



**My **Living** Theory:**  
**The ART of becoming (P)ART:**  
**developing socially-engaged art**  
**teachers**

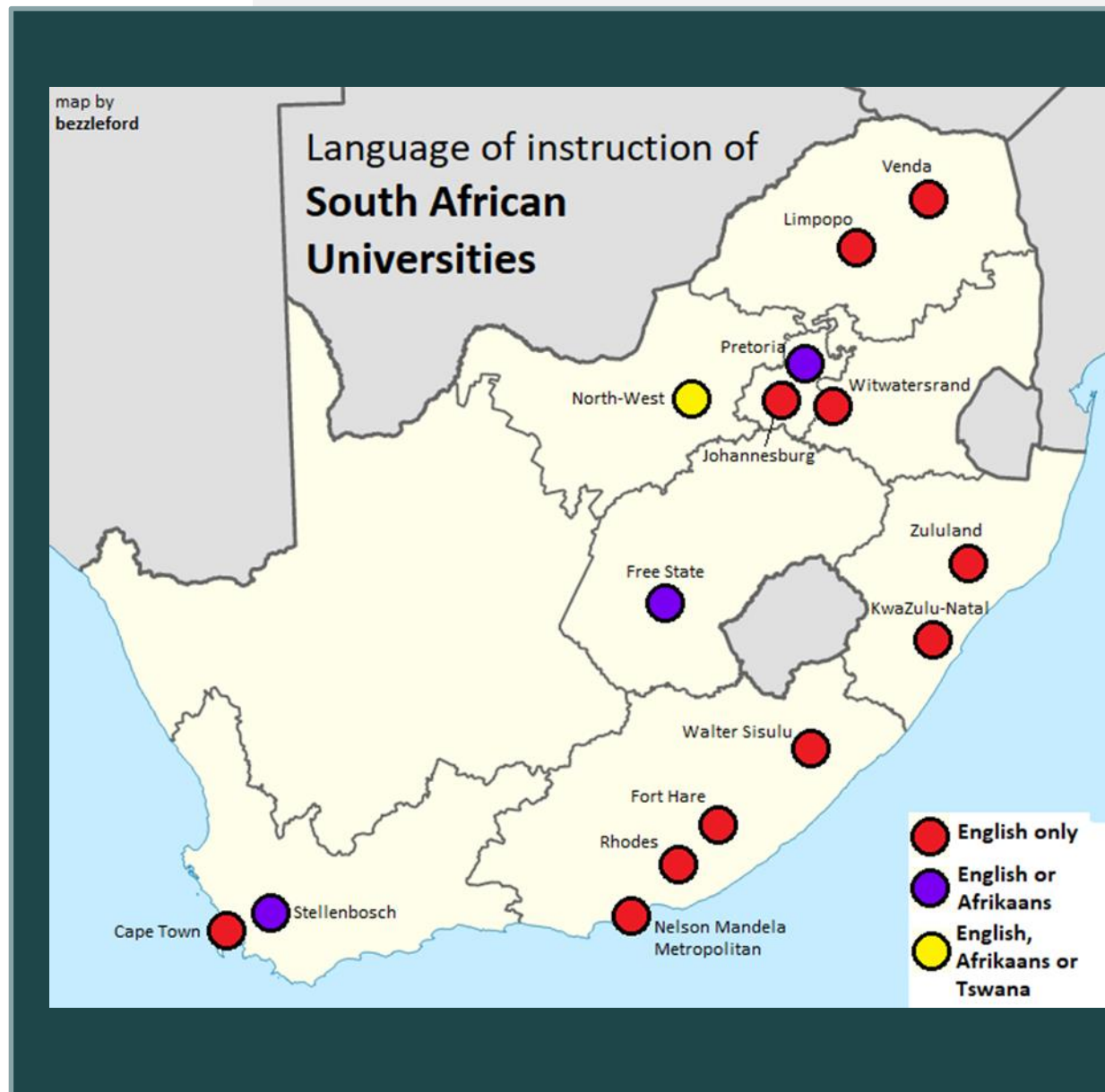
**Merna Meyer & Prof L Wood**

**InSEA Seminar, Walvisbay,**  
**26 Oct – 2 Nov 2018 NAMIBIA.**

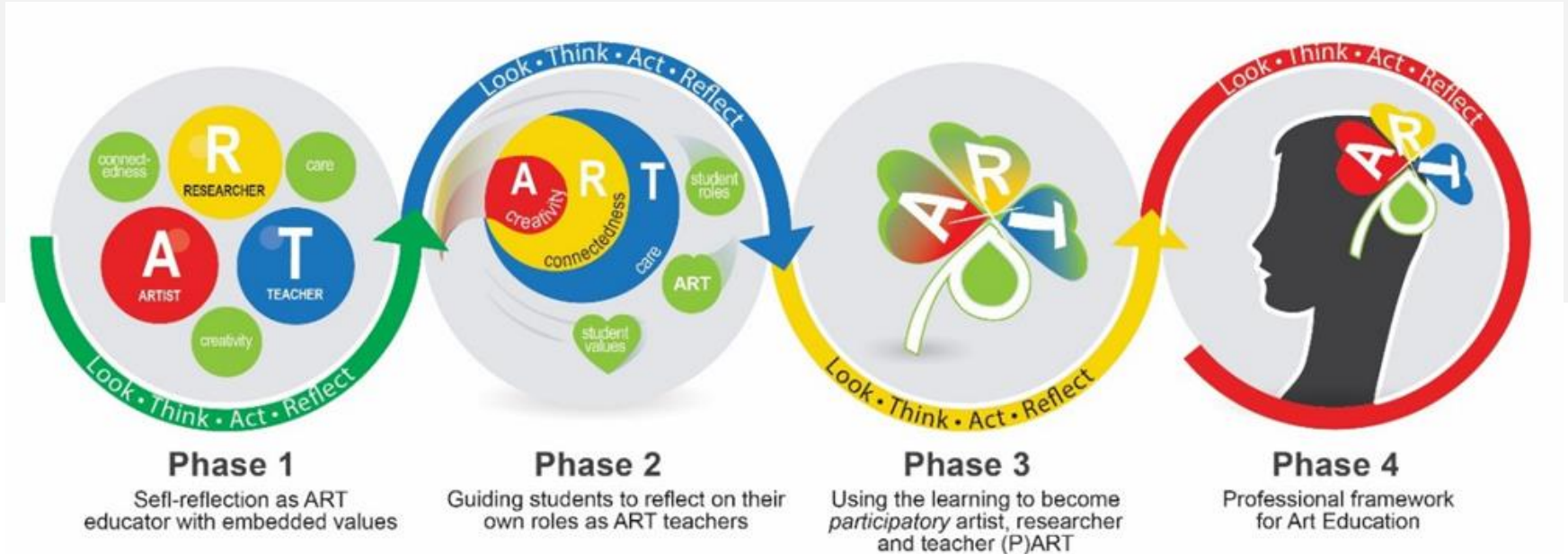
1 November 2018

# Universities in South Africa

- 73 400 students enrolled in SA
- 35 000 students at the NWU
- 18,800 distance learning programmes.



# Report on the **third** phase of my action research self-study



How to become participatory and socially engaged

# MY CONCERNS

- Lack of status accorded to art education and consequently to the art teacher and their roles
- Art is perceived as a specialised subject reserved for the talented few leading to missed opportunities to employ art-based learning in interdisciplinary, participatory and socially engaged ways
- Art is taught in isolation removed from the social contexts of learners. Students are uninformed about cultural, language and race differences

# Policies requiring working with diversity

South African minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications Policy (DHET 2015) requires teacher education to incorporate situational elements so that teachers work 'flexibly and effectively in a variety of contexts' (DHET 2015: 9) to develop competencies to deal with diversity and transformation.

## Policy requiring professional roles

The Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) 2015: 58-59) denotes seven collective roles and 'their applied competences' to position teachers in schools 'appropriate to their practice' (DHET 2015:58)

## Aim of paper:

To find out how can pre-service art teachers position themselves as socially engaged art teachers working in diverse learning environments

## Guiding questions:

*How can I influence pre-service art education students to become leaders in their learning environments by adopting more socially engaged practices?*

My intent is to prepare socially responsible art educators who value the principles of social justice, and understand the importance of integrating them into their future teaching practice.



# Professional framework

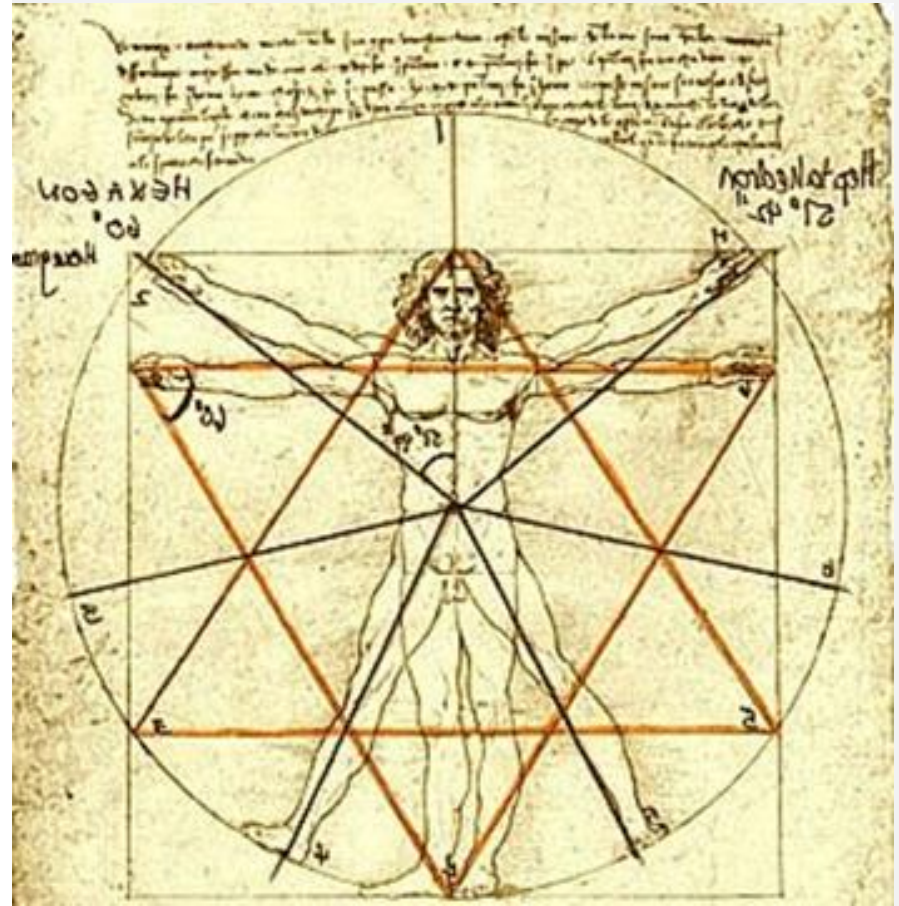
How do we provide a professional framework that consists of:

- Good theoretical base
- Practices embedded in personal values
- Ensure socially engaged citizenship and reflective practices

(Hickman & Brens 2015, Beijaard, 2009)



Positioning pre-service art teachers as leaders in art education



# How do students perceive themselves as art teachers?

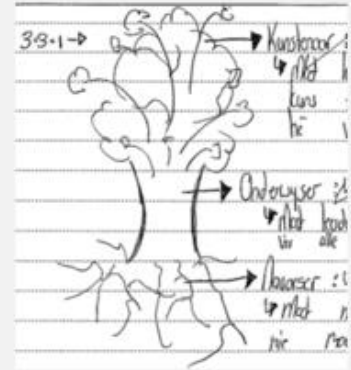


## "I" orientation



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Holistic 'our' paradigm



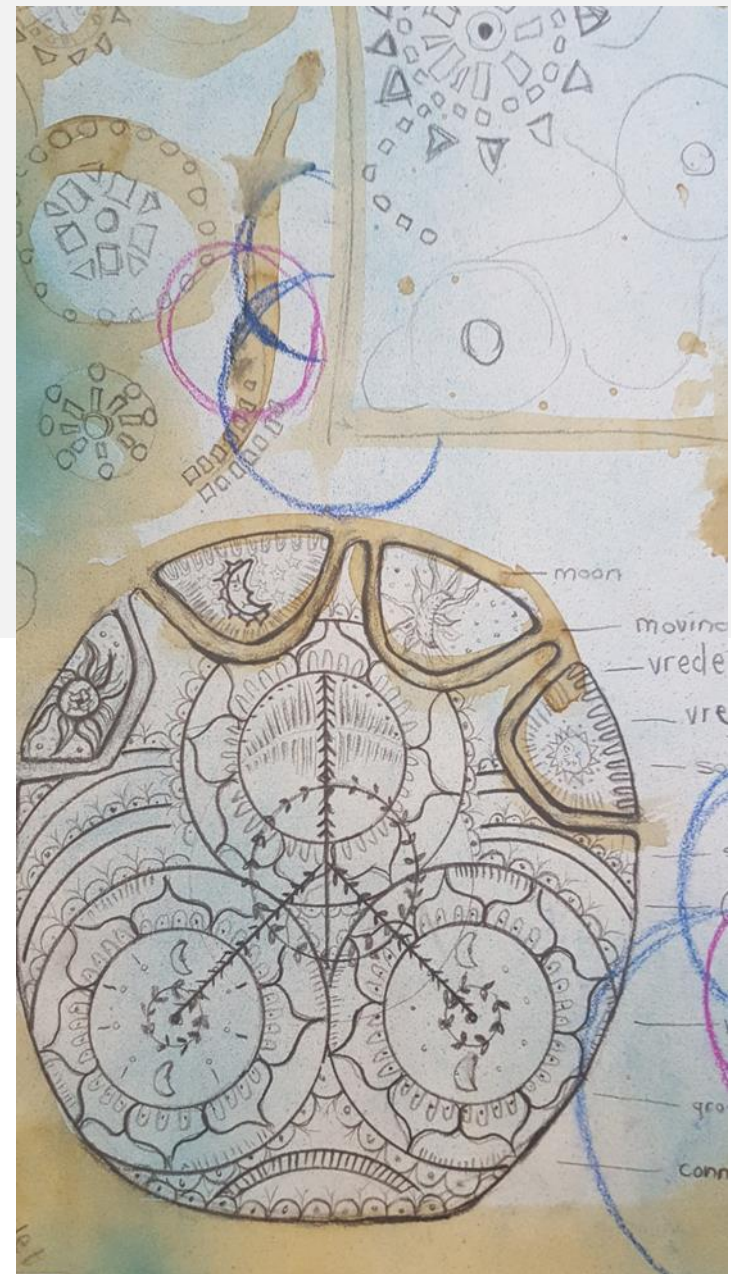
"Thanks to these three roles, I don't only see myself as artist, teacher and researcher, but [also] as educator, collaborator, role model, social activist, and somebody with a passion and love for learners" (SL\_4).



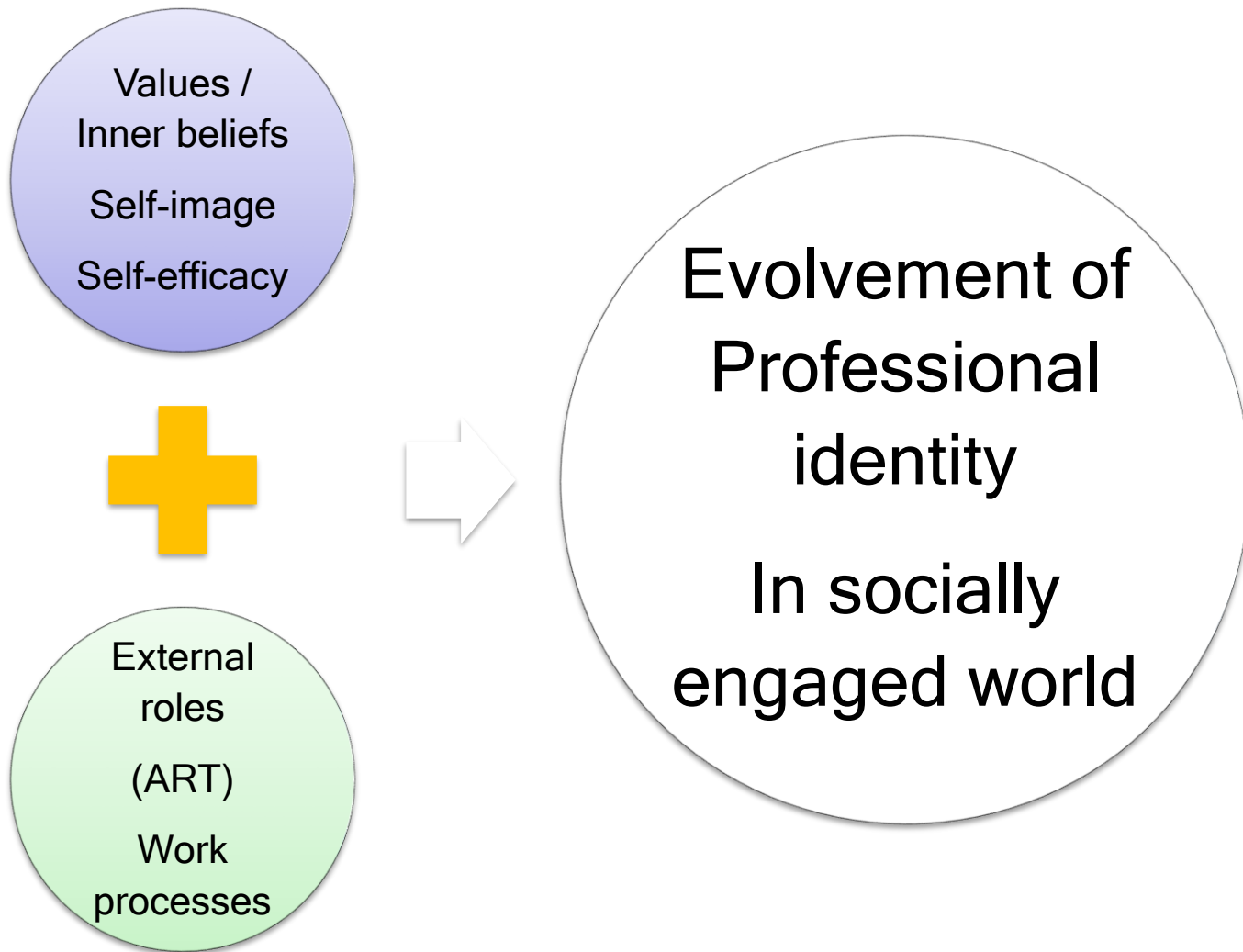


# Method

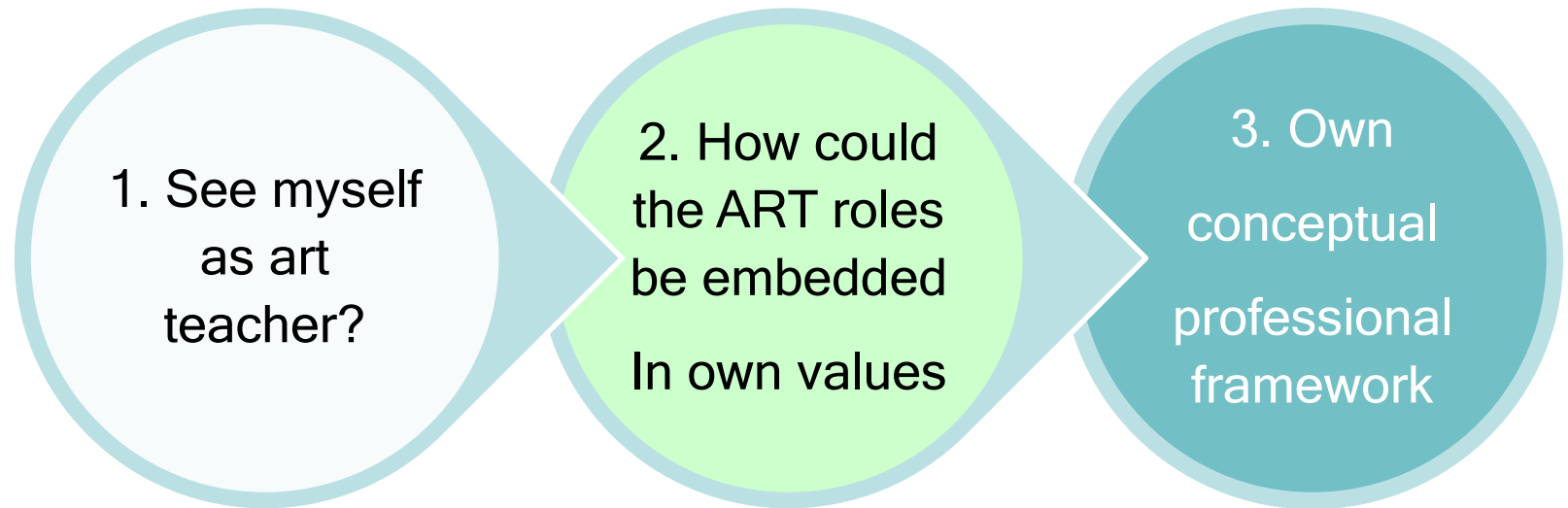
- self-reflective action research using recursive and iterative cycles
- (McNiff, 2011; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).
- 35 students assessments:
- visual diaries, reflective notes
- Thematic analysis & word cloud displays (Saldaña 2016)



# HOW to integrate values and roles into a professional framework



# Students' three cycles of exploration to find own framework



# ***CYCLE 1: How do pre-service teachers see themselves as art educator?***

1. Students viewed themselves in the role of 'expert' teacher
2. There was little awareness of the value of art as a medium of learning for all students
3. Lack of insight regarding art teachers' potential to work in socially engaged ways

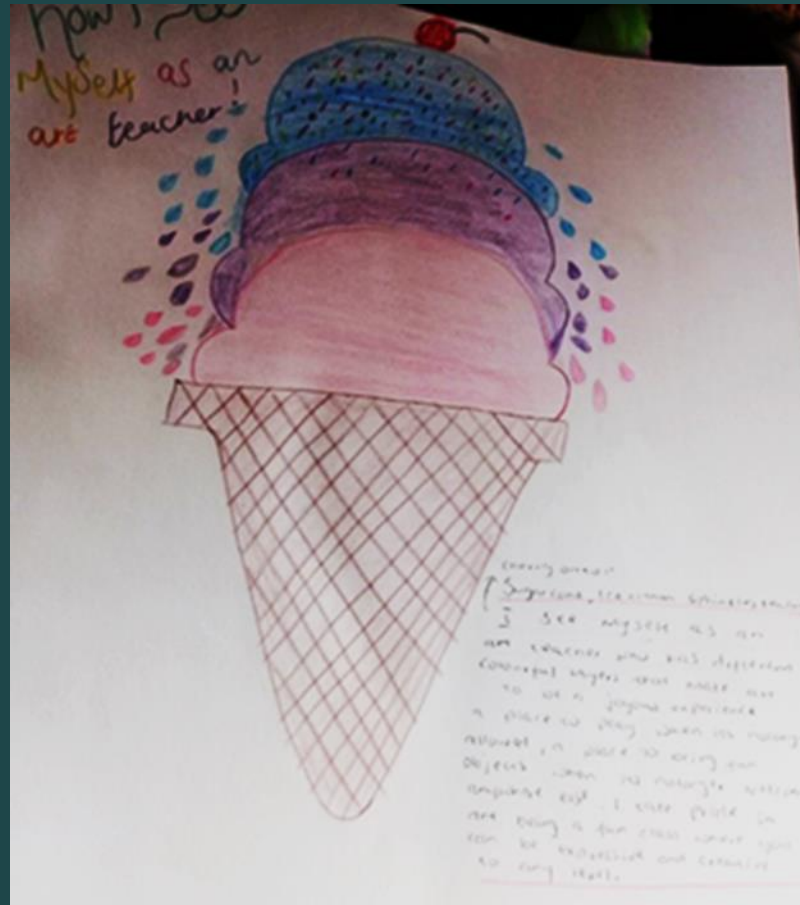


SL\_8: Myself as Art Teacher - shining the light on the empty pages



SL\_9: Art teacher as sharpener and learners as pencils to improve the learners in all aspects of their lives





## Intermediation strategy 1: Role of the teacher

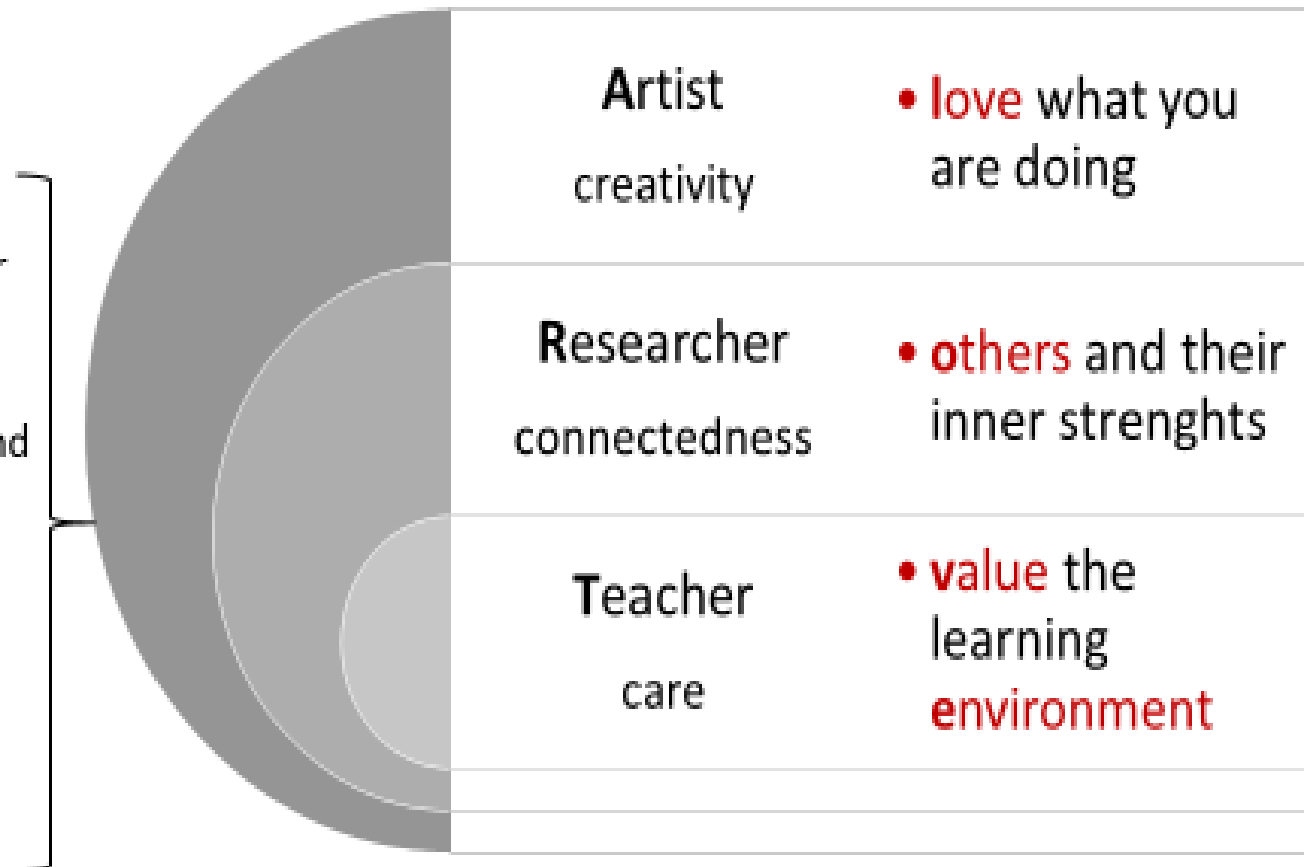
- *How do I see myself as ART educator?*
  - *How can I embody my values in my ART roles?*
- ... and validate my practices?



# Introduce 3 ART roles: explain the 'LOVE' paradigm

Amalgamate seven teacher roles into three ART roles

- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning
- Programs and materials
- Leader, administrator and manager
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role
- Assessor
- Subject specialist



# Theoretical frame

## ART THEORY

Artist, researcher, teacher (ART) (Thornton, 2013) forms the ART nexus (Bennet et al, 2010) with overlapping permutations and integrated functions

Aristotelian philosophy, representing “three kinds of ‘thought’”:

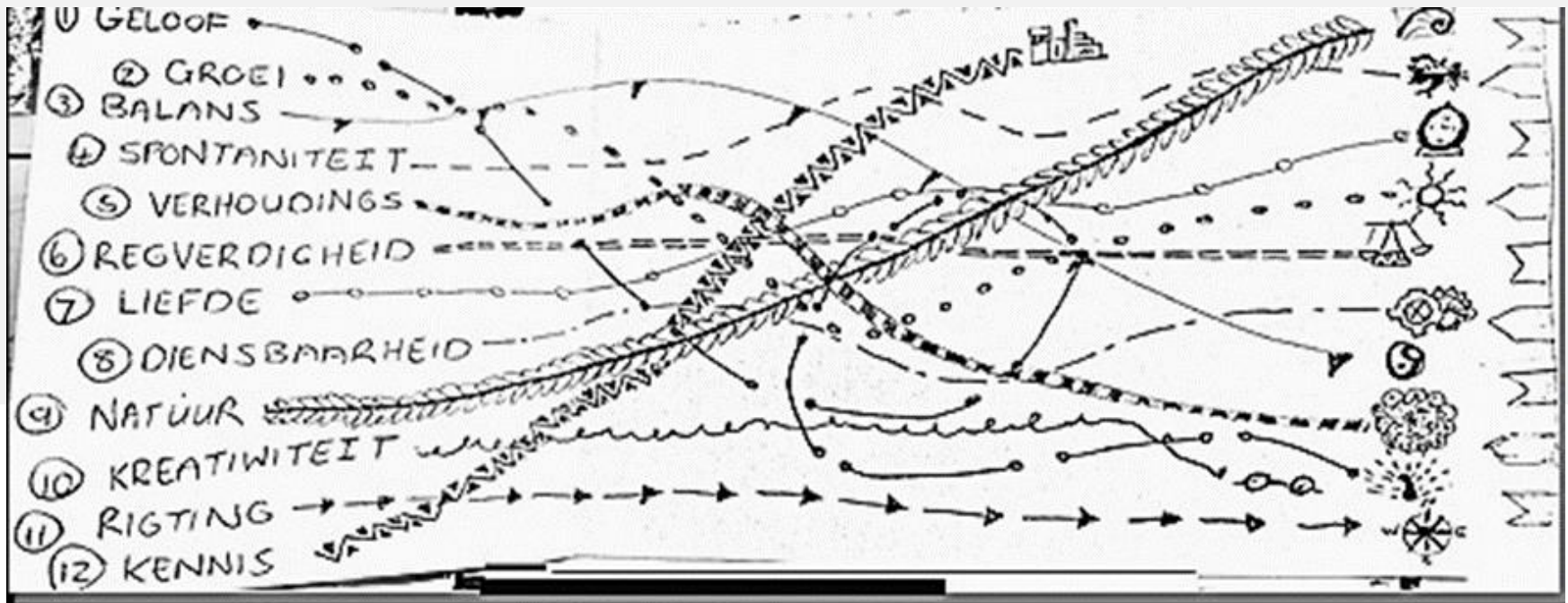
- knowing and researching (theoria),
- doing, learning, teaching (praxis) and
- making or creating poesis);



- “make, research and teach art”  
paradigm



# Students established own values



Spider diagram: example of a students' identity and values captured in a spider diagram. Relating words such as growth, creativity, love with specific symbols.



“Thanks to these three roles, I don’t only see myself as artist, teacher and researcher, but [also] as educator, collaborator, role model, social activist, and somebody with a passion and love for learners” (SL\_4).

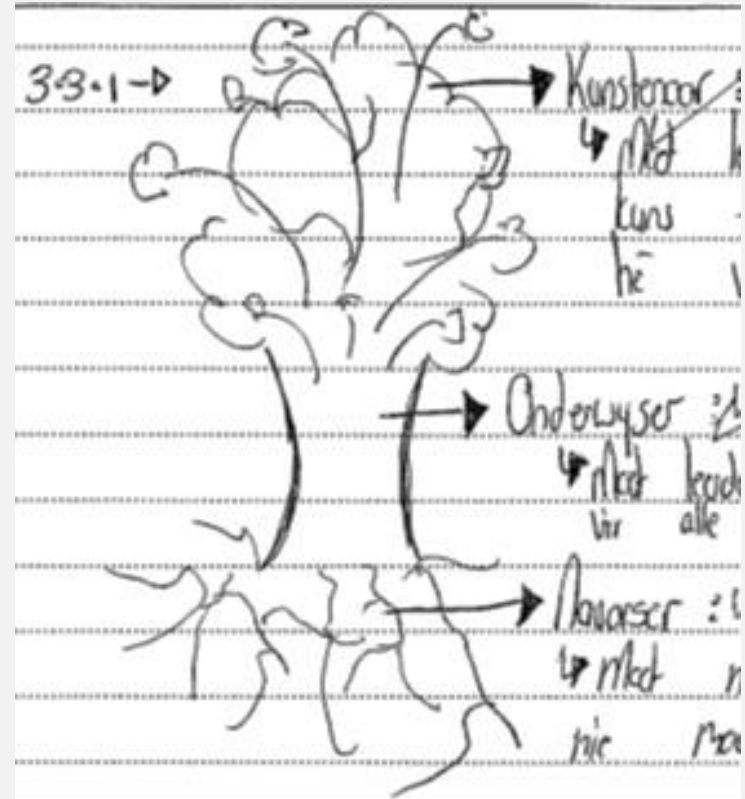




## “I” orientation



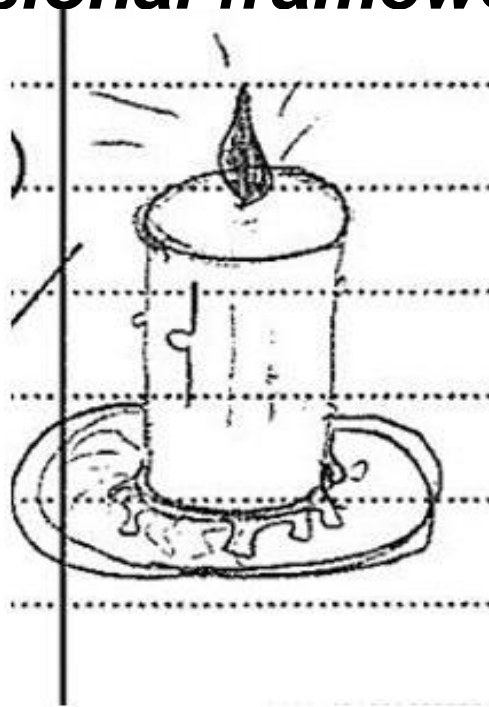
## Holistic ‘our’ paradigm



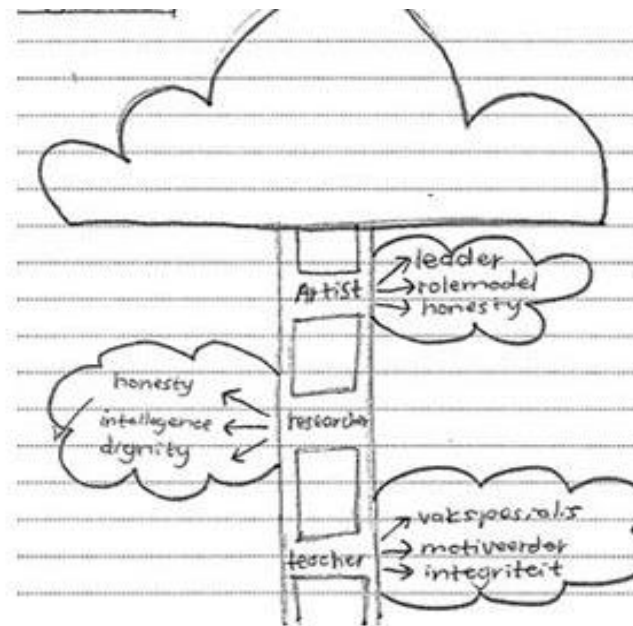
“Thanks to these three roles, I don’t only see myself as artist, teacher and researcher, but [also] as educator, collaborator, role model, social activist, and somebody with a passion and love for learners” (SL\_4).



# CYCLE 3: How do you conceptualise your own professional framework?



SL\_4. The flame illustrates the teacher that must exude warmth and light showing sincerity, friendliness, goodwill and being passionate. One could get burnt if you touch the flame, meaning that the teacher leaves her mark to everybody and is a light in dark times.



SL\_16. The art teacher represented as a ladder with the teacher as subject specialist, motivator with integrity; the researcher values honesty, intelligence and dignity whilst the artist is a leader, role-model and values honesty

# Service-learning: outreach goodwill bestowed on







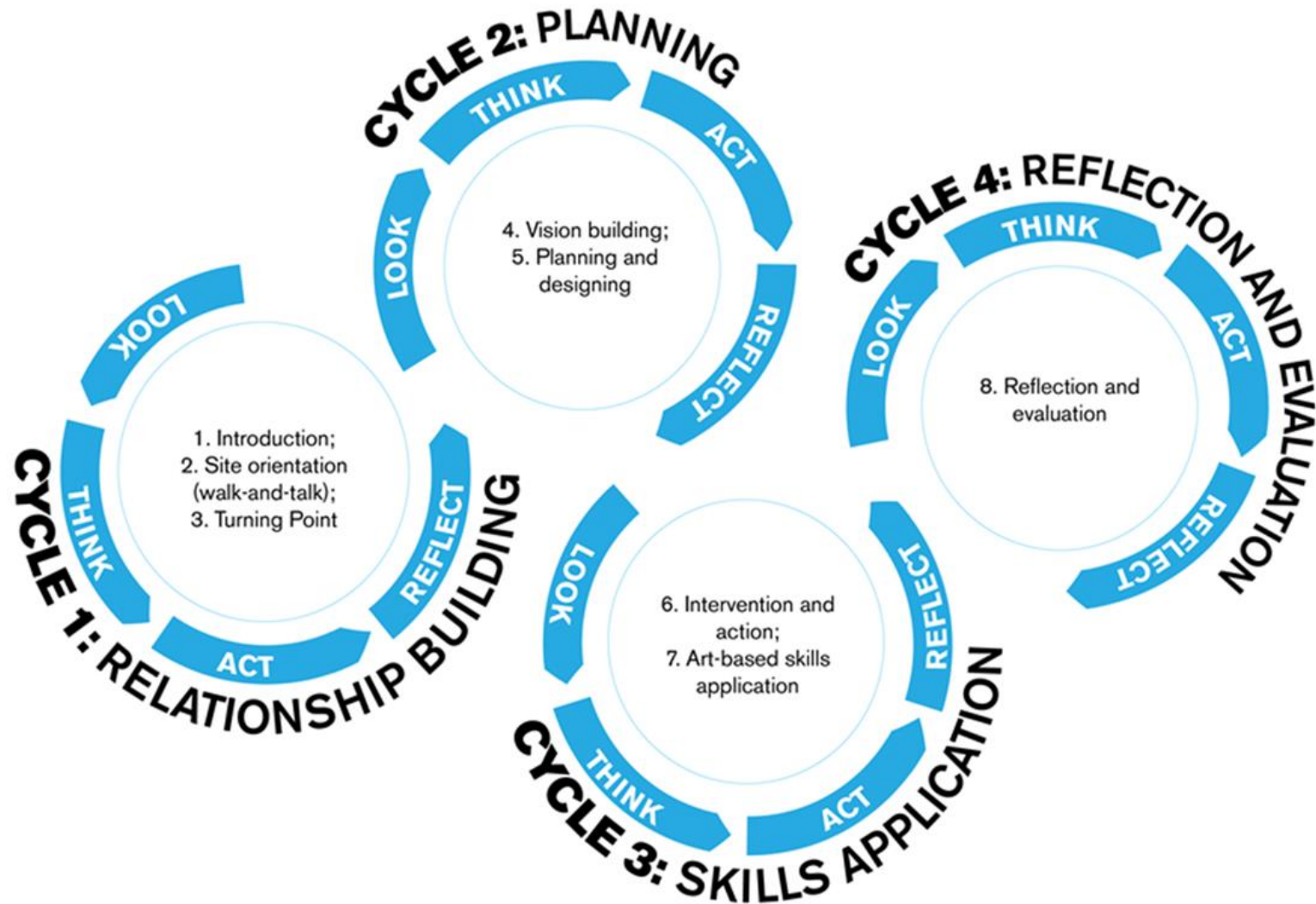
# Cognitive dissonance

(Festinger 1962)





# PAR (Participatory action research) DESIGN (Meyer 2015)



# Service Learning

With the completing of the assignment, I've learned a lot.

The children and my fellow students

did a lot of things that I did not even think of doing. I could

see in the children's faces that they appreciate the work

that we have been doing with them. For awhile they could forget everything in

their lives and enjoy doing some art. That was the biggest reward from this

assignment. The children came up with amazing ideas and portrayed it creatively. My fellow students

showed me that you do not need equipment to do art with children

and that you don't need to spend money to make

art. All of the students involved in this

project aspire to be great art

educators and this project gave us the

opportunity to practice the passion

we have for

teaching.







## ***Theme 1: Students learnt relational skills, and understood the importance of teaching with sensitivity***

She reconsidered her purpose for choosing teaching as a career, 'to initiate change' (SF\_3) and accepted the fact that 'people are fragile and that the way I speak and what I say can be harmful' (SF\_3). Students became more caring, igniting systemic changes that they wanted to see in the schools

... it is clear to me now... we are not just teachers, but we are there to give parental guidance to the learners. We have to enlighten and support them [the children] to reach their full potential. Learners come from different background, therefore need different attention and care. The implementation of effective counselling systems at schools is a necessity

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## ***Theme 2: Students developed socially engaged art practices***

They saw the collaborative interaction as opportunities to deepen understanding for the children and valued the role that art could play, 'art can serve as therapy and escapism from circumstances and immediate environments... they opened themselves towards me and shared their dreams, emotions and aims in life' (SF\_18).

They realised that 'without cooperation the outcomes of the project will not be reached' (SF\_7). Group techniques and scaffolding processes became 'indispensable strategies to get closer to our end product' (SF\_5). They valued working in democratic ways and agreed that through communication they could come to agreement that suited all and this came from 'understanding each other equally, valuing each other's opinion and statements' (SF\_8).

... every single learner, regardless whether they have the subject art, can do art. Every learner is creative in their own manner and could, with the help of examples, create artworks and express their own creativity (SA\_6).



# Group work and 4 ways of becoming **participatory**

- With **nominal** participation they presented artworks to the learners to observe in passive contemplation e.g. the elephant project.
- Students also **directed** children to participate in completing a simple task, such as hanging kindness tokens on a cardboard tree (Helguera 2011, 15).
- They encouraged children to participate **creatively**, contributing to the content of the art work, for instance children decorated their own rocks creatively, with their choice of content, such as fingerprints and natural elements to leave their mark and collectively combined the artworks in a rock garden structure.
- **Students participated collaboratively with the children throughout the process, they shared responsibility of the ideas, content and structure of the artwork through dialogical interaction (Helguera 2011, 14-5).**

## ***Students became more aware of art's potential as a medium of learning across disciplines and place***

They also understood that everybody should have an opportunity to appreciate art, even those who regard themselves as less talented, “every artwork is unique in its own way and gives a message through that can be meaningful for others in the future” (SL\_13).

They regarded the ART roles as “essential in creating better art teachers and understanding of learner development in art education” (SL\_8).

## ***Improved social and community awareness***

“I want to educate learners so that they can go into the community and create a better future for themselves, their families, and to create a better future for their children one day” (SA\_1).

They envisioned themselves becoming more emancipatory and caring in their teaching positions by “taking action incorporating values and roles and adjust it to their [the learners'] personal values and convictions” (SL\_5).



## ***Students took on a holistic, values-embedded and motivational role instead of a teacher-directed role***

I attribute the insight gained about value-embedded ART roles to the critical reflections and conceptual designs conducted during the second and third phases of the action research cycles.

## ***Theme 3: Students realised the importance of inclusive practices***

They realised that personal traits are part of people's diversity and that they should be more flexible and adaptable, 'less critical about people's body language and expressions' (SF\_7).

They should consider the children's individuality, '**everybody is unique and shouldn't be compared with the other**' (SI\_4) and therefore adjust activities to fit the children's needs instead of presenting a 'one size fits all approach' (SF\_4).

# Students became socially aware activists and conservationists



## ***Theme 3: Students realised the importance of inclusive practices***

Towards the end, their reflections indicated that they became more selfless, humane and caring:

- I will be able to do something similar in the future... it is not about you but absolutely about them and you need to ensure that they enjoy it. It is an unselfish action to engage with something like this (SL\_10).
- The project was not only to create better future teachers but also to give back to the community by working with different children... from different backgrounds (SI\_5).

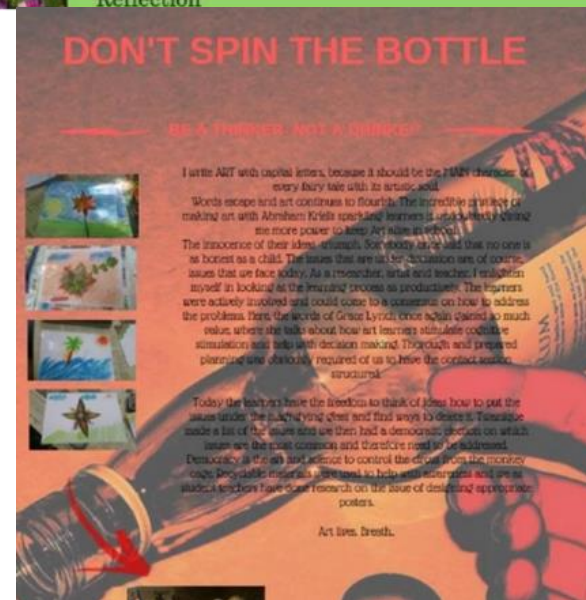
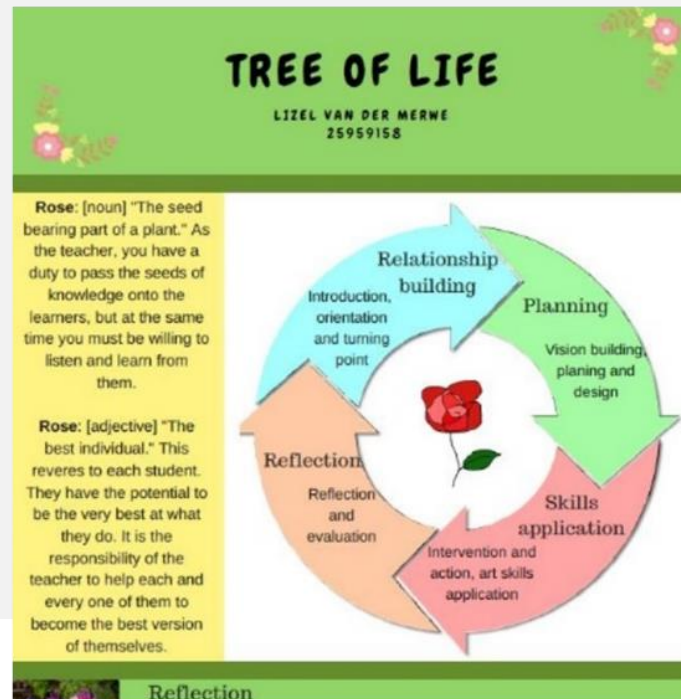
# Celebration & exhibition



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The project was not only to create better future teachers but also to give back to the community by working with different children... from different backgrounds (SI\_5).





# Kweek volhoubaarheid

Tydens die "service learning" het ek geleer dat ek die leerders moet help om te groei in kreatiwiteit en in menswees. Ek moet vir die leerders die grond en vrugbaarheid gee waar hulle hulle wortels kan laat ingroei en in die vak sowel as menswees te kan groei. Ek moet hulle fasiliteer en motiveer maar steeds toelaat om te groei in die rigting van hulle keuse om meer te bereik.

Motiveer  
Inspireer  
Fasiliteer  
Rekondeer



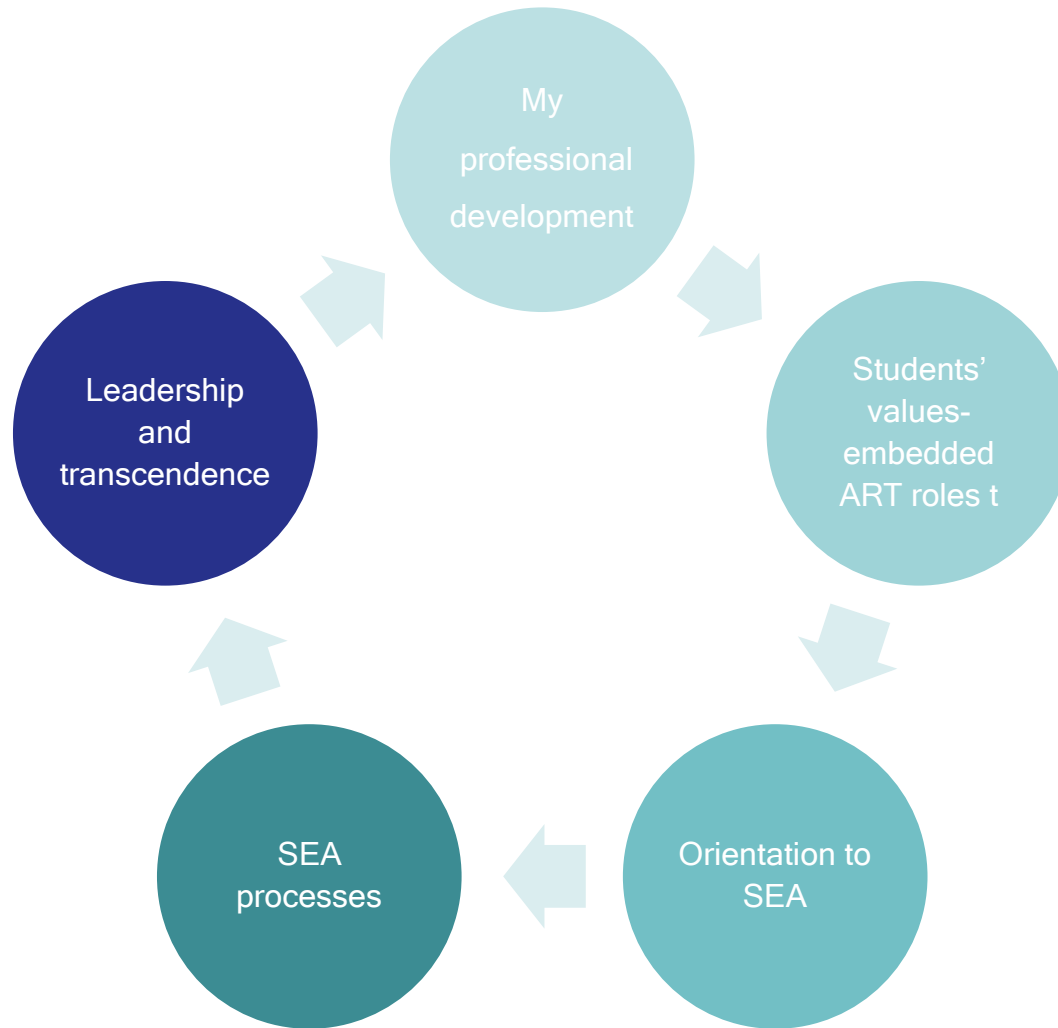
My ervaring is dat die leerders gemaklik was omrede die natuur, gevoel van veiligheid vir hulle skep, hulle ken al baie van die omgewing en daarom kon hulle baie inligting inoem en ook met hulle hulle ken al deel, die hulle laat om vry te voel en nie geblokkade in 'n klaskamer of bytbou nie.

Die projek was volhoubaar en het lewenslange leer bevorder. Leerders is nou in staat om die konneksie tussen kuns en natuur raak te sien, en hulle gaan die klipies plant waar hulle ander gaan inspireer en ander leerders by hulle woonplek kan leer hoe om die natuur in hulle kuns projekte in te werk.

Die aktiwiteit stel my in staat om my ART-model uit te brei, my sieninge te verbreed en my rol in die klaskamer te bevraagteken. My klaskamer moet soos die natuur wees, die leerders moet geïnspireer word deur die kunswerke teen die muur, die geluide/ musiek wat speel en die vars lug.

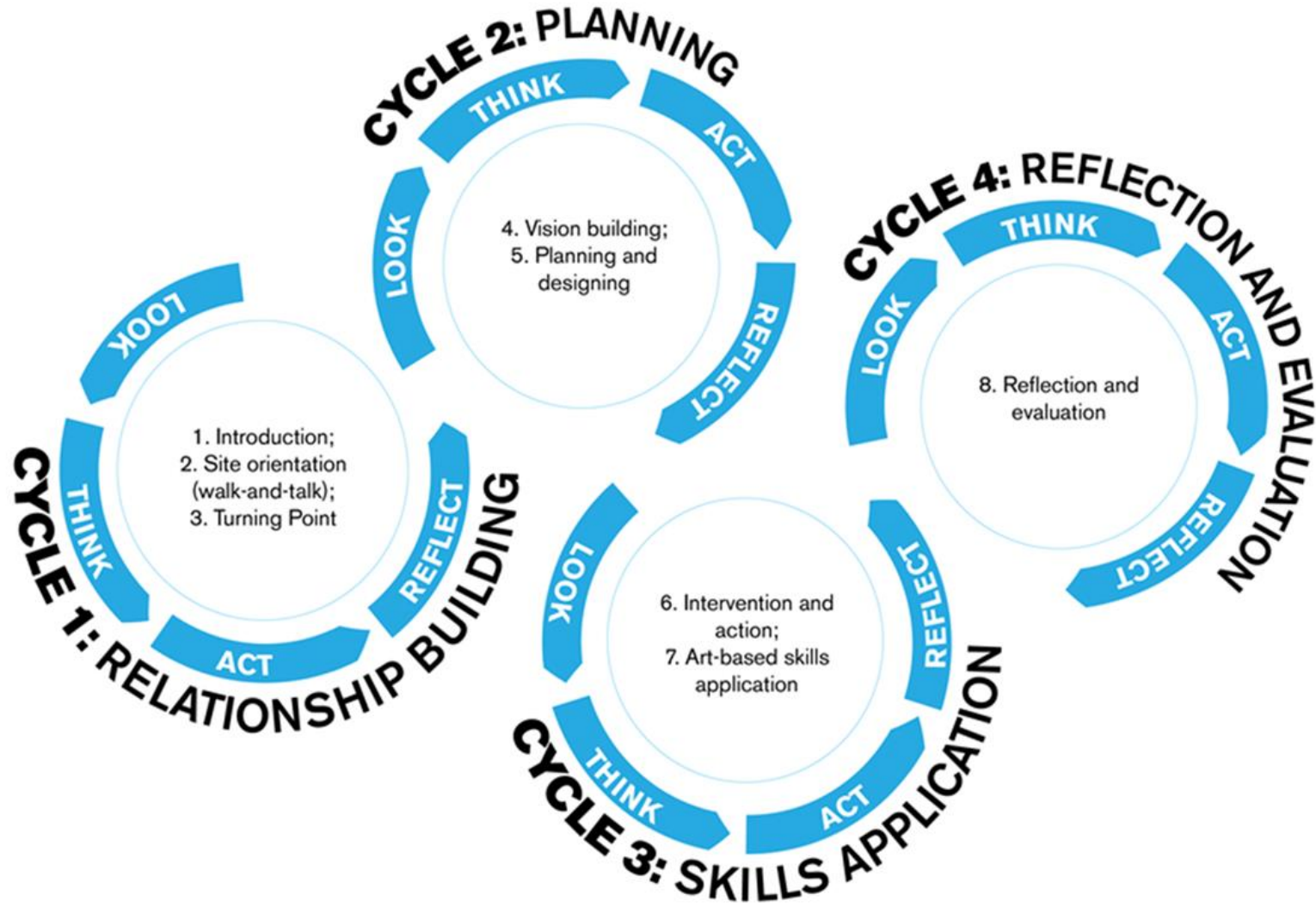


# Process of finding a professional framework





# PAR (Participatory action research) DESIGN





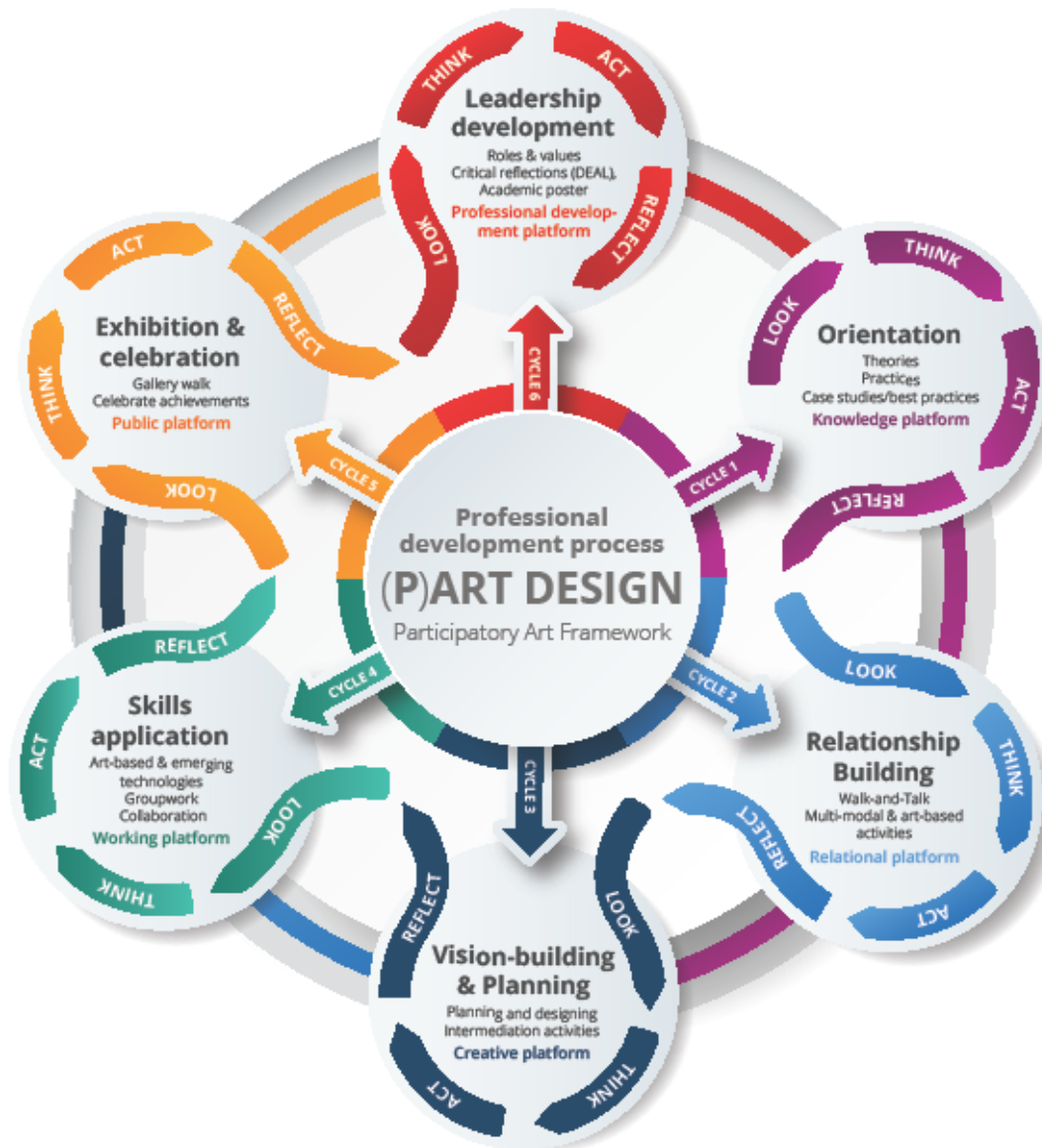
# What did I learn?

Students are not properly prepared to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

This emerged in the reflections of the students, when they had to examine suitable theories that fit their experiences.

CSL preparation should include unified theories that frame diverse forms of social inclusivity, instead of introducing a multitude of theories in sub-disciplinary ways which often result in a 'patchwork of learning on discrete issues' (DeLuca et al. 2011, 196).

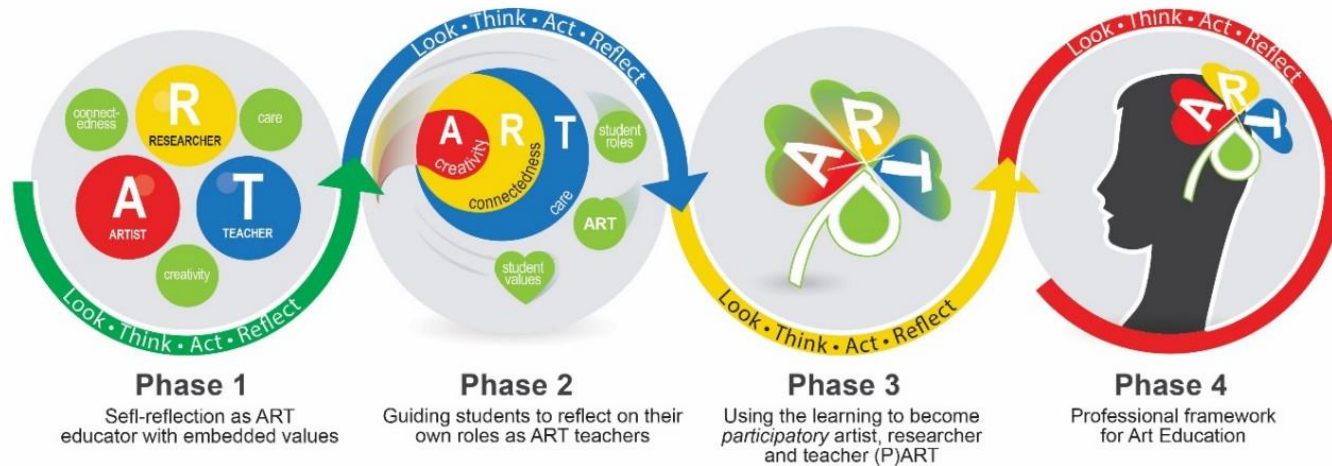
# (P)ART professional framework





One student envisioned his ART framework ultimately as a picture stuck on top of his desk that will instantly remind him of his values as an art teacher. It is a picture that he would like to show to the world as it encapsulates:

“improving creativity, knowledge acquisition and becoming aware and emancipated” [SL\_7].



Did I convince you that:

- ❖ The (P)ART professional framework provides an **empirically validated professional framework** for pre-service art teachers when they exit for their careers?
- ❖ I tried to follow a critical, reflective, accountable, self-evaluative to develop professional and engaged art teachers (CRASP)(Zuber-Skerritt 2011)
  - ❖ But mostly do you agree that it is an

**art to become (P)ART?**



# Thank you

Any opinion, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and therefore the NRF does not accept any liability in regard thereof.

Meyer, M. and Wood, L., 2017. A critical reflection on the multiple roles required to facilitate mutual learning during service-learning in Creative Arts education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 22(2), pp.158-177.

Wood, L. and Meyer, M., 2016. A participatory approach to service-learning in creative arts education: a win-win learning opportunity for campus and community?. *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*, (65), pp.31-54

- <https://www.litnet.co.za/how-can-decoloniality-inform-educational-curriculum-knowledge-selection/> (current discussions in RSA)

# South Africa: beautiful, quirky and diversely sophisticated

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPEG8Gn6Qxk>

scenery

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRUMsvWIJOQ>

Nando's advertisement: SA humour

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTnL-PtV8Q8>

Willemien taught her students French through song