurring, and we can harness the energy of today to deepen and accelerate positive change. But what can we, as educators, do? “... anti-bias educators can learn to clean their lenses to see with a more accurate eye and mind, and a caring heart.”⁴

Take time to build understanding, connections, and relationships

Educators need to learn and understand our students’ backgrounds. We may have students who come from two-parent hetero households, single-parent households, families with same-sex parents, children being raised by grandparents or other caretakers. More of our students come from mixed-race relationships, from other countries, practice various religions/belief systems, or speak various languages. Allow students to freely share about their families along with experiences and traditions. In doing so, you validate their life experiences and allow classmates (and yourself) to become more comfortable with each other and more comfortable discussing such topics. “Diversity does not cause prejudice, nor does children noticing and talking about differences, as some adults fear. Children learn prejudice from messages and images of prejudice. They also learn from the silence or discomfort of adults when children ask or comment about the human differences they see around them.”⁵ In my own teaching, I encourage students to include special observances, practices, and ideas their

families hold dear as a way to get to know them and for them to get to know each other.

Promote a comfort, joy, and understanding of human diversity.

Reflect on your classroom management style

How a teacher responds to various behavioral infractions sends an important message to students and can impact their success as a learner. Students will notice the words you choose when addressing their classmates. These words inform a student of how you, as the adult example in the classroom, value or devalue certain students. Also, never publicly shame a student. Take them aside, respect them as individuals, and speak to them privately about their behavior.

A disparity in how you respond to and speak with students can also result in negative achievement outcomes. "... researchers found that a 10-percentage point increase in the Black-white discipline gap in a school district predicts an achievement gap that is 17 percent larger than the average Black-white achievement gap."⁶ The research found that as the racial discipline gap increased or decreased, so too did the achievement gap increase or decrease respectively. This disparity resulted in the loss of millions of instructional days for BIPOC students according to an analysis of federal data from 2015-16 school year.⁷ This disproportionate and inappropriate application of discipline is resulting in disparate educational outcomes and harm for students.

What can you do? Begin with reflection. Keeping a journal of "discipline events" can help an educator notice patterns and address them. An honest, courageous reflection has the potential to improve the overall climate of your classroom as long as you are committed to making valuable change. Use non-punitive responses, positive behavior interventions and supports in your classroom/school. "...instead of practices that exclude students from school (or removes them from the classroom), [non-punitive discipline practices] could also help raise the academic achievement of racial and ethnic minority students."⁸

My school utilizes a positive behavior intervention method known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This method encourages teachers and staff to "catch" students when they are following the rules – recognizing the modeling of positive behavior. It gives all students the attention they need, highlighting their successes and not just moments when problems arise. PBIS has improved the disposition I bring to my classroom behavior management.

How you respond to students sets the tone for classroom respect and establishing individuals' value.

Carefully choose what you say

Carefully choose and monitor the language you use when referring to group identifiers. I make mistakes in this area, too often, but I am learning. I recently taught a lesson about how artists from all around the globe portrayed animals in artwork. One of the places to which we "travelled" was Australia. I began sharing the X-ray paintings, in which animals are painted by Aboriginal artists showing some anatomical features that simulate the appearance of x-rays to modern viewers. I have since learned that the term, "Aboriginal," is insensitive and has racist connotations promoting marginalization. The complexity of the challenge of correct use is fully explored in this website:

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/how-to-name-aboriginal-people>

Dr. James H. Rolling, Jr., President of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and Chair of its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission suggests we "...abolish the practice of jamming the distinct experiences of living as Black or Latinx or Korean, etc., in America all under the single umbrella term minority, thereby further "othering" these diverse ethnicities and their subcultures;"¹⁰ When you are teaching about groups of people allow them to self-identify. Using terms such as Aboriginal, Native American, or Asian, lumps large groups of diverse peoples into single groups furthering marginalization.

Identify individuals and groups with specificity and clarity!

Consider the physical environment of your art room

Think about the visuals displayed within your teaching space. Do the faces displayed on posters represent the students you teach as well as represent the diversity of the world in which they live? It is important for all students to see faces like their own represented; to feel a connection to school and the world. The visual art educator can also look at the artists and artforms which are displayed in their spaces. Again, this diversity helps all students understand the vastness of the art world but also assists them with discovering their place within it and giving them opportunities to making meaningful personal connections.

I will share an important but simple idea suggested by Libya Doman in an NAEA Town Hall conversation. She proposed sharing images of the artists (authors, inventors, leaders, etc.) we introduce.¹¹ In this way, we allow students to see artists

(authors, inventors, leaders, etc.) which look like them and to appreciate and expand one's concept of artists (authors, inventors, leaders, etc.) who do not look like them. "Children learn what is important to adults in the program by observing what is and isn't in the learning environment."¹² Doing this has allowed my students to feel more connected to school and the visual arts. They possess a greater interest in the people creating the exemplars shared and not just in the exemplars themselves.

The image is worth a thousand words!

Include diverse artists at all levels throughout the year

Black History month occurs in February, Hispanic Heritage month runs mid-September to mid-October, and Asian Pacific American Heritage is recognized during the month of May – and those should be recognized.

However, *only* teaching about a culture during their "month of honor" relegates them to the status of other – as an add-on. Artists and artforms of diverse people should be included within the curriculum, at each grade level, throughout the entire school year. Accordingly, these heritage months then become a way to highlight the contributions, traditions, and experiences of these groups. It is also a great opportunity to enlighten students and the community that each of these groups are not exclusive. Cultures are composed of many groups and subcultures. They speak various languages and constitute many belief systems, among other distinctions.

Value diverse artists, artforms, and cultures for the entire year, not just a month!

Examine your resources

Examine the textbooks, worksheets, and other teaching resources you utilize to inventory the diversity represented within them. If you often include literature in your teaching, make sure the authors, illustrators, and characters depict the students you teach as well as represent the diversity within our world. Again, share images of these authors and illustrators so students can see themselves, and others, in these individuals. "...it's personally validating and academically engaging to see themselves and their life [Image 6] experiences reflected on the pages."¹³

Mary Ellen Flannery shares this idea of these resources being *mirrors* and *windows*.¹⁴ Students see examples of characters who look like them and who have shared experiences as *mirrors*. And when students encounter characters different than themselves or that have experiences unlike their own, they have opportunities to open *windows* into the lives of

others. White children who only read about and see white characters gain a magnified perception of the importance of whiteness. Conversely, when BIPOC students are only introduced to white characters and stories, they may learn their own experiences do not matter.

Help create validation and empathy by providing mirrors and windows for your students!

Consider the sources of information you use

The movie *Green Book*, about the life of (Black) pianist Don Shirley, focused more on the transformation of his (white) driver Tony "Lip" Vallelonga. The screenplay was co-written by Vallelonga's son, also a white man. I share this to illustrate the notion of understanding the source of the information one might use in teaching. Understand the perspective of the resources' creator. A resource created by a White person about BIPOC individuals or groups is not automatically devalued, but we need to understand how their perspective may impact the information provided or frame how it is presented to us.

Our country's history is messy and often disturbing. Don't romanticize this history. I believe we can appreciate the inaccuracies generated by romanticizing the first Thanksgiving or Christopher Columbus' encounters with the Americas. Share truthful but age-appropriate stories of events, of how people were (mis)treated, and what we can learn from them. Do your best to locate stories from the perspectives of the non-white people impacted by or who impacted that event or period of history. Whitewashing or glossing over these details minimizes the importance of what occurred.

Perspective and experience are important!

Accept that you are not the expert.

As a white educator, or any educator teaching students of other races, cultures, ethnicities, religions, understand that your experience may be quite different than that of your students. There is also a possibility that your experience is different from some students who share the same [Image 9] background and context. Allow students to express their own narrative and develop a "voice". Provide them an opportunity to teach you and to share what is of importance to them, even if you find the experience uncomfortable. Give yourself permission to be uncomfortable. "...remaining neutral and not addressing topics that are important to students further marginalizes them and perpetuates

injustice.”¹⁵

When racially charged events occur or societal actions are taken which impact groups of people, make space for students, elementary to high school, to communicate about and process them. Allow students to represent these events and experiences in their art, writing, and speech. This will provide opportunities for students to process the world in which they live. I have introduced a lesson around the theme of change. Students created an artwork illustrating something they viewed as important to change. I shared the artwork *The Door* by David Hammons. This work depicts a black body pressed up against the glass door on which is printed “ADMISSIONS OFFICE.” After allowing them the opportunity to decipher the artwork, we discussed the discrimination and racism that occurred when this work was created and how it exists today in similar and different ways. I share how people of color were excluded from schools, colleges, and businesses. I allow students to share their thoughts on the fairness of those actions and the feelings it may bring up inside them (sadness, upset, confusion, empathy, etc.) along with any personal experiences.

Create a classroom culture where expression, respect, and discomfort are valued.

An example from my art room

As a visual arts educator, I introduce the artistic tradition of self-portraiture to my students. They learn about proportions of the face while simultaneously learning to look at the

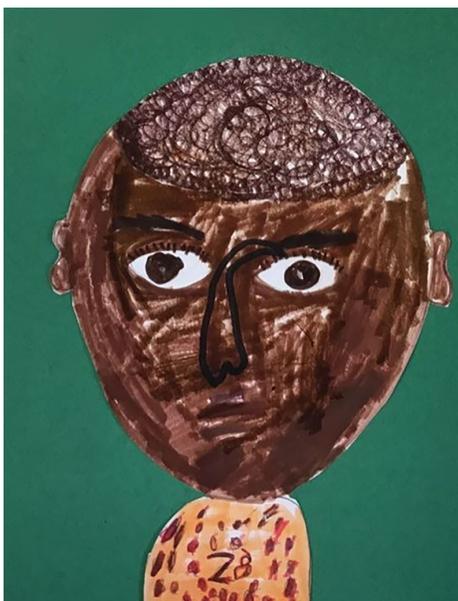
specific attributes of their own face. We take time to look around and see how the shape, sizes, and spaces between each other’s facial features vary, and how the colors, tones, and textures of our skin and hair differ. I extoll how our differences and how our similarities make us unique, human, and awesome.

Conversely, it is important to be sensitive to your students. Do not point out any particular student as an example, especially if you have minimal diversity in your student population. A biracial colleague of mine shared a story of how she and her sister were the only students of color in her school. She was often pointed out as the “diversity” that existed in her class. This made her feel very self-conscious while she was simultaneously trying to learn how to understand who she was. It is important to allow your students the space to understand who they are as they develop a healthy compassion for others. “By breaking the silence, you and the children’s families can nurture their accurate knowledge, empathy, enjoyment, and anti-bias relationships with racially diverse people.”¹⁶

Celebrate our students’ differences!

Continue your learning

“Anti-bias educators intentionally and proactively integrate the message into the daily life of their classroom that people of every racialized identity are valuable and deserve caring and, fairness.”¹⁷ Continue your learning. “...inform your own anti-racist and postcolonial worldviews by reading books and articles on the privileges of whiteness and on the



Student self-portraits

lives of people who are Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color.”¹⁸ Explore other forms of privilege you possess in our society that may be connected to gender, age, religion, residence, etc. Take this journey one step at a time but take that first step...and then that second step. Allow yourself to make mistakes, apologize when you do, correct the mistake, and then continue the journey. Aristotle is credited with saying: “Those that know, do. Those that understand, teach.” Continually and consistently strive for understanding.

Anti-bias educators are self-created!



*Thom Knab
Past NAEA President
K-4 Visual Arts, Dodge
Elementary*

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A Reflection on Culturally Responsive Teaching

Megan Cavanaugh

Editor's Note: In this article, Megan Cavanaugh has mapped out a carefully crafted approach to gaining her students' trust and opening their artmaking experiences to themes and approaches that are more meaningful and engaging to them. She recognizes social impediments to her own classroom persona, and with the help of an insightful resource, designs her instruction to be more accessible and authentic.

Having authentic and meaningful conversations about race, culture, and identity is a vital responsibility for today's educators. But what can often be challenging is figuring out exactly how to navigate those conversations with students. These challenges become even more complex when you are a white teacher in a linguistically and culturally diverse classroom.

I began teaching my own lessons several months ago as a pre-service teacher at my city's art magnet high school. I recall one of the first lessons I taught where I introduced students to a famous artist whose work focuses on issues of race. I showed video clips of the artist talking about their work to allow the artist's own words to speak for themselves. I was afraid of overstepping my boundaries and describing the experiences of others when those experiences were not my own. Unfortunately, my more passive approach did not quite work. Students seemed to miss the larger points I had hoped they would come away with. However, although a passive approach was clearly not the answer, I still felt I needed to be very sensitive to the way I approached my lessons as a white teacher educating students of varied backgrounds and experiences. Although I cannot say there is any perfect answer to this challenge, I do believe there is a good answer that seems to have started working for me. This better approach can be called Culturally Responsive Teaching.

Zarretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* (Hammond, 2015) is a helpful book that outlines the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching based on neuroscientific research. Hammond breaks down this pedagogy into four important principles: Awareness, Learning Partnerships, Information Processing, and Community Building (p. 17). Awareness means understanding and being sensitive to the implicit biases, privileges, and challenges that exist inside and outside the classroom. Learning Partnerships is about engagement and building mutual trust and respect with students, as students who feel connected to their teachers become better learners. Information Processing is about connecting new content to content relevant to students' lives, as engaging in prior knowledge allows for more complex learning. Finally,

Community Building is about creating a safe environment where teachers can function as co-learners, allowing students to take the lead and exercise their voices. As Hammond puts it, "culturally responsive teaching is not just about motivating disengaged students. It's about rebuilding trust with them through a learning partnership and pushing them into their zone of proximal development" (Ferlazzo, 2021).

Fragmented Faces

The first lesson where I implemented the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach was one on unconventional portraits. I compared the 16th century painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, who used fruits and vegetables and other objects to create faces and people, to the living artist Yung Jake, who claims to be "born on the internet" and uses thousands of emojis to create his portraits. Students became immediately intrigued by Yung Jake's interviews and artwork and could relate to his style and sensibility. This connection also helped them bridge an understanding of Arcimboldo's work and the overall importance of symbols. Students felt a sense of ownership over their own projects that followed, which had them create self-portraits out of symbols important to their lives. In one 'artist statement' explaining



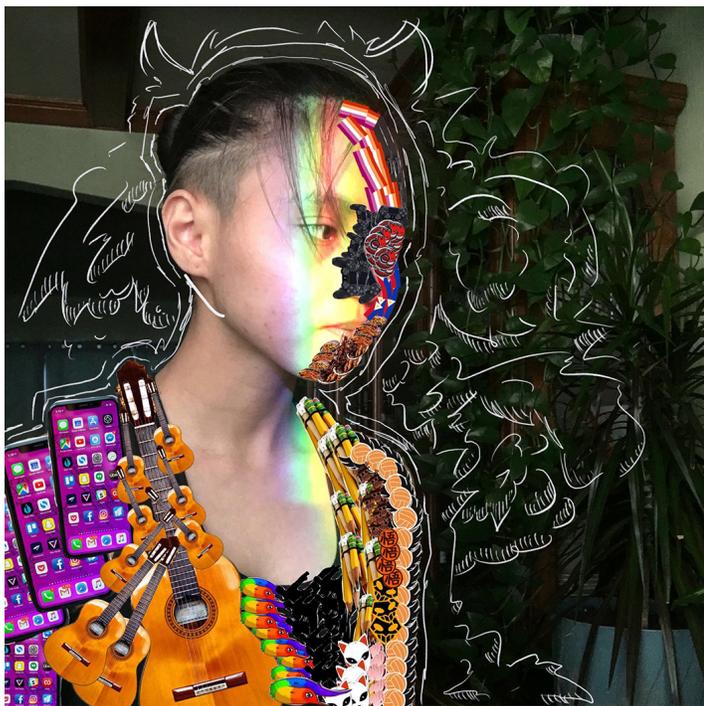
[left] Rudolf II as Vertumnus by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, 1591
[right] Self Portrait by Yung Jake, 2017

their work, a student discussed why the symbol of a guitar was so important to their portrait. The student wrote, "I love playing it, that and the ukulele. It means a lot to me since my stepfather's mother gave me hers before she passed away.

engaging students in a safe place where they could be seen and heard.

Empowered Portraits

In the next unit, I introduced the artist Kehinde Wiley paired with the concept of Empowerment. Similar to my previous lesson, I compared Wiley's painting "Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps" to Jacques-Louis David's painting of the same name, which it was based on. This comparison of the living artist with the older art canon gave the students a useful frame of reference. Representation is crucial in Wiley's work as his art celebrates all of society, spreading a message of inclusivity. For example, the subject of his "Napoleon" painting on the horse is someone who walked past him on the street one day. Students responded well to seeing Wiley's contemporary art subjects whom they could relate to and feel inspired by in their empowering poses. I asked the students questions that required analyzing Wiley's work, such as "Do you think Kehinde Wiley's artwork is successful at reclaiming history?" and questions that required relating his work to the students' own experiences, such as "Does Kehinde Wiley succeed in empowering you as the viewer?" I then moved onto more personal questions, like "Is there a time you felt empowered?" and "What does empowerment mean to you?" One student responded, "My definition of empowerment is how we define ourselves. How we can be ourselves without having any fear of



11th Grade, Studio in Computer Arts, Helga Mae Enoc, Digital Collage

Me and her were very close and she meant a lot to me. When she gave me that instrument, she told me to go 'ham and cheese' on it. And ham and cheese I did, I taught myself how to play it."

This Fragmented Faces lesson was about culture, identity, symbols, and expression. Although this lesson may not have explicitly addressed issues of social justice in the world on its surface, the accomplishment of engaging and connecting with the students on personal levels and building an equitable and inclusive environment contributed to the ongoing cultivation of social justice within the classroom. From the lens of Hammond's Culturally Responsive Teaching principles, I made Learning Partnerships with students who felt a personal sense of empowerment in their projects. I followed ideas of Information Processing to link prior knowledge of emojis and internet culture to the art history canon and added to a sense of Community Building by



[left] Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps, Jacques Louis-David, 1801
[right] Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps, Kehinde Wiley 2005



9th Grade Student in Graphic Arts, Maraia Peake reminagines George Washington (Lansdowne Portrait) by Gilbert Stuart

judgement or anything else that's going to come our way and take it from us. Also with how we can keep being proud of who we are, the consistency of having confidence in our worth and our true selves."

The next day, I shifted focus to Wiley's "Rumors of War," a monument made in response to the confederate monuments in Richmond, Virginia. This artwork is directly about complex current event issues of class, race, and American culture. As a class, we addressed the fate of monuments glorifying confederate generals and other historical figures of

imperialism. We discussed the public's debate that is split between removing or defacing the confederate statues and protecting them in order to preserve history.

By addressing these issues directly, my students were given the tools needed to continue the conversation. I then took a step back and assumed the role of co-learner, allowing



9th Grade Student in Graphic Arts, Emma Velez reimagines Sequoyah by Henry Inman

students to share their own personal perspectives. The students began to trust me more with their stories and thoughts and I continued to listen carefully and validate their experiences. One student related the discussion back to her life story: "I have felt scenarios I have created for myself and people in my life who dragged me into it... But I took my time to grow, to think and ask questions. I took my time on getting back my courage, confidence and power... As an immigrant, woman, POC, and part of the LGBT community, I have to face injustice on top of my own problems, but I myself have gotten through it and have powered through everything I have been through. It is important for Wiley and for everyone to keep critiquing the marginalization of different people so that the public doesn't have any incorrect vthinking and can treat everyone right."

This lesson equipped my students with the ability to better understand the world around them and gave me confidence to be more direct with my questions. It also continued to establish an environment of communal trust and inclusivity and showed students that they can engage with or challenge art history, and history in general, in their own ways.

Mickalene Thomas: Reimagining the Art History Canon

One lesson I found to be particularly successful was on Mickalene Thomas and the idea of reclaiming spaces. I started the lesson with a clip from *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, a film that I had really enjoyed and that most of the students had also seen and enjoyed. The groundbreaking animated film reimagines Spider-Man as a young Afro-Latino boy named Miles Morales. I explained that the film is important because it gives a new voice to the character of Spider-Man, and this new perspective challenges our assumptions of who Spider-Man can be. By

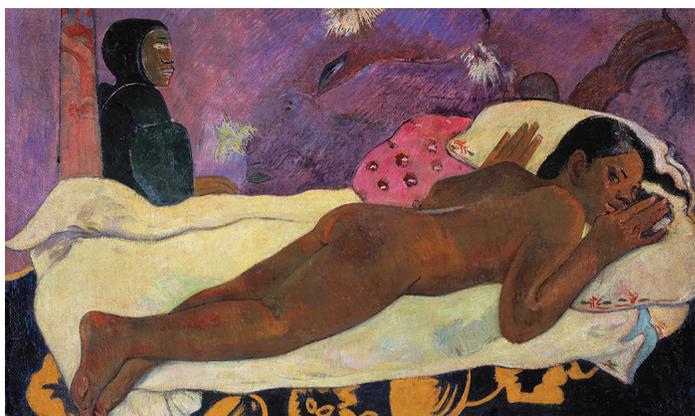
reimagining the character, the film reclaims this space for those who are underrepresented.

This served as a perfect link to Mickalene Thomas, an artist whose work reimagines famous painted characters of the art history canon and therefore reclaims those artistic spaces for the underrepresented. We compared the *Odalisque*, *The Three Graces* and *Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* to Thomas's reimagined versions. Further, it was insightful to compare Thomas's *Odalisque*-inspired painting entitled "Naomi Looking Forward #2" to Paul Gauguin's 1892 portrait "Spirit of the Dead Watching," which depicts a black *Odalisque*-inspired figure sprawled face down on a bed. Although these paintings both depict black women, they have very different contexts and meanings.

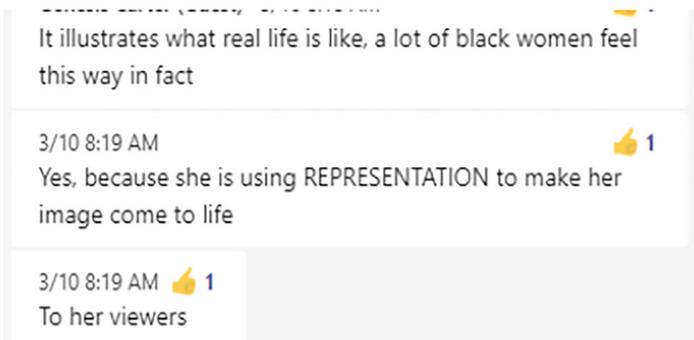
I began the class conversation with simple observation-based questions, such as: "what are the similarities between the paintings?" and "what are the differences?" I then transitioned into questions of analysis and interpretation, like: "based on their poses, how do you think the women in these two paintings feel?" and "why do you think Thomas chose to update the odalisque?" There were some questions that might have felt awkward to ask, but were important, such as: "Do you think that Mickalene Thomas being a black woman is relevant to her work?" and "Is this information important to understanding the decisions she makes about representation?" The potential awkwardness of questions like this come from not wanting to define



[top] Naomi Looking Forward #2, Mickalene Thomas, 2016



[bottom] Spirit of the Dead Watching, Paul Gauguin 1862



Screenshot of class discussion about Mickalene Thomas

another person’s race or experience, but I knew that not acknowledging race altogether would mean that I would be implicitly ignoring it.

Acknowledgement is key to Culturally Responsive Teaching. Fortunately, what made this question successful was the connections and trust I had established with my students up to this point. Students were immediately open to sharing their opinions. One student wrote in the group chat that Mickalene’s images “illustrate what real life is like, a lot of black women feel this way in fact.” Another student wrote, “the author is proud to be a black woman, so she made art to express herself maybe.” While another student wrote, “It is definitely important that black people are idolized in the art world. But it shouldn’t matter who is moving the brush. What matters is the imaginative world.”

Conclusion

When it comes to navigating the complexities that a teacher will inevitably have to face regarding addressing differences in race, class, gender, identity, culture, politics, and experience in the classroom, there is no perfect solution. But a teacher can help students see their unique perspectives as an asset within an environment of inclusivity and



Megan Cavanaugh is a teacher candidate in the Art Education post-baccalaureate program at Buffalo State College and holds a Master’s in Fine Arts from Brooklyn College and a Bachelor’s in Fine Arts from Buffalo State College. Megan has been a substitute in the Buffalo Public School system for almost three years. In her free time, she enjoys helping to homeschool her neices and working on her stop-motion animation.

understanding. So, I have found Culturally Responsive Teaching to be valuable.

This approach to teaching is not a formula to be followed but is rather a method that must grow and develop within the classroom. For example, my success in curating an open and direct classroom conversation in my Mickalene Thomas lesson could not have happened without the tools of discussing similar issues established in my Kehinde Wiley lesson, which in turn, could not have happened without the sense of trust established in my Yung Jake lesson.

I realize that my experience so far as a pre-service teacher has been a small snapshot and that there will be issues and challenges, I cannot foresee, which will require changes and solutions that I cannot predict. But Culturally Responsive Teaching has been a valuable foundation for my teaching philosophy and as I look forward, I look to this approach as a way to ensure that my lessons will guide my students toward finding a sense of empowerment and agency. I also hope the experiences that I have had may contribute to a larger discussion among the teaching community on how to better serve our students.

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Art is Power: Art Education is Empowering

Rachel Lyons

I realized a few years ago that my teaching philosophy can be boiled down to three simple words: Art is power. That's it. It seems so simple, but it is the underlying theme to everything I do with my students. I want them to know they can use art to voice their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives about meaningful events and circumstance, and make positive change in the world. Socially significant lessons like the one I will share, that incorporate students' personal spaces, choices, and voices, and where they take action to improve the world, are examples of culturally responsive teaching.

Seventh graders in my English department colleague's ELA class read *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. The book is a work of fiction, but is based on the real life of Salva Dut, a "Lost Boy" from the Sudan who is a war refugee. Salva became separated from his family as a child, and spent years roaming across borders and in and out of refugee camps until eventually coming to the United States where he settled in Rochester, NY. While they read the book, they drew comparisons between the way Salva grew up and their own lives.



[left] *A Truly Rich Man Is One Whose Children Run Into His Arms Even When His Hands Are Empty* shows the influence of maps in Mark Bradford's work. [center] Bradford's work *Los Moscos* is a great example of his layering of different materials. [right] *Strawberry* is a great example of Bradford's use of end papers.

While they were reading the book in ELA, students worked in my art room on a collaborative project influenced by the layered work of artist Mark Bradford. Bradford creates large scale mixed-media abstract works by collaging layer upon layer of materials that include items such as maps, signs pulled from neighborhood fences, and perm end papers (used by hair stylists to protect the ends when chemically treating hair). His work comments on politics, race, poverty, and the realities of urban life. Once he has finished collaging, Bradford sands back down through the layers to re-expose elements on his canvas. For the layers of our project, we alternated between layers about students' individual experiences and layers of information they learned from the Linda Sue Park book. Each student had an individual map of their neighborhood that they found on Google maps, enlarged to the size of our canvas, which was 44" x 32".



The finished work created by the seventh graders

We used the maps to locate resources like stores, transportation, and parks which are available in their communities and made the comparison to resource availability in the Sudan. We then collaged the layers together, alternating between student maps and information we learned from the book. Then students sanded the canvas to find lost parts and help them reemerge. The process led to some interesting juxtapositions as the sanded layers became re-exposed. For example, images of soldiers resurfacing near a map segment including a playground.

Though our artwork was complete, our project was not. We photographed details from our work, and created notecard sets, which we sold for \$5 a pack. The money we raised from the notecard sales (about \$400) was donated to Water for South Sudan (waterforsouthsudan.org), which is Salva Dut's organization that builds wells in South Sudan to help improve access to clean drinking water. The students were even interviewed by our local NPR station about the project. The finished artwork is permanently installed in our school hallway.

One more thing, this was my 8:1:1(8 students, 1 teacher, 1 aide) class of students with Autism. I mention this now at the end of this article because I made a conscious choice to not focus on or share this information during the project. At no point during the art making, while marketing the notecards, or during the NPR interview, did I ever share this information about my student artists. I wanted the focus instead on what they could accomplish through their art. This asset-focused, rather than deficit-focused mindset, also aligns with culturally responsive teaching theories. I encourage others to create similar socially significant and culturally responsive units because of the pride, joy, and empowerment they bring to students. One student said, "I never would have known about this, I'm so glad we learned about the Sudan and were able to

donate money to build wells." My students ended this project proud of their work and empowered to make change. I could not ask for a better outcome.

RESOURCES

With the mission to deliver sustainable quality-of-life services to and with the people of South Sudan, Salva Dut has established this non-profit organization.

www.waterforsouthsudan.org

A brief overview of Mark Bradford's life and work.

https://www.saatchigallery.com/artist/mark_bradford

A link to the NPR interview with the students.

<https://news.wbfo.org/post/seventh-graders-inspired-lesson-harsh-life-sudan>

An article with great examples of Bradford's use of perm end papers.

<https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2018/june/19/did-you-spot-mark-bradford-at-the-beauty-shop/>



[left] Photos of the finished notecard sets the students sold to raise money to build wells

[right] Details image from the artwork that were used to create the notecards.



Rachel Lyons is in her 23rd year as an art teacher for the Buffalo Public Schools. She has been at Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts for the past 19 years. Lyons has taught everything from fifth grade art to AP Studio in Art. Currently, she teaches Graphic Design, Computer Art, and seventh and eighth grade art. For the last several years, she has served as the mentor teacher for new art teachers in the Buffalo Schools.

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A Fine Line

Susan Rudy

"There are no original ideas." This is the one of the most memorable things I learned from a mentor as I began my first career in advertising. He believed that ideas are borrowed, altered, reconstructed, and assimilated from what has been observed or learned, and then they are molded into something fresh and original. Now, as an art educator, I continually go back to my mentor's words, trying to make sense if them in the art room.

Is this borrowing and reshaping of ideas considered appropriation? It obviously can be an effective strategy in the art and business sector and we see it every day. Appropriation, according to Dictionary.com is: "The action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission." Many think of it as simply 'borrowing' a well-known image and using it in a new way to create a different outcome. This is a fine line, though, and it becomes more complex as we talk about inspiration and teaching our students. How are we teaching inspiration and the rules for borrowing ideas? Are we discussing what appropriation is?

Art educators strive to expose their students to different cultures, but now we need to be especially critical of our approach to cultural responsiveness. The definition of appropriation has taken on many more layers of meaning. Dictionary.com defines cultural appropriation as, "The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society." When the ideas and concepts of one culture are used out of context or exploited by a more dominate culture, it can disrespect and devalue. So how do we, as art educators, understand and avoid the pitfalls of cultural appropriation?

As arts educators, we know that what

we understand of our world is reinterpreted by us and that we build our narratives on the underpinning of what preceded us . . . past knowledge, views, and perspectives. Developing new ideas from what we know, communicating, and telling stories are all aspects of artmaking we want our students to learn. We instill in them the importance of developing unique perspectives that are meaningful and expressive and that finding inspiration is an important tool in making art. It is essential for us to not only be aware of what we are teaching our students, but also what we may inadvertently be teaching our students. Do we discuss the sources that inevitably precede our new ideas and explain that everything we learn, observe, or perceive in our lives are the foundation for those ideas? How much do we emphasize the proper and respectful use of inspiration?

The questions become how do we include diverse artists, works of art and cultures, and ensure appreciation while avoiding cultural appropriation? How do we encourage them to then create their own art, inspired by various artists and cultures? What does it really mean to be inspired to create something unique, and not just replicate it? We want students to use their new knowledge to tell their own stories, and respect and appreciate the art of other cultures, rather than appropriate it. This means we must attempt to understand it, and learn about the culture and context in which it was created, enabling us to broaden and deepen our knowledge and understanding, as opposed to adopting a superficial aspect of a particular culture and creating art about it. By doing our own research to learn about artists from cultures different than our own in appropriate ways, we model it for our students.

To make the separation between superficial cultural appropriation and



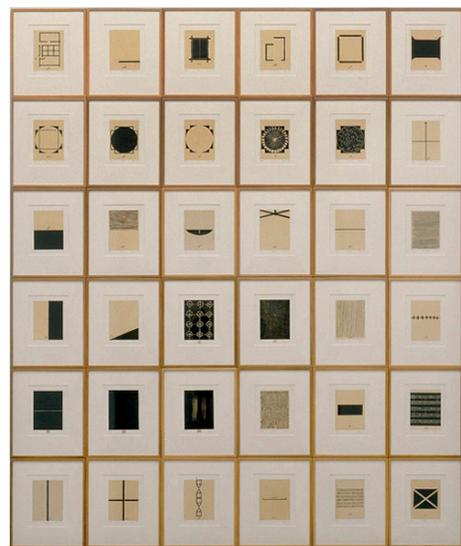
Dawoud Bey, *Untitled #1* from series *Night Coming Tenderly*, Black, 2017



Ernesto Neto *installation* *Voices of the Forest*, 2016



Rivaz, *October 2014* from *Teju Cole's Blind Spot*



Zarina, *from Home is a Foreign Place*, 1999

genuine appreciation in the art room, we need to be culturally responsive. One strategy is to avoid using a 'token' artist to study, and instead present several artists of diverse backgrounds, who address similar big ideas or themes. It is by diving deeper into contexts and meanings of art, artists, and cultures, that we begin to make that distinction. By making this culturally responsive practice a regular part of our practice, we will ultimately help our students feel validated and create opportunities for them to really connect with the art experiences we offer them.

One of the themes I present to students in my Art History classes is that of

Place; Place in the sense of what value and meaning certain places have to an individual or group of people. We discuss what different places mean to different people and different cultures and we explore diverse artists that use that theme in their work. We also look at how Place can trigger physical and emotional responses and how it can lend itself to resurrecting memories and personal interpretations.

We study exemplars such as Ernesto Neto, a Brazilian artist who explores the boundaries of space through interactive installations with an indigenous focus; Dawoud Bey's latest series of black-and-white photographs that reimagine sites along the last

stages of the Underground Railroad; Teju Cole, an African American artist who creates color photographs taken in places he has visited with writings inspired by those places; Zarina's woodcut prints entitled Home is a Foreign Place; and the domestic interiors of Kerry James Marshall.

After exploring the formal qualities of these artworks, the reasons the art was created, the decisions that went into them, and the context in which they were created, the students are challenged with developing a personal work that reflects their perspectives on Place; a place or aspect of a place that is meaningful to them.

Here are some of my students' unique solutions and interpretations of the theme Place.



Jeanelly N., Boots, 2021 (student in Art History II)



Mara S., City, 2020 (student in Art History II)



Ronan B., Rainforest, 2021 (student in Art History II)



Anu D., Community, 2021 (student in Art History II)



Beatrix A.-M., My Pond, 2021 (student in Art History II)



Christina C., Ocean, 2020 (student in Art History II)

It is our responsibility as art educators to ensure that our students understand the difference between appropriation, cultural appropriation, and appreciation. We must continually guide them toward awareness, respect, and appreciation of other artwork, artists, and cultures.

The first step is to become aware of the sensitive nature of appropriation and cultural appropriation and understand how damaging it can be. We must question our motives and guide our students to ask certain questions when researching and planning artwork. For example, how am I showing respect and appreciation for the artist or culture? Do I understand the meaning and original use of the art? Am I acknowledging the significant decisions required to create the art? Am I encouraging personal connections? Am I extracting what deeply resonates with me and creating my own unique stories from what I have learned?

When we include and genuinely reflect on the art of diverse and dissimilar cultures in our teaching, we encourage respect and inclusivity. Only then can we successfully teach our students to reverently appreciate the limitless differences in art, artists, and cultures, and how to value diverse perspectives through art making.

RESOURCES

Dawoud Bey <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/dawoud-bey>

Teju Cole and his book *Blind Spot* <https://www.lensculture.com/articles/teju-cole-another-way-of-telling-teju-cole-s-blind-spot>

Ernesto Neto and the Huni Kuin installations https://www.tba21.org/#item--sacred_secret--511

Ernesto Neto and the *Voices of the Forest* installations <https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/219/>

Zarina and *Home Is a Foreign Place* <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/132514>

<https://www.zarina.work/>



Susan Rudy is the chair of the Visual Arts Department at School of the Arts (SOTA) in Rochester, New York, serving students in grades 7 through 12. SOTA offers traditional academics complemented by an arts-based curriculum. Susan has been teaching Visual Arts at SOTA since 2000. She has taught: Photography, 3D Design, Commercial Arts, Drawing and Painting, Foundations, Art History, and AP Art History. Susan is the moderator of SOTA's Yeabook Committee and the Artistic Minds Club and is the co-moderator of the SOTA Image Makers Photo Club. Susan assists student outreach projects throughout Greater Rochester, guiding annual student art exhibitions in SOTA's David Silver Gallery, and with regional and nation art contests and exhibitions. Susan is actively involved in the School Based Planning Team, Culture and Climate, Black Lives Matter, Friends of School of the Arts, and professional development.

Dispatches from the Front

Editor's Note: sometimes there just isn't enough time to put together a full article, but you have something to say. For this issue we created a special section of "dispatches" – where art teachers can share brief glimpses of their thoughts, successes, and challenges.



Nick Napierela, Elementary

As a white male teaching in a rural/suburban, mostly white elementary school I feel a responsibility to present artwork created by artists of all different backgrounds, races, and genders. I feel it is important to present contemporary art, artists, and ideas and reinforce through my teaching that art is for

everyone and created by everyone.

One thing I always do when presenting work to my elementary kids is include a photo of the artist to help them identify with the person behind the work and whenever possible I include interviews or videos of the artists working and talking about themselves and their artwork.

Even though the students I teach are young, I always try to teach them to be kind, to understand that they have a voice through their art, and to let them know that art is a safe space where differences are celebrated and welcomed and are opportunities to learn. I know that my students are capable of grappling with complex issues and engaging in personally and socially meaningful conversations, which inspires me to incorporate more authentic learning opportunities for my students.

Having attended the district I teach in, I am aware that it is a tight knit community that doesn't often take the 30-minute drive into the city of Buffalo. I know, even for myself growing up, it was a rare occasion. It was on those trips that I often visited cultural institutions like the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, The Burchfield Penney Art Center, and Shea's Performing Arts Center, all of which have broadened my experience and brought me such joy. Recently the Albright-Knox has supported a huge mural project in the city. I love to teach about these murals and tie them into my lessons. I always challenge my students during mural lessons by saying, "If you are ever in Buffalo and find a mural take a picture and tell me about what you saw!" I am always impressed to receive emails from parents and photos from kids who are very

excited to tell me about the mural they saw and learned about in art class.

It is my duty as a teacher to help educate my students on the rich cultural experiences that we have in our community at large. Aside from these cultural institutions, we have a rich community of artists in the city of Buffalo.

One local artist we've learned about is Rodney Taylor. We watched a clip of him at work, and also a clip of his exhibit at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. We discussed the way he explored the idea of home. We saw diverse perspectives of the idea of home and came to understand that home is more of a feeling than a place. We discussed the idea of representing dream homes that we would love to live in one day. They had the option of creating artworks of their current home, a home in the community or a home of a loved one. Whichever they wanted to explore in their work and felt most like home to them. We discussed how Taylor often worked on his porch which looked out at the homes in his community for inspiration.

The students then created a gelli print of their vision in response. I feel through this learning experience we were able to engage in conversations that broadened our understanding of our community and the community at large including the city of Buffalo. We saw diverse perspectives and came to understand that home is more of a feeling than a place.

Find out more about Rodney Taylor at <https://www.albrightknox.org/person/rodney-taylor>



[left] Dream Cabin, Grade 4



[right] Tree House by the Lake, Grade 4



Rebecca Schwarz, Middle School

A few years ago, I encountered a situation that was very challenging. A student of color in my class wanted to use the “N” word in his art, in the context of a James Baldwin quote that he was incorporating into his piece. Based on years of what I thought was the “appropriate” thing to do, I discouraged him from doing so

because I was concerned about that terrible word appearing in the art displayed in our school.

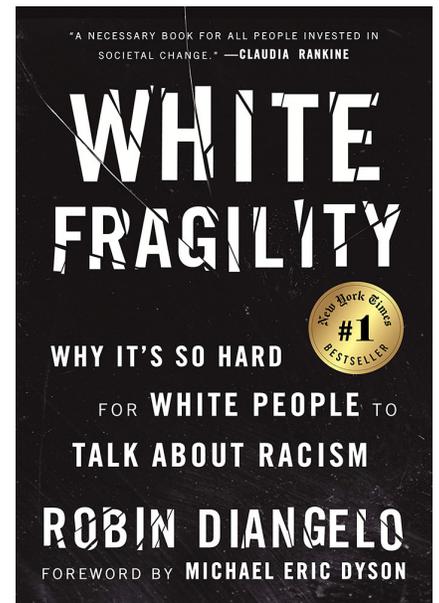
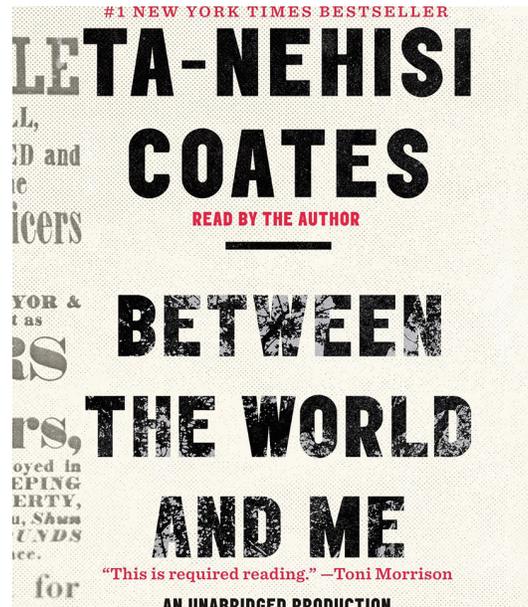
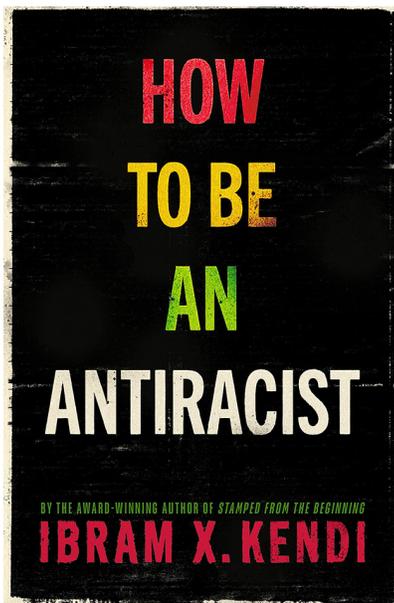
A call from his parent made me realize that I had a lot to learn about respecting and empathizing with the voices of students, particularly students of color. In addition, I realized this was a missed opportunity for the student to truly connect with my subject in a way that was personal and meaningful to him.

That experience was the catalyst of many hours over the last few years educating myself in cultural proficiency training, anti-racist teaching practices and learning about BIPOC artists to incorporate into my curriculum. Part of this training was through my school district, who hired staff development consultants to educate teachers in cultural proficiency. In addition, I attended workshops about artists of color and read several books, including *White Fragility*,

How to be an Anti-Racist and *Between the World and Me*. I have also watched great documentaries, such as “Black Art: In the Absence of Light,” attended many relevant museum exhibitions and have done extensive research to develop a database of BIPOC artists from which to draw art inspiration for my lessons. In addition to making my curriculum more diverse, I have also included Art about important current issues, like the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

Lastly, I received a grant to the Pelham Education Foundation to bring in guest speakers who are experts in diversity in the art world and anti-racist teaching practices. The goal is to transform the K-12 Art curricula with both staff development and classroom engagement. Middle school students will learn that the art world has evolved into a more inclusive institution, as a result of many years of lobbying and protests to include BIPOC artists and other marginalized groups, including women. K-12 Art staff will also learn about this evolution, with the addition of training in anti-racist teaching practices. Teachers will be provided with a large database of BIPOC artists and other groups who have been excluded from art history books, from which to draw for curriculum references. As a mostly white staff who do not have the frame of reference to understand the experiences of our students of color, I feel that we have to work extra hard to provide a diverse range of art references.

I still have more work to do, but I feel much more prepared to meet the needs of all my students. I am resolved to give them meaningful experiences to which they can truly relate, making them feel included and important.



How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology? Mapping Identities, Unpacking Self

Samantha Nolte-Yupari, Anna Castellani, Shane Heller, Danielle Kennedy, Jennifer McLean-Bove, Anna Mack, Ashley Todd, Jasmine Weiskopff

Abstract

In this article we, the art educators (teacher and pre-service teachers) of a graduate research course, consider the question, how does your positionality bias your epistemology? Or, how does who you are determine what you know. Using identity maps to aid our thinking, we unpack our identities and consider how our autobiographies with gender, geography, family, health, age, economics, politics, recreation, aesthetics, race/ethnicity, occupation, and religion affect how we make sense of the world. We reflect on the role such work plays in culturally relevant pedagogy and contributing to social change in our schools.

How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology? Mapping Identities, Unpacking Self

“Those with power are frequently the least aware of – or least willing to acknowledge – its existence.” (Delpit, 1995)

How does your positionality bias your epistemology? It’s a fancy way to ask: How does who you are determine what you know? This question is key to developing the critical and socio-cultural skills needed for culturally relevant pedagogy (Takacs, 2003). Asking this question with consistency builds reflectiveness and asset thinking, and removes the authoritative voice carried by many discourses (Takacs, 2003). In this article, we, the art educators (teacher and pre-service teachers) in a graduate, qualitative teacher-researcher course at Nazareth

College share our efforts to answer this question. Seven of us identify as cis-gender females, one identifies as gender-queer, seven of us identify as Caucasian, one identifies as Latina. Several of us have had chronic pain or longstanding medical issues that have affected or continue to affect our abled-bodiedness and several of us identify as having a history of anxiety or other mental health issues. We are at various stages of our careers as teachers, and of the deep internal work necessary to make social justice changes in our pedagogies. In this article, we first discuss the context of our work. Then we share our three-step process for making art. Finally, we reflect upon what we learned.

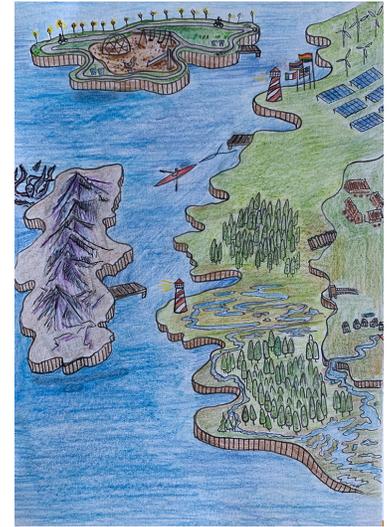
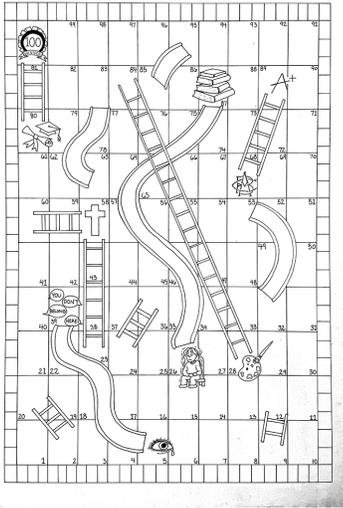
What is positionality and how does it bias your epistemology?

How does your positionality bias your epistemology? Positionality is the overt acknowledgement of how one’s experiences contributes to your cumulative and situational understanding of the world. Such questioning, in turn helps us understand epistemology: what we count as knowledge, whose knowledge we acknowledge, and whose knowledge we have been taught to dismiss. This line of inquiry asks us to reflect upon how our context enculturated implicit biases within us, but also opens us up to the multitude of knowledge others bring to the table. Such work requires vulnerability. Though she was talking about research, anthropologist Ruth Behar’s (1996) words are applicable here when she notes that such vulnerability repositions

one from an “I” observing an “other” to someone who “now stand[s] on the same plane with our [students],” moreover, Behar insists that “[students] will only tolerate us if we are willing to confront them face to face” (p. 28). Understanding how positionality biases epistemology disrupts deficit discourses, expands one’s sense of what is “normal” (there are so many “normals”!), and helps us understand how people of color and other marginalized groups have been historically misrepresented and exploited in educational systems (Milner, 2007).

Unpacking Identity: Maps and Positionality Statements

To begin the process of unpacking our positionality, we worked with Gaudelius and Spier’s (2020) “Mapping My Identity” visual organizer (pp. 110-115). We considered 13 areas that affect our identity: gender, geography, family, health, age, economics, politics, recreation, aesthetics, race/ethnicity, occupation, and religion. We claimed and named the labels and experiences that affect our positionality. We worked with the complexity of our identities and sought how our intersectionality revealed the ways we were simultaneously privileged and underprivileged (Oluo, 2019). For example, Samantha noted that, “I am raced white and thus privileged, but gendered female and so targeted.” At the same time, she acknowledged that her cis-gender heterosexuality in turn privileges her further than those who identify as non-binary or trans female.



Embracing the Vulnerability: It's Risky Work

The hardest part of positionality work is the risk in being vulnerable. Such reflection is incomplete and ongoing. As we worked through our positionality statements, we found it easier to identify our positionalities than to detect how they bias our epistemology. Detecting implicit bias is like figuring out what 'you didn't know that you didn't know'. We found that many of our thoughts could be each other's, creating an overlapping chorus:

Mapping was a process of translation. I had to think about the different intersections of my positionalities: how they are all implicated in each other, how impossible it feels to disentangle them, and how to visually represent something as messy as identity, which defies simple representation (Anna M). I relived certain pivotal moments in my life, painful or happy, and as a result I understand myself more. I have never blatantly said before that I am a privileged, white woman (Jen). This opened my eyes to the experiences that define who I am and the things I have forgotten (or taken for granted) that shape my life (Anna C.).

By looking back at the ways in which we were raised and the personal intricacies of our lived experiences we become aware of the biases we have in the classroom (Jasmine). I am aware that even though I am part of minorities (LGBTQ+ and female-born), I am advantaged in ways that many of my students are not (Jasmine). Moving forward as a teacher I need to consider how my anxiety is perceived, and I work to understand how it might affect my teaching (Ashley). In allowing myself to be vulnerable, I visualized feelings that I do not often reflect upon (Shane). If I had teachers that were vulnerable by being openly nonbinary or gay it would have validated me in my adolescence. Exploring ways that I can normalize diversity in my classroom culture without projecting my insecurities onto my students is something that I need to solidify as a teacher (Jasmine). I have come to realize the impact my positionality has on the way that I teach. It was not an easy task at first to become vulnerable, but once I recognized my positionality it became easier to reflect upon and write about (Danielle).

What Does Revelatory Positionality do for Educators?

Milner (2002) advises that the real work towards equity begins after we detect how our positionality biases our epistemology. We grow our ability to

perceive previously obscured unseen and unforeseen ways positionality affects any issue. Take an urban district's conversation about high school dropout rates. A seen danger in such a situation is that stakeholders may not critically examine policies in terms of racial patterns and instead blame students for dropping out (Milner, 2002). But this is also insufficient because an unseen danger includes the unconsidered ways daily interactions between students, teachers, and administrators contribute to drop out rates (Milner, 2002). An unforeseen danger is that existing policies might be maintained or new policies put in place that continue color- and culture-blind patterns (Milner, 2002). If we are to engage, as Oluo (2019) suggests, in a process of building our understanding of racism, power, and privilege as institutionally reinforced systems of oppression, then we *must* ask the question, *how does our positionality bias our epistemology?* "The concept of privilege violates everything we've been told about fairness and everything we've been told about the American Dream of hard work paying off and good things happening to good people" (Oluo, 2019, p. 63). But our discomfort does not mean we should turn away from such investigations. "When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change" (Oluo, 2019, p. 65).

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Samantha Nolte-Yupari, Ph. D., is Assistant Professor and Program Director of Art Education at Nazareth College. She is also the author of another column that appears earlier in this issue. See *Re(Considering) Advocacy for further biographical information*.

A look back on... Conference 2019



“My America” Photo Project

Lauren S. Reinert

In a time when our students are walking around in a PTSD pandemic hybrid-school culture, I knew my first photo project with advanced photography students had to tap my students’ interests and wake them from their delirium. Feeling utterly discouraged after the U.S. events of January 6th, I turned to my students, the kids who are our future, to give me some hope and perspective.

Jan. 6, 2021

What is YOUR America?

Our Founding Principles:

What principals do you and your family celebrate most:

- all people are created equal
- have fundamental rights such as
 - liberty
 - free speech
 - freedom of religion
 - due process of law
 - freedom of assembly



What’s YOUR vision?

UNITED WE STAND

“Like many communities across the country, West Irondequoit students came to school today confident that our district remains a **safe place for all students to process the world around them, express their own thoughts, ask hard questions, and face uncomfortable truths.** In our classrooms, we supported one another by listening and learning with our teachers, classmates, and peers. This proves our core value as a community that during unsettling events – divisive, destructive or otherwise – **our diversity is a source of strength,** and we will continue to forge ahead during unprecedented times. As we strive to do every day, we will continue to problem-solve and grow together, leaning on one another.”

-Ms. Kim Cristal, our K-12 Curriculum Supervisor of Social Studies



In my 18 years of teaching, I’ve found that students want to contribute and share their budding viewpoints. The more you give them an opportunity to share their diverse opinions, along with the space to respectfully critique their own work that is personally meaningful and relevant, the more the entire class will be committed to their creation of art. It is from these roots this “My America” photo project was born.

In a PowerPoint with varied imagery, classes looked at forms of government and highlighted why many countries are fighting for democracy right now. We discussed the First Amendment and free speech, and how the right to disagree is American. The ability to speak out peacefully, through our art, is our right as citizens.

I asked my students to take a stance based on what they see in their world right now and express their own thoughts, while reinforcing that our diversity is a source of our strength. During such a chaotic time of political unrest, I wanted to model support and open mindedness to all students. For this reason, I was unsure of what imagery I’d end up with at the end of this project and feared angry or concerned parent phone calls.

The previous summer, our community had some students post racist hate speech on social media and the community conversations were heated to say the least. I genuinely feared opening the door for racists and Neo-Nazis to have a platform. Fortunately, my district is incorporating the ‘Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations’*:

1. Stay engaged,
2. Experience discomfort,
3. Speak your truth,
4. Experience and accept non-closure.

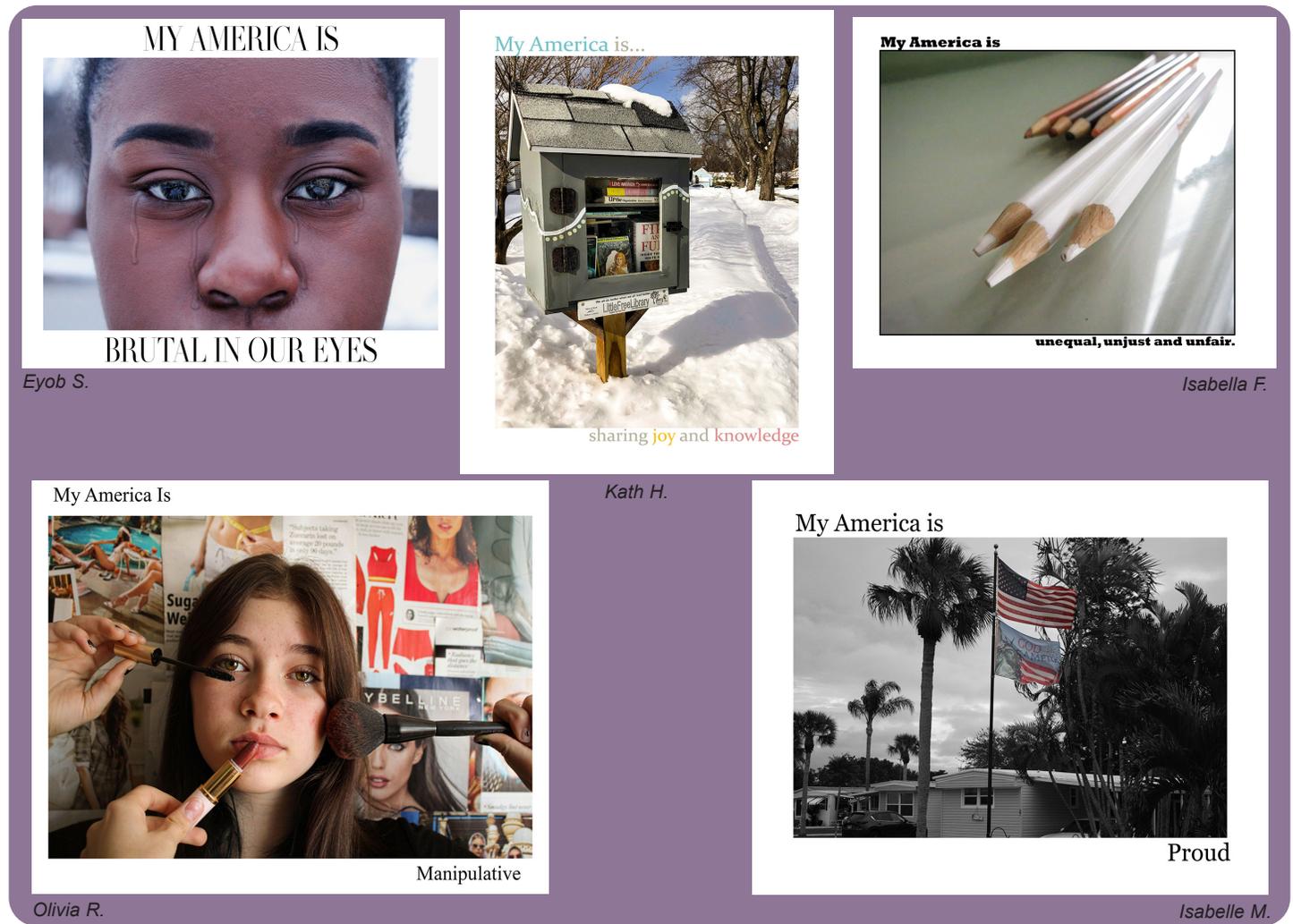
My students honored these steps throughout the assignment. Student topics ranged from animal abuse, BLM, racism, stereotypes, poverty, religious freedom, Covid, LGBTQ+, privilege, and thoughts on education during the pandemic.

I wondered if any students would offend or create division due to their perspectives. It was relieving to see all students participated in a positive way, creating thoughtful work. Though I did not get any parent phone calls, after displaying student work, I did have a few administrators say they were initially concerned that the topics were too powerful, but because they balanced multiple perspectives, they were effective and clearly showed the power of art in society.

I intentionally showed a diverse group of artists from varied backgrounds because I want my students to know the world is bigger than our own small suburban community. We looked at the photo work of Jana Curcio, Marvin Joseph, Sheila Pree Bright, André Chung, and Marc Baptiste.



Students had to fill out a brainstorming sheet for ideas and then they were sent off to photograph their vision of 'My America.' Students had two weekends to take 100+ images. In the end, they had to edit and add text to their three favorite images using Adobe Photoshop. The work and the critique were powerful and wide-ranging.



I've been reminded through this project our young students are more aware than we give them credit for, and they want to share their perspectives on the world. If we continue to give our students the opportunity to consider and share their viewpoints through socially and culturally relevant art projects and pedagogy, hopefully they will become more knowledgeable, empathetic, engaged, and active students and citizens of the world.

*The 'Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations' are Adapted from Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. 2006. pp.58-65. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

My America



is bigoted

Emma R.

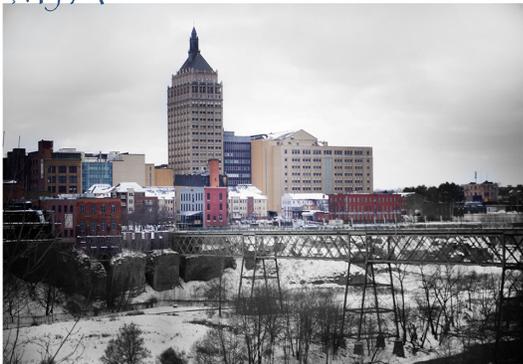
M
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EVERYONE HAS FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Jessica K.

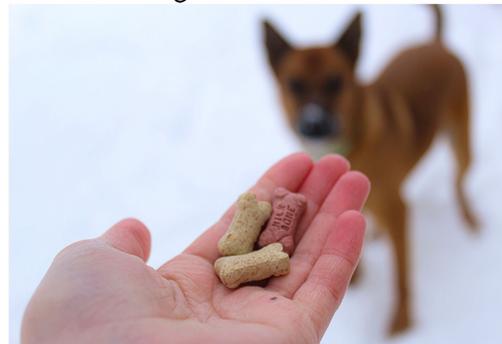
My America



Is filled with history and culture

Maddie P.

My America is...



giving

Jillian K.

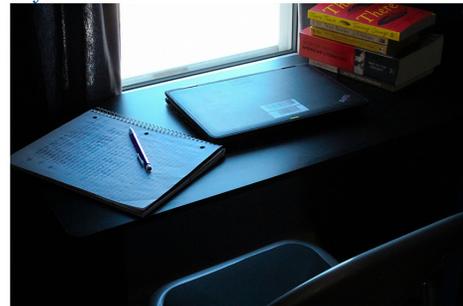
My America is...



full of bright young students excited to learn

Emma B.

My America is...



trying its best to get by

Kath H.



Laura Scherer Reinert has been an art teacher, concentrating mostly in photography & graphic design, in the West Irondequoit School District for the last 18 years. She has a BFA in Illustration; minor in Art History from UB, studied at Lorenzo de' Medici Institute in Florence, Italy, and is a graduate of RIT where she received her Master's of Science for Teachers. Before she started her family, she traveled as a Teacher Leader with the People to People Student Ambassador Program around the globe (China, New Zealand, Australia, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France) to enhance student international understanding.

Creating a Virtual Field Trip as a Culturally Responsive Teaching Practice

Laura Minor

In 2018, I started working at North Park Community, an elementary school in Buffalo, NY. The school was founded using a Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). One of the tenors of SEM is to provide a broad range of advanced-level enrichment experiences for all students. Furthermore, Buffalo Public Schools' vision and mission statements focus on creating community that "embraces, values, and infuses culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning for all students . . . in order to support and respond to the growing needs of our diverse student population." Our district's focus is on meaningful learning experiences. Pre-pandemic this meant frequent field trips and guest speakers. The pandemic put an end to teaching in person, let alone going on field trips.

Teaching during a pandemic forced me to reinvent myself as a teacher, as I taught in an empty room, sometimes to blank squares, through a camera. I prepared and delivered art supplies to my students' homes and began learning how to teach my students remotely. Already drowning in to-do lists, my new assistant principal knocked on my door, introduced himself, and then began sharing his ideas for the school year. "What about creating a virtual field trip to the Freedom Wall" he suggested hopefully. Field trips were the last thing on my mind. So, I smiled and nodded my head and filed the idea under I'll get to it some time.

The Freedom Wall is a mural on the corner of Michigan and East Ferry in the city of Buffalo. It features 28 portraits of notable civil rights leaders from the past and present including Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Alicia Garza, and Malcolm X. The mural was a collaboration between the Albright-Knox's public art initiative and Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor. It was painted in 2017 by four local artist of color: John Baker,

Julia Bottoms-Douglas, Chuck Tingley, and Edreys Wajed. Each artist brought their own unique style to the portraits they painted.

My assistant principal continued to broach the Freedom Wall field trip. Could I create a worthy virtual experience? I thought about how I view artwork in person. I stand back to study the whole piece and then get as close as I can to take in details. I wanted the virtual experience to feel similar. With only my iPhone in hand, I headed to Michigan and Ferry and started recording. I started at a distance to capture the whole portrait, then zoomed in close to highlight the difficult surface the artists had to work with. I moved along the wall from panel to panel and then took still images of each section. I was starting to envision what the footage would look like when pieced together.

Filming was the easy part; the editing process was to take significantly longer. I started by importing all the video footage and stills into to an iMovie timeline. I watched it and knew the art itself wasn't enough. I knew I wanted to add information on each civil rights leader depicted in the mural. I started with short biographies but then changed my mind. I thought what if we could hear the actual voice of those great leaders? Thus began a great search for audio that I could use. I started with YouTube videos. Using the free software ClipGrab I downloaded videos with audio that contained 20-30 seconds of useable audio for an individual in the mural. I added speeches from Angela Davis, Shirley Chisholm, Stokely Carmichael, and Huey Newton. Next, I was able to pull audio from NPR and the Studs Turkel Radio Archive. Soon I had many of the national figures covered.

Audio of the local civil rights leaders was more difficult to find. I had to sift through many locally made videos to find



useful content. Even with the help of fellow art teacher Amy Luraschi there were still gaps. I decided to contact Kelly Beuth, the theater teacher at Buffalo Academy of Visual and Performing Arts to see if her students would be interested in recording short audio segments to fill the gaps in the project. I received an enthusiastic yes. The theater students read short biographies or quotes I created for the remaining heroes from the mural. I added identifying labels, artist information, and music from SoundCloud and the Free Music Archive and a piano track from our music teacher, Carmen Friscaro.

Now it was time to watch it! And watch it again. I fine-tuned each element of the video and fixed little mistakes. Finally, I added credits to thank all those who had helped me or provided audio and musical tracks.

It was finally time to share the completed 17-minute video/virtual field trip with my students.

I asked my students "What characteristics make an effective leader?" Together we brainstormed a list: caring, helpful, hardworking, good speaker, kind, stands up for themselves, brave, etc. Then I told them about the field trip and a little information on the artists who created it. I said they may recognize some of the portraits, and not others but that they would learn about each person. I instructed them to listen carefully to the voices they heard. I started the video. Students connected immediately sharing comments like "I drive past that on my way home" or "I saw that the other day." Next, we discussed why this mural was painted and why we should look at it: "to learn from our past," "honor those that came before." We discussed what Black Lives Matter means, and why they saw it at protests over the summer.

Afterwards, I asked the students to identify leaders in their

own community. We talked about preachers, teachers, and many named their own parents. They cited caring for others as a strong characteristic of a leader. I then asked students to imagine that there was a 29th panel in the mural – who would you add? Would it be a nationally recognized figure or a local one? What are that person's achievements?

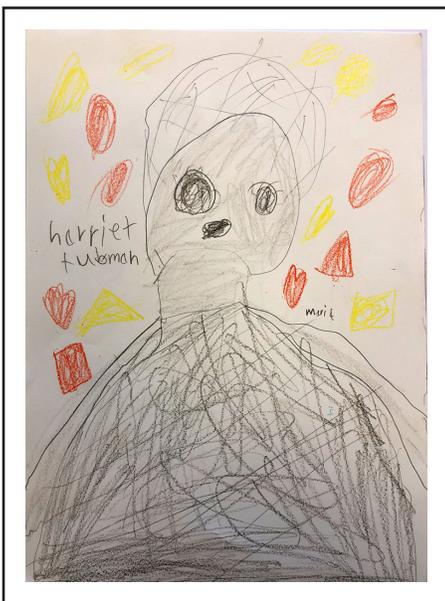
Students got to work on their drawings. A few students honored their family members who were essential workers. Another chose to draw Kamala Harris because she "helps people get what they need." Barack and Michelle Obama and President Biden were also given the honorary 29th panel.

In the end the idea my assistant principal brought up months ago was the catalyst for deep, interesting conversations that I would not have experienced otherwise. The students saw and connected to people that have fought to expand civil liberties. They saw themselves in the art and the artist who created it. The creation of a field trip linked my school's SEM priorities and the district's Culturally and Linguistically Responsive centered mission. The audio augmented the experience of viewing the mural and connected the art to history it exemplifies. Each student was able to find meaning in the experience and expand upon it.

You can view my Freedom Wall Field Trip video here: <https://youtu.be/REOXOIZek28>



Laura Minor is an artist and art educator. In her artwork she explores themes of environmentalism, motherhood, and feminism. She is currently working on a series of cyanotypes using found images. Since 2012 Laura has taught elementary art for Buffalo Public Schools. She resides in Hamburg, NY, with her husband and daughter.



M. J. 1st Grade,
"Harriet Tubman"



D.M. 1st Grade
"Kamala Harris"



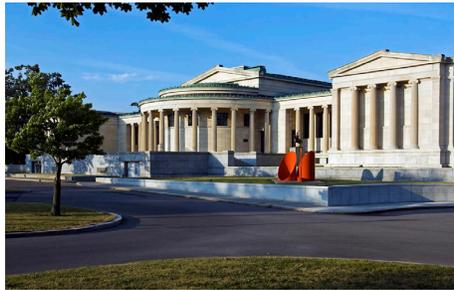
C. S. 1st Grade,
"Joe Biden"

How Reflecting on My Own Practice Helped Me Become a More Culturally Responsive Art Educator

Lindsey Kranz

In August 2020, it became clear that in-person programming was not going to happen for the 2020-21 school year. For those of us in the world of museum education, this meant reframing our programs so we could continue to provide accessible and relevant opportunities for our communities. Since a big audience of mine is PK-12 art educators, my goal was to provide something virtual that would be relaxing but informative at the same time. It was from this mindset that I created a new monthly virtual series for art educators titled "Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art?" I welcomed university and PK-12 art educators, pre-service teachers, and museum educators for free evening presentations that took place once a month over Zoom from October 2020 through May 2021. Each 45-minute program took a semi-deep dive into the practice of one contemporary artist and provided educators with connections for classroom learning. I welcomed participants to leave their video on or off, have a cocktail while they listened, or whatever felt right to them in that moment. I made sure to record each presentation so that if one signed up but didn't feel like attending because it was too rough of a day, or needed a screen break, then one could watch at their convenience at a later point in time.

Looking back, I realized that sharing the artist's perspective and voice is more powerful than offering my own interpretation or speaking on behalf of someone else's lived experience particularly as a white female teaching



The Albright-Knox Museum in Buffalo, NY

about BIPOC artists. Hearing the artist's perspective connects us to different cultures, languages, and life experiences. By allowing the artists' voices to be heard rather than providing my own narration or interpretation of their work, I was taking a more culturally responsive approach to teaching than I had in the past.

Each monthly presentation spotlighted a contemporary artist, their practice, and various works made throughout their career, followed by ideas for student engagement through open-ended questions and artmaking prompts. I included artists whose work focuses on issues of equity, identity, beauty, and race. Some are powerhouses in creating works that tackle social justice issues, like Zanele Muholi, whose works give voice to the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa. The artist Mickalene Thomas portrays concepts of beauty and questions what it means to be a woman.

What a beautiful transition into having our students investigate their own individual power to explore ways they can make a positive impact on their

own communities. Contemporary artists can help students to think creatively and critically about making a positive impact in our society. Different perspectives challenge students to encounter ideas that are different from their own.

Why is this important and what do students learn from this? Hearing about an artist's work from the artist themselves helps students understand their point of view, which could increase the students' ability to reflect on and recognize their own potential bias. It could encourage them to think about how their points of view could contribute to a more diverse discourse in their own art and local communities.

I began my series in October 2020 with a presentation on Betsy Casañas, an award-winning artist, educator, and social activist who created a mural for the Albright-Knox's Public Art Initiative in 2017. The mural celebrates the significant contributions made by the region's Hispanic and Latinx community to the cultural and economic vitality of Buffalo through vivid imagery, symbolism, and design. I knew her work would be inspiring and provide fun and thought provoking prompts for discussion and meaningful artmaking, but I didn't know much about the artist herself.

Through research, I ended up completely falling in love with her practice, her passion, and the pure joy she exuded when she was being interviewed. Known as the "Queen Bee of Murals," Casañas strives to give a



Betsy Casañas's Patria, Será Porque Quisiera Que Vuelas, Que Sigue Siendo Tuyo Mi Vuelo (Homeland, Perhaps It Is Because I Wish to See You Fly, That My Flight Continues To Be Yours) at 585 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY. Dedicated on August 25, 2017 (courtesy of the Albright-Knox Museum)

voice to underserved communities through her art, as exemplified in projects like the Mural Arts Philadelphia's Porch Light Initiative. The goal of this work was to improve the health of individuals and communities through human connection and art. As I planned the presentation, I chose to include part of a video in which Casañas explained the process of installing her mural here in Buffalo.

After that first night, I realized how meaningful it was to have the artist herself speak as part of the virtual program. I made sure to include a short video of the artist speaking in each presentation that followed. This is not something I have done for in-person programs (unless the artist is physically present) and it was such a bonus for a virtual program it made me rethink how we can present the voices of contemporary artists in future workshops and events for educators.

This work has encouraged me to become a better museum educator and to think more deeply about art, community, culturally responsive teaching, and curricular connections. For example, Felipe Pantone, an Argentinean and Spanish muralist, finds inspiration from the op and kinetic art of the 1960s to create mesmerizing and bold murals. Yes, his works connect wonderfully to the mathematics behind geometric design for creating optical illusions, but his focus on the positive potential of a digital future to make the world a more dynamic and connected place can bring such interesting discussions into the classroom. Do

your students agree that technology will help the world become more connected? After a year of having to use the internet to stay in touch, did it bring us closer? Are we closer to solving the issues that impact our communities and society at large? If the only focus was on the visual impact of Pantone's murals to create fun optical illusions, students would miss out on having a meaningful discussion on technology and society.



From Felipe Pantone's Chromodynamica series

Next, we explored what "home" meant by analyzing the work of Do Ho Suh. We investigated how notions of home, belonging, and sense of self related to this turbulent year. Suh creates 1:1 replicas of rooms he has lived in all over the world that could potentially "be packed up" and brought with him anywhere. What could students create to represent their versions of or perspectives on home? Home is a delicate subject to address with students who may not live at home or even have a home.



"Installation shot of Do Ho Suh: Almost Home, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2018, courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, photo by Libby Weiler.

Home may mean something different to you than what it means to your students. In the presentation, we discussed how a "home" can be based

on a place, people, memory, and/or objects. Like all people, artists grapple with the definition and memory of home whether it is positive or negative. You could encourage students to make a drawing or choose a small object to respond to the question: what does home mean to you? What did they choose to depict and why? This could lead into a deeper conversation about homelessness and what we can do to help. It is, of course, important to be mindful of the population in your class as there may be students in the class who are – or have been – homeless. Addressing stereotypes and dispelling myths around homelessness may help your students to be more comfortable, and in turn, be better prepared to confront the roots of the problem.

Writing each presentation was a learning process for me, because it was different from any educator program I've run in the past. It was important to me as an educator to challenge and confront my own and others' assumptions of how and why to include BIPOC artists into contemporary curriculum. I realized I often viewed artists through the lens of my own upbringing as an American citizen, and found it impactful to research and recognize stories of artists from other countries and cultures. I watched numerous videos about diverse contemporary artists, listened to podcasts such as the *Distill Creative's* website's "First Coat" podcast, and The *Jealous Curator's* "Art For Your Ear" podcast. There are also museum-based podcasts, like the Tate's "The Art of Healing". I tried to find many instances in which I was hearing from the artist themselves. It was essential to get out of my comfort zone as a white educator to learn, discover, and highlight diverse contemporary artists whose works are in the Albright-Knox's collection and Public Art Initiative. It helped to foster conversations about equity and social justice and include their perspectives of what it means to be a citizen in the 21st century.

Contemporary art is perfect for today's curriculum because it gives us tools to unpack what it means to live in today's society. What are some of those tools?

Artists can help guide students to gather, analyze, and interpret information and be able to communicate their ideas through thoughtful presentation. They can begin to think creatively and give visual form to abstract thought. By studying the way artists manipulate various media, they can increase their technological skills and work toward solving problems both individually and collaboratively. By listening to them talk about their work, students can work through bias, discover new ways of thinking and creating, and see artists that may or may not look like themselves.



Kota Ezawa, National Anthem (Buffalo Bills), 2018, courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art

My last presentation was on the artist Kota Ezawa, whose “National Anthem” series is a response to the police brutality protests that took place during

the national anthem at NFL games. I showed the video from the 2019 Whitney Biennial, where his soft-spoken explanation vibrated empathy for the football players that were kneeling in protest. Ezawa’s wide-ranging practice – everything from digital drawing to duratrans transparencies and lightboxes – gives educators ample inspiration for encouraging students to use technology and multimedia to create their own works in their own signature style to focus on a social justice issue that resonates with them.

I share this to help you incorporate diverse contemporary artists in meaningful ways into your own culturally responsive curriculum: find diverse contemporary artists who encourage you to think in a new way, who get you excited about their work, ideas, and processes, and reach out to me or your local museum educator for inspiration and connections.

RESOURCES

If you are interested in watching recordings of the “Who’s Afraid of Contemporary Art?” presentations, you may watch them here: <https://www.albrightknox.org/learn-discover/educators/>

[educators-workshops-and-presentations](#)

You can view the Distill Creative podcast with Betsy Casañas here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNHSWNG2YJs> where she talks about the Buffalo mural from 18:00 to 21:44.

Another short video of Casañas’s project in Buffalo can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ob75_DJXo28.

[Distill Creative’s “First Coat” podcast](https://distillcreative.com/firstcoat)

[The Jealous Curator’s, “Art For Your Ear” podcast](https://www.thejealouscurator.com/blog/art-for-your-ear-podcast/)

[The Tate Museum’s “The Art of Healing” podcast](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/saye-nak-bejjen-t15140/art-healing)

[Do Ho Suh on Art21](https://art21.org/artist/do-ho-suh/)

[Kote Ezawa print interview and video](https://www.kqed.org/arts/13856441/kota-ezawa-2019-whitney-biennial)



Lindsay is an educator working as a museum professional in the Learning and Creativity Department at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, NY. She has more than 15 years of experience working with students in the visual arts, focusing on promoting creativity and open-mindedness. When she isn’t at the museum, you’ll find her on her farm with her husband, dog, cat, and 31 ducks.

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Elected officers will begin their term of office July 1, 2021. Vice-President and Secretary are both two-year terms of office.

nysata PORTFOLIO PROJECT

The Portfolio Project is an initiative of NYSATA that was developed in cooperation with the New York State Education Department. It is an authentic assessment tool that is based on The New York State Learning Standards and provides students with an opportunity to present portfolios of their work at regional adjudication sites. The student portfolios provide evidence of understanding and student learning in the visual arts. Feedback is available for the student, parent, school, and community. The Portfolio Project can provide an authentic source for data on student success in the visual arts.

**To find out more about the
Portfolio Project go to**
<https://www.nysata.org/portfolio-project>
or contact **Christine Attlesey-Steger**
attlestine@gmail.com





the NYSATA news



Call for Contributions

Calling for Contributors to the FALL 2021 NYSATA News

Revitalizing: Social Emotional Learning and Self-Care

This digital issue of the NYSATA News will be online in October 2021

Deadline for content submission is September 15.

The next issue of the *NYSATA News* will focus on social-emotional learning and self-care. As art educators, we know the arts are uniquely situated to help teachers and students return to some sense of normalcy. As artists, we navigate personal and worldly issues, explore and grapple with our thoughts and emotions, and express ourselves in positive, powerful, and meaningful ways. What, and how, we teach, can help our students develop knowledge and dispositions needed to thrive during challenging times. By studying work of diverse artists, learning about various art movements, and engaging in the artmaking process, students learn to self-reflect and self-monitor, and work towards individual and collective goals. Helping them empathize with and see from multiple viewpoints, while improving their communication and collaboration skills is social and emotional learning at its best. In this issue, we will explore how we can help each other, and our students, thrive individually, collectively, personally, socially, and artistically.

We ask that you consider writing about:

- How have you adapted your practice to address students coming back to school full time, or to the hybrid format your district/school/building has established?
- How have you supported students who needed to practice self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-care? What did that look like? What kinds of artist mentors and activities worked for you?
- What art lessons and units have yielded unexpected social-emotional benefits?
- What lessons are you adapting to focus more on social emotional needs of students?
- How have you and other art teachers engaged in self-care? What were the results?
- How has your own art making enabled you to adjust, adapt, and even thrive during challenging times?
- Though we are not art therapists, how can we, as art teachers, use arts in therapeutic ways for ourselves and our students?

Articles (around 500 words) and features (around 2000 words) should address this theme in some manner. There is no specific length required or recommended – say what you need to say.

You can use our latest issue for reference. The newsletter welcomes and encourages images but be sure you have signed permission slips for student artwork / classroom activities showing students' faces (we have a form). Images should be .jpg format / a minimum of 5x7" at 150 ppi.

Please contact us with your idea. We can discuss your piece, deciding on how we can best help you.

We appreciate the time and effort you will put into your work for the newsletter – remember how much it will enrich and inform the readers. Find the latest issue here: <https://www.nysata.org/nysata-news>

Marty Merchant *NYSATA News* Editor merchantmartin@gmail.com

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1	Western	Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming
2	Finger Lakes	Allegany, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Seneca, Steuben, Yates
3	Central	Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence
4	Southern	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schuylar, Tioga, Tompkins
5	Adirondack	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton
6	Capital Eastern	Schoharie, Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
7	Southeastern	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
8	New York City	Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island
9	LI Nassau	Nassau
10	LI Suffolk	Suffolk



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