

IMAG :: issue 16.

**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE,
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS
THAT CULTIVATE THE
CREATIVE PROCESS**

CONNECTING STORIES OF BELONGING

As art educators and artists how do we match our commitment to embrace differences with effective tools to create inclusive learning environments? The visual essays in this IMAG issue, Building sustainable, inclusive environments that cultivate the creative process offer thoughtful and innovative ways that respond to the challenge of developing a strong sense of belonging and equity for diverse populations. From craft schools to pre-service teachers, from visual journals to non-verbal performances these essays offer insight on how to create compassionate and creative communities.

Lucy Bartholome in her visual essay *Shimmering moments: The creative intersection of place, time, and body* invite art educators to bring their students and creative attunement outside. She illustrates how global mark making of nature offers the opportunity to embrace diversity as our bodies become, as she says, "tools absorbing the data of the world."

Non-verbal communication and diversity of narrative is key to Marija Griniuk's *Performative actions in the classroom - towards diverse and multicultural discourse*. Using performance, exhibitions, AI, and creative workshops the author demonstrates how the multidimensionality of art

empower a Sami population on their cultural identity and engage an international group of students to as the author notes, "bring together diverse voices and perspectives." In both groups Griniuk helps these students become active participants in their creating and reflecting.

The inquiry of "how can we include more community members" generates inclusive arts education programming at a local Vermont, USA craft school. Heather Moore in *Love through art: Finding community with care* illuminates the importance of creating opportunities in craft arts for those such as veterans and homeless who might otherwise not have such chances. Moore showcases how a craft school develops resourceful partnerships, builds on the voices of resident artisans, and offers scholarships to create a strong sense of belonging to community.

In *The art education Collab: A creative community of practice for beginning visual art teachers* Kristin Vanderlip Taylor reminds us of the importance of creating caring and inclusive learning environments to help reduce anxiety and develop a positive sense of identity. By being paired with veteran teachers, reflecting on experience through visual journals, and using photovoice to capture lived experiences Vanderlip Taylor offers practical and artistic ways to gain confidence in bringing inclusiveness to the arts classroom.



Image by Gabriella Pataky
Szentendre, Hungary, February 2024.

Engaging in service learning and reflecting through multi-textual journals strengthen two pre-service teachers' abilities to create collaborative inclusive environments as described in Karen McGarry's visual essay *Place as Identity/ Identity in Place*. Examining the relationship of place and identity helped these pre-service teachers and their students develop a mindful and trusting approach to self-understanding.

Jifina Filipi in *Creative journal as a way to myself and others* illustrates how she adapted her personal experience creating visual diaries to her work with children ages 6-12. After students created their own diaries Filipi used prompts to help them visually reflect on concerns, identity, and dreams. Through the process of introspection and sharing by choice students became self-aware, developed empathic skills recognizing the diversity in others, and witnessed their own empowered voice.

IMAG co-editors hope these visual essays spark ideas and contribute to the conversation on how art educators build sustainable inclusive learning environments. There is much strife in the world based on "differences." The more we find ways to work through unyielding silos, create spaces of belonging for all abilities and cultural backgrounds, and engage the arts to give voice to all human stories the more we might collectively cultivate the best in humanity.

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our authors, reviewers, and readers,
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Principal Editors ::
 Gabriella PATAKY
 Maho SATO
 Jonathan SILVERMAN
Graphic Designer
 Viola REKVÉNYI

INDEX

2

:: Editorial - *Connecting Stories of Belonging*
Jonathan Silverman

5

Shimmering moments: The creative intersection of place, time, and body
Lucy Bartholome

12

Performative actions in the classroom - towards diverse and multicultural discourse
Marija Griniuk

16

Love through art: Finding community with care
Heather Moore

21

The art education Collab: A creative community of practice for beginning visual art teachers
Kristin Vanderlip Taylor

27

Place as Identity/Identity in Place
Karen McGarry

34

Creative journal as a way to myself and others
Jifina Filipi

Shimmering Moments: The creative intersection of place, time, and body

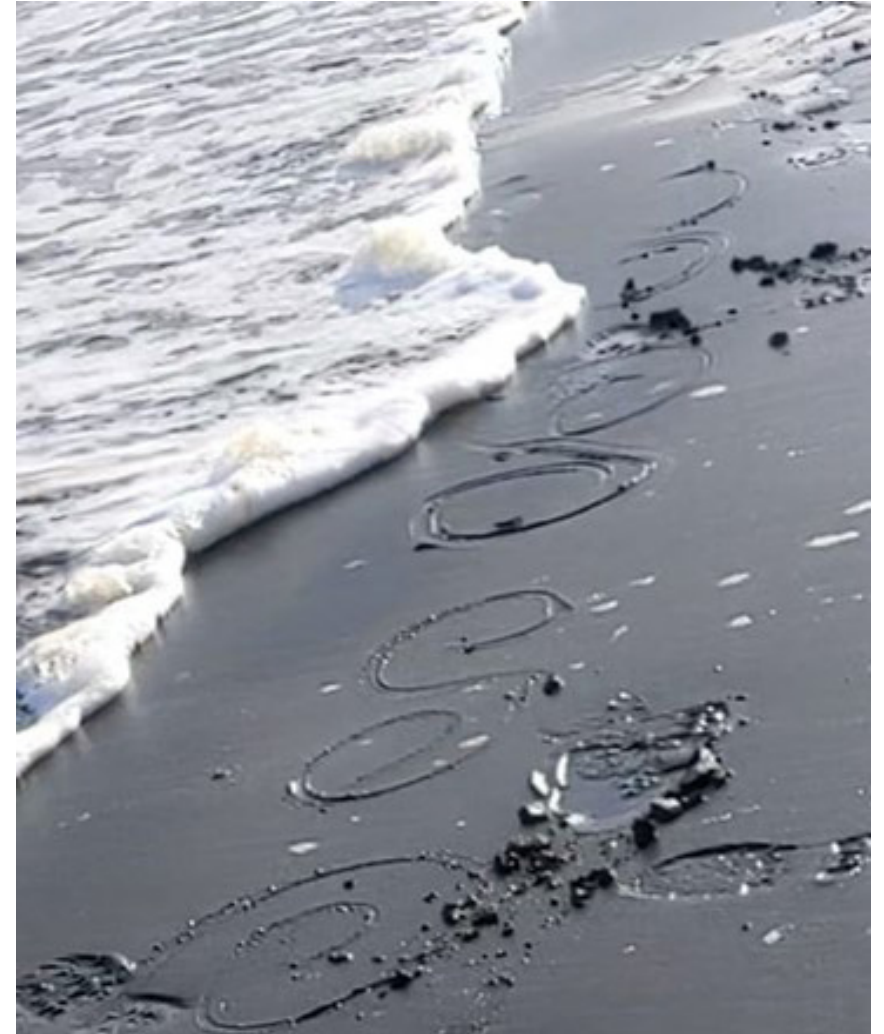
Keywords and phrases: creativity, nature, ar/t/ography



Lucy BARTHOLOMEE, Ph.D. is an Artist, Writer, Teacher, & Traveler. With over twenty-five years teaching experience, she is an advocate for experiential learning and supporting diverse learners in a creative environment as Assistant Professor and Art Education Area Coordinator at the University of Texas in Arlington. lucy.bartholomee@uta.edu

Creative inspiration thrives at the intersection of our bodies and the world, while time shimmers its ephemeral presence. This visual essay explores the experience of mark making at the convergence of place, time, and body moving into and through places with an open attunement to creativity. Historian Rebecca Solnit observes, "Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engaging the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world" (Solnit, 2001, p. 29).

In these images, this intersection is demonstrated through global mark making in sustainable collaboration with nature. Many images represent *The Movimento Project*: a personal creation of intimate earthworks utilizing assemblage or drawing to momentarily express visual movement through a practice known as Walking Ar/t/ography. The *Movimento Project* has developed gradually and thoughtfully over the last five years. As I walk, I invite the elements unique to each location to awaken possibilities for the temporal aesthetic potential.



Movimento Project: Arctic Circle, Black Sand
Iceland, 2022

The intersection of student bodies with materials, the place of the art room, and the time dedicated to the class, yields dynamic creative experiences: joy, frustration, surprise, disappointment, and pride. It is my hope that this visual essay will inspire art educators to also envision the outdoors as rich with creative potential. Connecting students with the co-creator of the natural world builds a sense of community and belonging that is open to all.

BODY

I nervously gathered tiny damp petals to arrange on slate tiles under a crepe myrtle tree. My first attempt to co-create with place and time was terrifying. I felt intensely self-conscious, but inspiration drove me forward. Determination busied my hands despite the awkward nervousness of doing something creative in this way, afraid of appearing weird. The skin prickled on my neck as I felt the eyes of passersby, a surge of nervous energy, a bit of adrenaline. I photographed the design but was unsure of the lighting and started all over.

The outcome was lovely and intimate, and had the temporal qualities I was hoping to experience. The gesture of photographing co-created the image, fleeting as the rain and wind returned. As Barthes asserts in *Camera Lucida*: "What the photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once; the photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially" (2010, p. 4).

::



Movimento Project: Waiting to Melt, Seaside
Síldarminjasafnið Siglufirði, Iceland, 2022



Movimento Project: After the Rain
New Orleans, 2019



PLACE

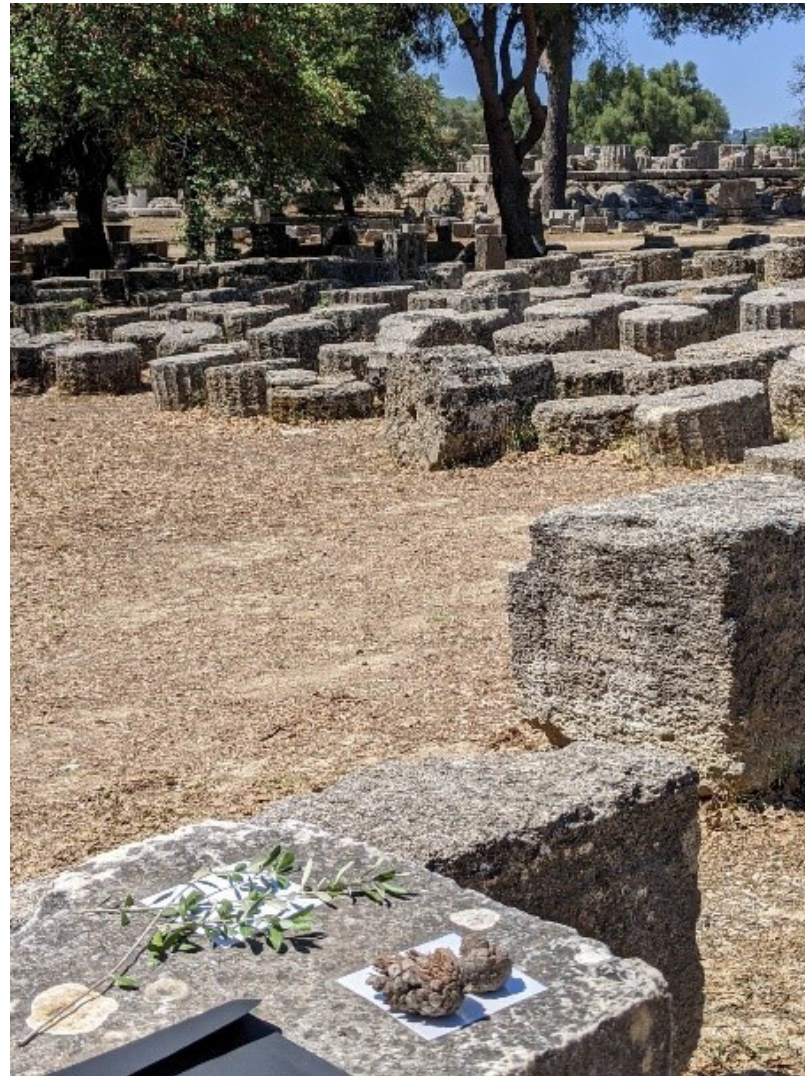
We conduct daily life in places that are simultaneously ordinary and deeply meaningful, for they hold the value of dwelling and home. Geographic philosopher Relph observes that places are not limited to mapped designations, but are “sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home” (2016, p. 29).

For all of us, past creative experiences stage an opening for each new inspiration. The art room, like an artist’s studio, “is a creative place because I created things there. My whole body came to know, kinesthetically and primordially, that creativity happens [here]” (Bartholomee, 2018, p. 212). We discover how to make something from nothing and anticipate the rush of joy when ideas we dream up are brought into existence.

Yet the potential for surprise and revelation lures me to explore places new-to-me: rustic coastlines, ancient sites, nearby forests. Creative engagement with a place invites a flow between ourselves and whatever is near to hand, allowing ideas to wander in.



Movinemto Project: Sea-Smooth Marble
Lindos, Rhodes. 2022.



TIME

Sunlight is temporal, yet material. Light waves illuminate the visual world around us, give life, and warm our skin. Our moods are impacted by the nature of the sun's light, shifting as the hours slide by.

Yet light has particles and behaves like matter in a way that sound waves do not. Among the ancient columns in Olympia I gathered with other art educators. We collected leaves, stones, and debris to construct designs on photosensitive paper. The waves of sunlight bounced off the page to co-create a composition. The brightness of the rays, the angle of impact, and the passage of time were transformed into elements of art.



Sun prints in Ancient Olympia, Greece. 2022
Shared creative experience with other art educators.

ATTUNEMENT

What do you see and hear?
 What do you smell and taste?
 What are you discovering?
 Are feelings stirred within you by the place around you?
 Is there a sense of the spiritual, a connection to nature?
 What could you create here?

Creative attunement is risky, for the outside world is unpredictable. Yet the body is always aware of its place, aware of numerous attributes of that place, even if the mind is not. "The everyday awareness that each one of us is always situated somewhere, and always participating in the shared existence of humanity and of the earth, is necessarily grounded in places" (Relph, 2016, vii).

Our bodies are complex tools absorbing the data of the world. Seeking an aesthetic moment, invite the data of your place and time to speak to you, your students, to your aesthetic and creative core.

RESPONSE

I show up in a place with all my humanity: my creative potential, my memories, joy and pain, my hopes and ideas. I hear the waves, taste salt in the air, hear seagulls, feel the steady breeze on my skin.

Movimento Project: Ice Marks
 Skútustaðir Mývatn, Iceland, 2022



Movimento Project: Waves and Washes
 Manly Beach, Australia, 2020





Movimento Project: Watermarks
Outside the InSEA World Congress, Çanakkale, Turkey, 2023



Movimento Project: Luminous Endurance
A Forest in Denton, Texas, 2021

Time slips by. I open myself to inspiration. What is *here*, in this moment? Can I draw with something? Gather something to arrange? Observe something in a new way?

Knowing that after the creative moment I will let the waves wash it away. The wind will carry away the sand and water droplets. Each gesture is in harmony with the environment, neither taking away indigenous materials nor leaving behind external debris. My photographs capture only the initial spark, the ephemeral creative event with joy and wonder.

Allow yourself to be attuned, and to respond through your own creativity: writing, drawing, singing, cooking, solving, healing, making. Dwelling with creativity invites this attunement to be a daily practice where inspiration and action flow together, evolving into a sustained harmonious practice.

Creativity is a way of being in the world.

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Performative actions in the classroom - towards diverse and multicultural discourse

Keywords: performance, diversity, multiculturalism, art, creativity

INTRODUCTION

This essay explores performance and teaching's synergy, while enhancing learning in diverse groups. It suggests performance as a pedagogical tool in classrooms and workshops. It compares two cases to extract common strategies.

PROCESS

In 2022, the impact of war, climate crisis, and other factors on Europe's increasing multiculturalism and multinationalism was evident. As facilitators and teachers, it is important to be prepared to reach out to our students using innovative, non-language, or text-based tools. While teachers or lecturers are associated with titles in institutions such as schools or universities, facilitating and creating a meeting place between participants is a core in art institutions. The author assumed both roles, as a teacher or lecturer in one case, and as a facilitator in another. In the role of university lecturer, the author, who is a performance artist, collaborated with two artists: Marta Žuravskaja and Rūta Matulevičiūtė.

Action research

Two action research projects were conducted to explore the use of performance-based tools in working with multicultural and multilingual groups of learners. Husted & Tofteng (2012) and Ulriksen (2014) inform the theoretical framework of the essay's action research projects, which were co-shaped in the process by participants and lecturer or facilitator.

"E's" performance, collective creation

It is particularly important to utilize "E's" - empowerment, enthusiasm, expertise, and excellence (Kember & McNaught 1988; Kember & McKay, 1996) - when working with diverse groups. The "E's" can be achieved through the involvement of performance artists and performative tools, such as liveness (Auslander, 2022). Educational process can be seen as a performance (Pineau 1994, p. 4). Performance here suggests a broad spectrum of activities involving the body, time, and space (Goffman, 1990). The collaborative approach to the performative creative process involves collective creation, as a collaborative and social phenomenon, incorporating not only humans but also non-humans, such as technology (Barrett, Creech, & Zhukov, 2021).

Cases

This study compares the two cases. The first study was a performance workshop for a multicultural group of children from the Troms and Finnmark areas in Norway, designed to help them understand and interpret the "Treasure Chest" exhibition of Sámi art at the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok (See Image 1). The relevance of the exhibition was due to the fact that a large part of the group were Sámi. The group ages ranged from 7 to 16 years old. The group was signed up for the course by their teacher to work with a theater and performance summer camp in Karasjok.



Dr. Marija GRINIUK (curator-artist-researcher) is an artist working with performance, installation, painting and printmaking. She holds a Doctor of Arts from the University of Lapland, Finland and is the director of the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok, Norway. Currently she is a Postdoctoral researcher at Vilnius Academy of Arts, Lithuania. marija@samidaiddaguovddas.no



Image 1.
Performance workshop in Karasjok.
Photo by Marija Griniuk.

The second case was a course on Creativity that the author taught at Vilniaus Kolegija/University of Applied Sciences (VIKO) to an international group of students countries that included India, Georgia, Germany, Ukraine, and Poland. In this case, diversity was understood in terms of multinational representation. Course contained teaching online, engaging live performers, artists, AI, and live closing sessions at VIKO at a local art gallery (see Image 2 and 3). Interaction with AI served as stimuli for enhancing collective creativity.



Image 2.
Performance by Marija Griniuk, Kaspar Aus and Liliya Gotautaitė-Smalinskė.
Photo by Algirdas Liutkus



Image 3.
Discussing experience from the perspective of the audience.
Photo by Algirdas Liutkus

The two cases used performance to explain diverse art and scientific concepts. Creativity varied: exploratory in one, merging practice and theory in the other.

In the first case, children at the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in small groups selected their favorite artwork and collaborated to create a performance. Each child contributed actively, interpreting art through movement (See Image 4). In Image 4 the sculpture is by the Sámi artist Ingunn Utsi, and the new performance story was based on each participant's suggestion regarding what the sculpture represents. Pedagogical change in students leaned towards openness, recognizing that artwork serves as stimuli for their numerous creative outcomes.

In the second case study, performance was used as a tool with BA students to bring together diverse voices and perspectives. Multilayered narratives in the outcomes were achieved by assuring that each narrative was equally valid and a safe and welcoming space was created.



Image 4.
Performance workshop at "Treasure Chest". Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok.
Photo by Marija Griniuk.

REFLECTION

Cultivating inclusive environment through art

Visual and aesthetic tools were utilized as the theme and content for meetings with learners. Children explored and interpreted exhibitions through movement, and engaged in art through the creation, observation, and discussion. Communication through art transcended language barriers; non-verbal artistic tools enabled greater participation from each individual, regardless of any language barriers present. "E's" are applied by merging the role of performance artist, lecturer and facilitator.

Strategies to generate a feeling of belonging

The first strategy was the involvement of a professional performance artist, who provided empowerment, enthusiasm, expertise, and excellence and was perceived as an international representative for both groups of learners. The second strategy used performance to highlight concrete concepts of creativity theory or artworks within the exhibition. Art as a communication tool created a sense of belonging and helped explain complex ideas through collaborative efforts. The position of the participants shifted from the position of participant-performer, to the position of participant-viewer. Participants had varying levels of experience. They shared and applied their experiences as active participants in the learning environment. The diversity of perspectives was focused on a single outcome - performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Love through Art: Finding Community with Care

Keywords and phrases: inclusive communities,
art and love, craft school



Heather MOORE, EdD is the Executive Director of Shelburne Craft School. She spends her time building new community partnerships and creating pottery, stained glass as well as dabbling in all of school's studios. At home she enjoys her sweet family and nurturing large vegetable, perennial and rose gardens.
director@shelburnecraftschool.org

Creating while surrounded by love represents the highest vibration of being. An inclusive community begins with individuals feeling accepted and seen. From sticky August mornings to deep purple winter evenings the Shelburne Craft School (SCS) in Vermont, USA strive to bring joy and a strong sense of belonging to everyone who is a part of our community. Our sustainability relies on individuals who take courses in clay, woodworking, weaving, stained glass, oil painting, drawing, metal working as well as courses specifically for children afterschool and in the summers. We serve 2000 students a year in our six studios.

In the past year as the school's director, I have worked with partners to expand our offerings to provide artistic experiences to individuals who may not otherwise have access or feel connected to others. The following projects we created reflect how we accomplish our goal of creating inclusive learning: Weaving Your Story for individuals over 60, woodworking programming for a veteran support group, an art space in a local shelter, an accessible raised bed garden, as well as doubling our scholarships for those who struggle to pay for courses. Each program has fostered a variety of new relationships growing our community in both size and perspective. In some cases, we responded to what we discovered to be physical and/or psychological barriers.



Image 1
Weaving Your Story participant, Betsy Franzoni creates a weaving of her life

Weaving Your Story is a free program for older adults in which they weave their life stories through fibers and artifacts of personal importance (for instance buttons from their mother's collection or a pin from college graduation). In the creation of these tapestries, stories of grief, triumph, loss, and wonder are shared, laughter turns to tears and back again. In these sessions, individuals create and share, bond as a group, and heal together.

SCS partners with a local veteran center for woodworking courses. During these sessions, veterans create projects in our cherry perfumed woodshop. At first these sessions filled slowly; now all classes have a waitlist. In each case of increasing the reach of our organization, we started small, demonstrated our ability to provide excellent instruction, and grew from positive experience.

When we began our partnership with a local institution providing housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, we quickly recognized the need to travel to their location. This partnership began with art projects. On the first visit we offered scholarships to any child who might want to take a course at our school. We then expanded that to adults. For the next few visits we offered free courses and again, found no interest. What would it take for a student from a family experiencing homelessness to make it to our campus? They would need to take a bus and then walk and then walk and take a bus back. A single parent would need to chaperone their child, take the bus with the child, wait for the program to complete, and bus back. Upon exploration, it was simply not accessible for families experiencing homelessness to get themselves, and their child to and from these lessons. Finding this barrier, we created a permanent space at the temporary shelter. This space is nearly complete and will stay stocked with a variety of art materials.



Image 2
The Art Space at Harbor Place with dynamic rainbow mural

In our relaunch of a community-driven creative carpentry program, we built a large, accessible raised bed garden in a local park. Whenever we take on new projects we ask how we can include the most individuals. Occasionally the answer is as simple as raised beds that are tall, enabling people with mobility or physical challenges to participate.



Image 3

Our new accessible raised beds full of vegetables and flowers from last June

In each of these vignettes we asked ourselves, how can we include more community members? How do we meet individuals where they are? We have done this by supporting folks through grief, altering physical space for access and safety, and encouraging positive and reassuring support through each person's creative process.

In all of these instances, we sought to create space in a manner that our partners deemed best—we relied on the wisdom of the groups with whom we were working. Once we expanded our programming to a wider variety of people and groups within our community we invited more partners, collaborating to meet the needs of the organizations involved.



Image 4

We have witnessed how an arts community thrives when members learn from others. Some of our extended programs happen organically. A group of potters who have worked together for years created dozens of bowls that will be sold to raise funds for our local food bank (for those in our community who need financial assistance). Ten potters took a 2-week trip to Japan to deepen their understanding of

Japanese ceramics, culture, and aesthetics (IMAGE 4: Pottery from our summer art show). A trip to Southern Spain for paleolithic cave art viewing is also planned for 2025.

These ideas were born in the light-soaked pottery studio, each potter throwing, discussing, and dreaming. When a community is safe and full of love, the opportunities and possibilities will flourish. We continue to reflect on what an inclusive community means for a craft school. We seek to be a prism, radiating color and beauty into our wider community. When artisans feel included, safe, and seen they seek ways to include others.



Image 5
We pour beauty into all the details—
our hollyhocks are evidence

PARTNERSHIPS

Veteran's Group
Ryan Cocina, instructor
South Burlington Veteran's Center
Landvest Grant

Accessible Raised Bed Garden
Manny Hutter, instructor
Town of Shelburne Vermont
Building Arts Grant

Art Space in Harbor Place
Champlain Housing Trust
Heart Show
Hoehl Foundation Grant

Outward Thinking Potters
Jonathan Silverman, Leader of Japan Trip
Barbara Murphy, Pottery Studio Manager,
coordinator of Food Shelf pottery donation

The Art Education Collab: A Creative Community of Practice for Beginning Visual Art Teachers

Keywords and phrases: community of practice,
beginning art teachers, mentoring



Kristin Vanderlip TAYLOR, Ed.D. is an Associate Professor of Art Education at California State University, Northridge and is National Board certified in Early/Middle Childhood Art. She is professionally passionate about collaboration in art and research, and her visual artmaking includes a combination of photography, embroidery, and mixed media. kristin.taylor@csun.edu

With a call for teacher education programs to incorporate more culturally responsive and sustainable pedagogical practices to prepare teachers for serving diverse populations (Carter-Andrews, 2021; Hammond, 2015), many newly certificated art teachers strive to cultivate inclusive learning environments for all students. But as newcomers to the profession, how do they themselves experience compassionate and creative communities that nurture their sense of belonging? When faced with struggles many teachers experience, including challenges with student behavior or lack of respect for teachers (National Education Association, January 31, 2022), increased working hours (Gicheva, 2022), and higher levels of stress (Steiner & Woo, 2021), what supports are available to those newest in this field, particularly those who foster their creativity and reflective practice with others who understand just what they are going through?

The Art Education Collab, a mentoring Community of Practice (CoP) for beginning visual art teachers from two California universities in their first- and second-years teaching art, strives to provide this kind of creative community as a way to reduce teacher attrition and increase support for those embarking on their careers during these challenging times in education. Teachers in the Art Ed Collab are paired with veteran art teacher mentors and text or email each other biweekly or monthly to answer questions, address current instructional or school issues or concerns, and provide support as needed. To meet the diverse needs of our newly credentialed teachers and create an inclusive environment, we ask mentor applicants to share their own experiences and resources for supporting BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and/or beginning art teachers with disabilities. Collectively, we meet monthly online throughout the academic year with guest speakers and art museum educators who share strategies and resources based on various needs reported by participants in a beginning of the year survey.

To nurture their creativity in this community, beginning art teachers are invited to respond throughout the year to a series of ten prompts (or create their own) in a visual journal using any methods or materials they like to work with. Visual journaling encourages reflexive practice, making meaning through a combination of visuals and text (Gatlin, 2012). Participants have shared a variety of reflective images, including: their classroom spaces (see Figure 1), ways they de-stress from work (see Figure 2), a visualization of something they were struggling with (see Figure 3), a teacher who has been influential in their career choice (see Figure 4), and success in the classroom (see Figure 5)."

De-stressing From Work

Continuing my own artistic practice has been imperative in maintaining my excitement for teaching. Prior to being hired as a ceramics and fine art teacher, I had not had the opportunity to explore the medium of ceramics in-depth. Time spent in preparation for demonstrations allowed me to interact with the material and analyze potential challenges students may have when approaching parts of a project. In addition, my love for the medium grew I found manipulating the clay to be very therapeutic. My unfinished demo pieces became my own artwork, increasing my confidence as a teacher and an artist.

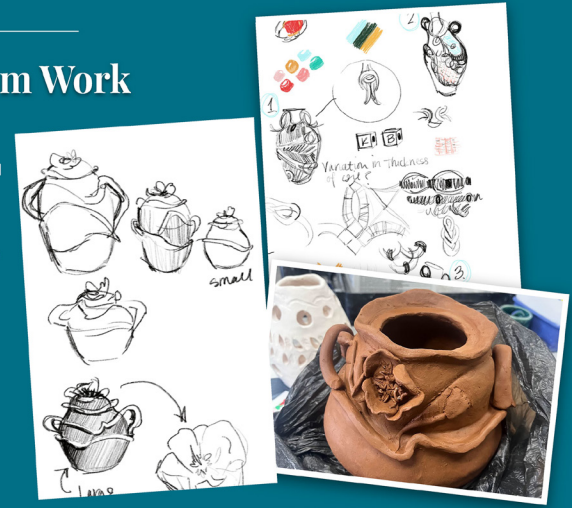


Figure 2.
De-stressing from
Work, visual journal
prompt response, 2022.
Courtesy of K.B.

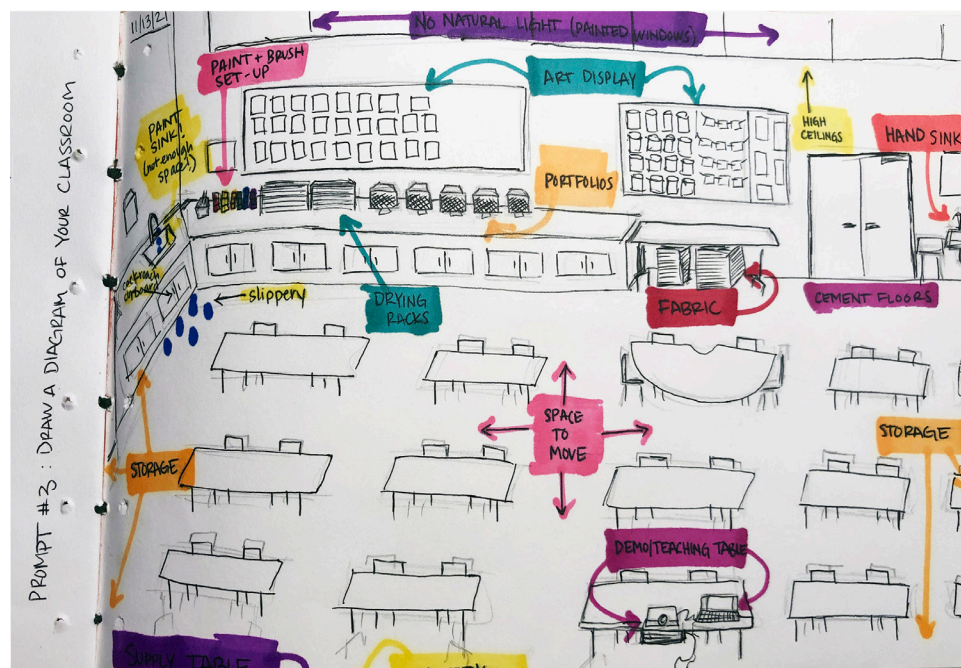


Figure 1.
Draw a Diagram of Your
Classroom,
visual journal prompt
response, 2022.
Courtesy of A.K.

2

Draw an object using pencil/pen/pastel/other materials that can serve as representative of a struggle you are dealing with lately. Use text to tell us what that object represents.

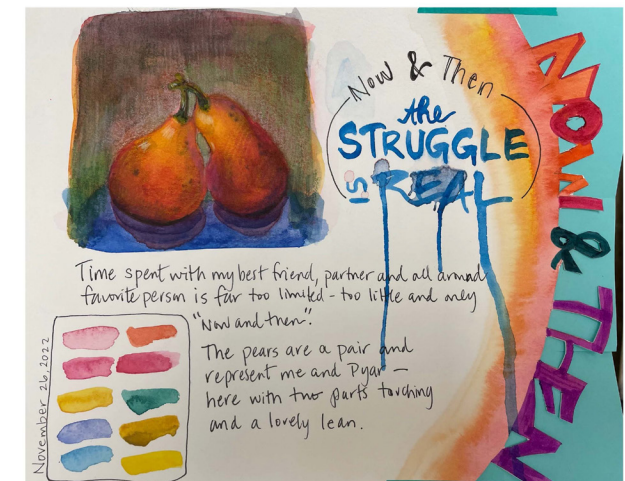


Figure 3.
Something you are
Struggling With,
visual journal prompt
response, 2022.
Courtesy of C.W.A.

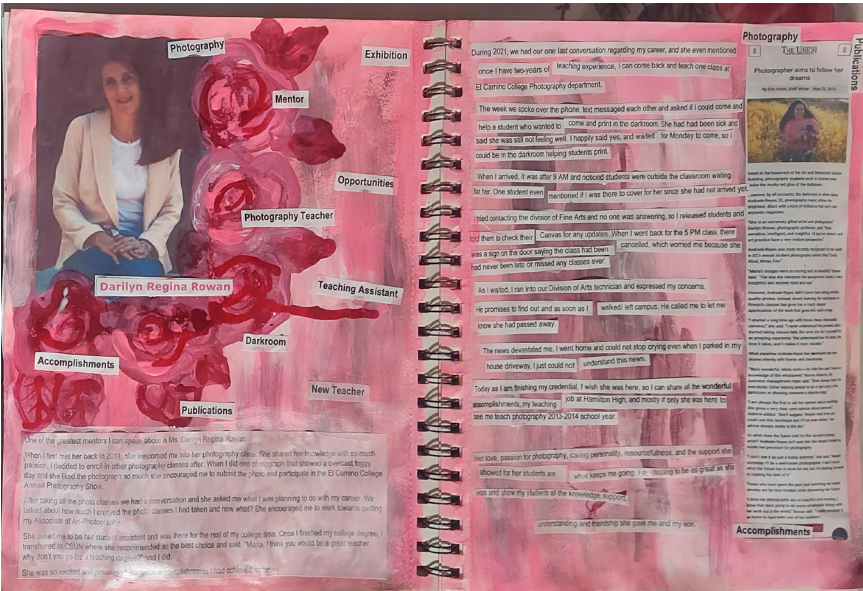


Figure 4.
An Influential Teacher,
visual journal prompt
response, 2023.
Courtesy of Mhar.

Our beginning art teachers also participate in a Photovoice project at the conclusion of the year in which they take a photograph and write a short narrative about it (see Figures 6, 7, and 8). Photovoice was selected for its foundations in Paolo Freire’s Critical Pedagogy and Feminist Theory (Wang & Burris, 1997) as a way to empower participants to share their lived experiences as first or second year beginning art teachers. The images and accompanying text submitted by participants have proven to be incredibly moving and powerful in their candor, bringing some of us to tears during the final group meetings in which they were shared.

Figure 5.
A Success in the
Classroom, visual journal
prompt response, 2022.
Courtesy of J.Z.



Figure 6.
Photovoice response,
2022. Courtesy of J.R.



It was overwhelming being a first year art teacher. Aside from looking like a teenager myself and not knowing if I would be taken seriously by 170 high school students, I was worried. I was worried about figuring out what material to present, how to present it, and if anyone would even be listening. Although I had a great group of teachers at my school to assist me, this was the extra cushion I needed to feel supported.

My picture represents the multiple doorways that could be opened due to the amount of freedom that I had to teach in the classroom. Nobody was checking up on me to make sure I was teaching certain concepts or telling me what to do; it was as if the classes were blank canvases and it was my duty to fill the canvases to the best of my ability. I know there are areas on those canvases that I could have smoothed out or planned a better composition, but sometimes you have to just go with the flow and find out where it takes you. That is how I ended up here in the first place... isn't it? Anyways, this program helped me fill in areas of those blank canvases. It contributed to my brainstorming and even though I was the one who had to execute the final outcome, it wasn't something I had to do completely alone. Thank you for helping me.

Figure 7.
Photovoice response,
2023. Courtesy of Mhar.



When I first found out I was hired to teach art I was excited. I was also nervous because even though I have done art, teaching it felt scary. What was scarier was waiting to meet my students and checking CTC website daily hoping for my intern credential to be cleared.

As I waited patiently, I was invited to participate in this community of practice and honestly, it has been the BEST EXPERIENCE. Because of this group I felt ready when I finally was cleared and ready to be in the classroom. I learned different strategies, ways to engage students, discussion questions, and ways to assess students learning which made me feel strong and prepared for what would come.

Meeting my students for the first time was great. I had great days and not so great days but what made it easier was having the support of my mentors, monthly meetings, a space to connect, share and support each other.

Closing the door behind to a wonderful year of great experiences that helped me grow as a teacher and an art educator because of the community that support me throughout this school year.

Figure 8.
Photovoice response,
2022. Courtesy of J.Z.



She was afraid to go down the stairs. Her tia held her hand as they descended. There was no turning back. Her tia reassured her one step at a time. She was focused, she felt safe, she was secure. Her confidence grew with every step. They reached the bottom of the stairs, so her tia let go. She was now roaming on her own, she no longer had a fear.

This photo represents my feelings at the beginning of the school year. At the beginning of this program I felt overwhelmed. I was excited and scared to be a teacher but terrified that I didn't know what I was doing. I was excited to know that I would be part of a community that I could turn to. The guest speakers were amazing. They brought so many new ideas. I particularly loved having that time to check in and share what was going on in the classroom.

We also piloted a weeklong summer institute in June 2023 (affectionately referred to by our CoP members as summer camp for art teachers) in which participants engaged in critical thinking about contemporary art, developed curriculum maps for the coming year, and participated in hands-on activities to further their own artmaking practice (see Figure 9 and 10) This time for collaboration and planning renewed participants' enthusiasm for teaching after a challenging year, evidenced by their requests to participate again the following summer and conversations with each other throughout our time together.

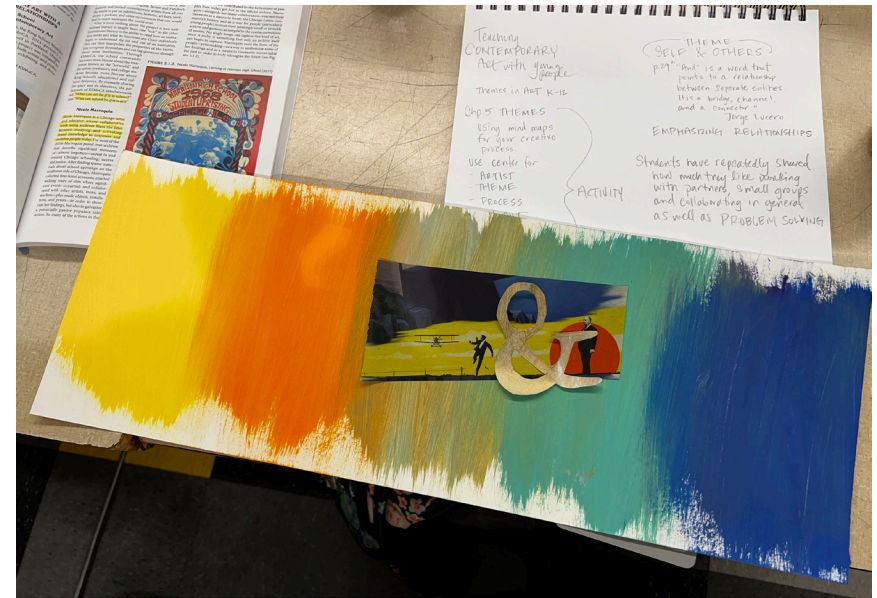
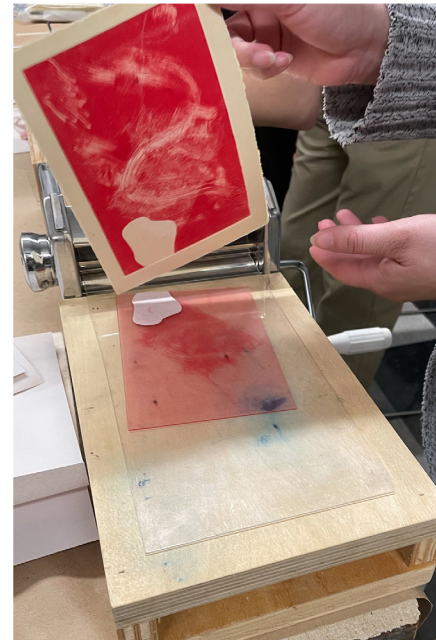
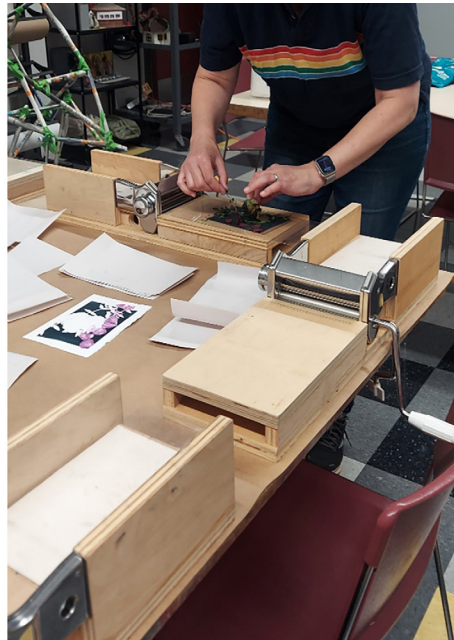


Figure 9.
Summer institute printmaking practice, 2023. Courtesy of Mhar and C.W.A.

Figure 10.
Summer institute curriculum planning, 2023. Courtesy of the author.



While the Art Ed ColLab isn't able to miraculously resolve all the issues participants face throughout the year, our time together in dialogue and artmaking provides opportunities to build community and make meaning together, nurturing creativity in ways that have helped beginning art teachers process things that are happening in their classrooms and in their own lives as new art teachers. As our two universities are part of a 23-campus system, our goal in the coming year is to expand to some of our sister campuses with strong Art Education programs to increase support for beginning visual art teachers throughout California. We also plan to invite our beginning art teachers to become mentors in the Art Ed ColLab after three years of teaching, creating a cyclical mentoring CoP that continues to build an inclusive, compassionate, and creative community where veteran and novice art teachers alike feel supported in sharing their challenges and successes and know they belong.

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Place as Identity/Identity in Place

Keywords and phrases: service-learning, inclusivity, social justice, place, collaboration



Karen MCGARRY, PhD, MFA, is an Assistant Professor at Oakland University, MI. Her roles include Art Education Teacher Education, teaching for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in Teacher Education, and teaching Art Foundations in OU's school of Art & Art History. She employs arts-based research practices as both a researcher and a visual artist. Current work centers on mentoring and preparing students to become arts professionals; this work strives for collaborative writing and publishing practices with preservice teachers. kmcgarry@oakland.edu

The greatest value of a picture is when it forces us to notice what we never expected to see.

—John Wilder Tukey, 1977

INTRODUCTION

A strong clinical field placement in teacher preparation should promote respect and belonging for all collaborating participants: university preservice teachers (PSTs), K12 students, school mentors, and the wider school community. This essay describes how a shift in teaching and learning in an art education methods course with a focus on service learning enhanced a sense of belonging and sense of inclusive practice. Purposeful service-learning placements with “place” as context helped PSTs recognize community in practice. As mentor of the program I record here two PST’s visual and oral data to illustrate the impact of identity on place and of place on identity as they prepared for and participated in service-learning encounters as a focused field placement.

As a service-learning cohort in a visual art education methods course, we sought to find inherent meaning in our work as practitioners (Tukey, 1977). Utilizing the concept of “place” offered our work a chance to engage in artful practice in places/spaces that were new to us and with participants who may have never noticed the value of visual imagery.

As part of the pre-placement process, PSTs created multitextual reflection journals to aid our critical discussions about place and identity for and with the participants in our field placement. Two PSTs in an art education methods course, fall 2023, are co-authors and agents along this journey: Kelly M. Gagliardo and Katelyn Wilks. To assist our learning process, Kelly and Katelyn generated new knowledge in their multitextual journals (McGarry, 2019a, 2019b). * They illustrate how we saw ourselves as active learners in process-learning and meaning-making.



Figure 1

McGarry, *These places thus far*, 2018, mixed media on canvas, 8 x 10 in.

Note. Figure 1 is a collage within a series of 10 canvases depicting place and identity dwelling within a place/space as a collection of conversational parts intoning the compositional space.

We began our semester by focusing on the creative process as a means of growing toward, not arriving at an end product or prescribed outcome. We embraced how learning and growth occur over time (Dewey, 1966).

GROUNDING

Before starting our on-site service-learning field placement, we investigated the meaning of service-learning, eco-pedagogy, sustainability in artful practices, and transformational change through creative activity and actions. We explained the difference between service-learning and volunteerism. PSTs earn course credit while service is carried out as “the service and the learning are intertwined” (Center for Engaged Learning, 2022, p. 1). Linking learning to service helped us view the high school site and its community as a potential source for knowledge (Hammond, 2021), and a way to connect student learning and cultural capital.

The term multitextual is used because all art education PSTs are encouraged to use any textual formats to create their reflective responses to course content as reflective actions or acts. Those reflective actions/acts then become artifacts for critical classroom dialogue, reflection, and discursive engagement. As we built a foundation of service-learning focusing on place, Kelly wrote, “Service learning is an opportunity to bring together the collective assets of a community. It balances the skills of educators, students, professionals, and community members in a way that can strengthen place” (K. Gagliardo, personal communication, November 10, 2023).

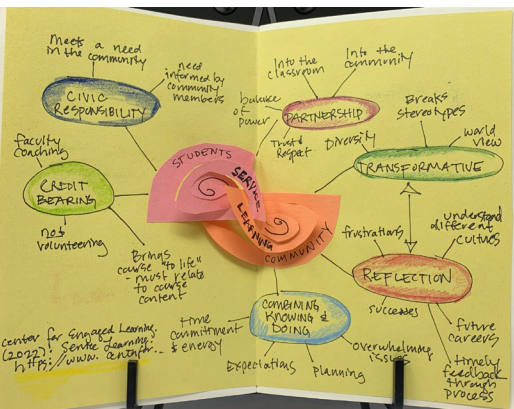


Figure 2
Gagliardo, *Journal Entry – Service-Learning*, mixed media, 14 x 5 in.

Kelly's image in Figure 2 illuminated how specific course readings became interpreted based on how she visualized the word-based reading content. She found components within a course reading to construct new knowledge for practical application in our field placement. The visualization of the textual content then shaped her peer-to-peer discursive interactions; she revealed her thinking about her thinking as a reflection action/act. Likewise, Katelyn (see Figure 3) made a connection to how the “we” in service-learning “is about forming partnerships to work together as a community to make positive change” (K. Wilks, personal communication, November 10, 2023). The “we” Katelyn refers to in Figure 3 signifies participants in a process of learning that starts by getting to know and trust one another prior to embarking in field service-learning (Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004).

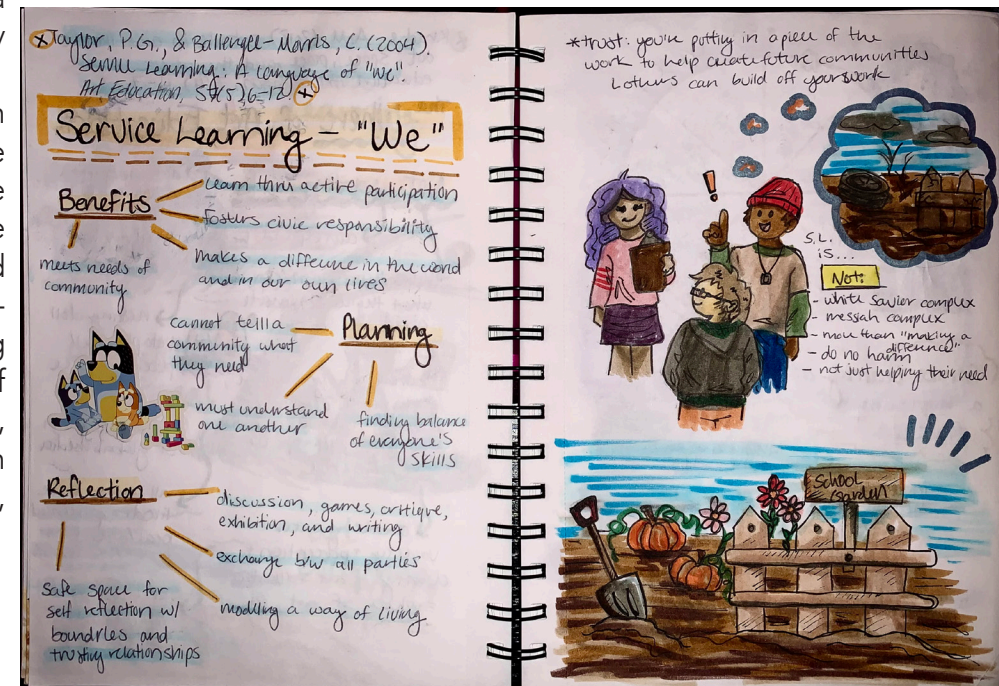


Figure 3
Wilks, *Service-Learning "We"*, mixed media, 10 x 7 in.

Katelyn found her own illustrative pathway, unique to her and distinct from Kelly, between course readings and discussion sessions to create a visual and verbal response about the potential positive impacts of service-learning, again, as a reflective action/act.

Course reflection journal entries were developed and determined by each PST; method and material selection were individually selected. PSTs were encouraged to consider sustainability in creating course artifacts: how we, as artists, might mindfully participate in material/media selection with the least harmful eco-impacts respectful of climate change.

For the fall 2023 semester methods course, we collectively chose place and identity for both sites of learning – our university site and our service-learning field placement. Because we wanted to look at place in a more site-specific manner, we considered the context of place impacting individual identity and also conceptualizing how our identities influence place as well as the people inhabiting places (Kraehe & Brown, 2011).

FIELD PRACTICE

Mindfulness toward working under a service-learning umbrella, meant we would take our foundational knowledge about process into our field placement. Our unit planning established the big idea focus (Place as Identity: Identity as Place) but not the outcome or product. To support a service-learning methodology, we worked with our field placement site – the high school students in specific building classrooms. Two high school mentor teachers hosted our service-learning process. Together, we worked with mentors and high school students to decide on how to create artful responses to the ideas of place and identity. Figure 4 shows a handout we used

at the start of our collaborative classroom time to gauge how the high school students thought about place and identity. We felt it was vital to establish prior knowledge with our on-site participants to better initiate artful learning in context and in conjunction with identity and place.

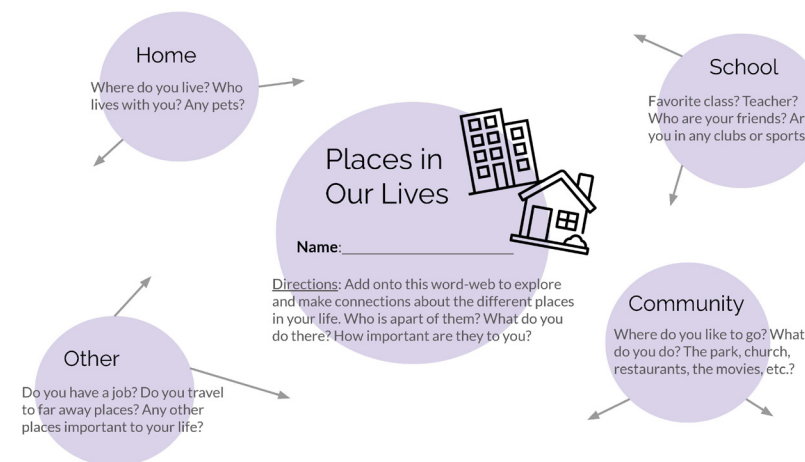


Figure 4A
Capturing Notions of Place and Identity in Service-Learning, handout for high school student responses

Once the service-learning student partners completed their handouts and began to think of place and identity construction, we shared a set of instructions and suggestions for an artful process making place/identity boxes. Figure 4.1 shows how we introduced an artmaking action using materials the high school students were familiar with and that were on-hand for classroom use. We helped the classroom students shape and articulate imagery, from the words they shared in their handouts into the forms they would use to complete their artifacts for the service-learning project. We focused on a mindful approach to how artful inquiry crosses thinking patterns between words, ideas, and images. We discovered the importance of guiding learning in a manner that invites individual student voices within an artful process of realizing, articulating, and evidencing place and identity in context.

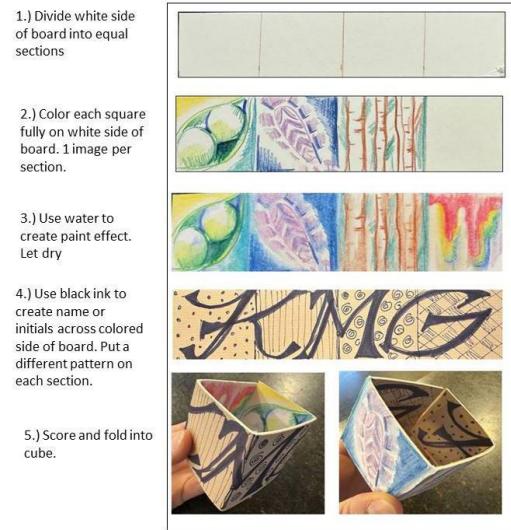


Figure 4B
Instructions for Building a
Place/Identity Box,
PPT presentation slide

Both Kelly and Katelyn reflected on mindfulness in unit planning actualized through the process of practice, instead of creating unit plans detailing every part of the learning process. Katelyn reflected on the importance of making place as identity formation respectful of the people in that place: "Based on my field placement experience, that means working with students as a preservice teacher to inspire the act of placemaking – or cultivating a public environment to benefit those who utilize it in their everyday lives" (K. Wilks, personal communication, November 10, 2023). The notion of place helped connect the individual and the communal as a newly considered site or place, enveloped with mindful empathy (Bertling, 2023).

Kelly reflected on place as "a reflection of each individual's unique identity as placemaking prioritizes the people. How we feel about a place can inform how we act, how we live, work, play and the responsibilities that we hold" (K. Gagliardo, personal communication, November 10, 2023). We emphasized placemaking to establish a site for our service-learning that might "capture the ongoing evolution of cultural and social identities of a specific location" (K. Gagliardo, personal communication, November 10, 2023), as a living, thriving community. The theoretical grounding that began our overall learning process blended theory into practice for PSTs. Building a knowledge base in theory helped PSTs appreciate the value of artful engagement in school field placement sites as places for transformational change through "a theoretical framework for advancing urban education that considers the city as an ideal site for learning about and with the arts" (Hutzel et al., 2012, p. 11).

Throughout our service-learning field placement, PSTs connected theory and practice with reflection and dialogue. We took our knowledge base of service-learning into the field and created multitextual reflection actions/acts to show thinking both in and on action. PSTs noted how the big ideas – place and identity – began a process of shared learning as a collaborative cohort before engaging with on-site learning as a field placement experience. Collaboration extended from jointly unpacking theoretical knowledge that then generated pathways for practical application.

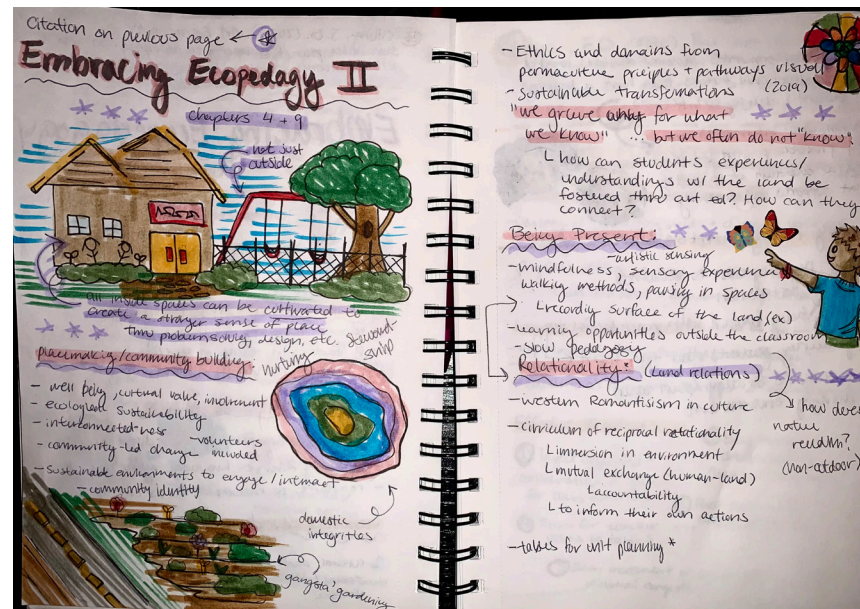
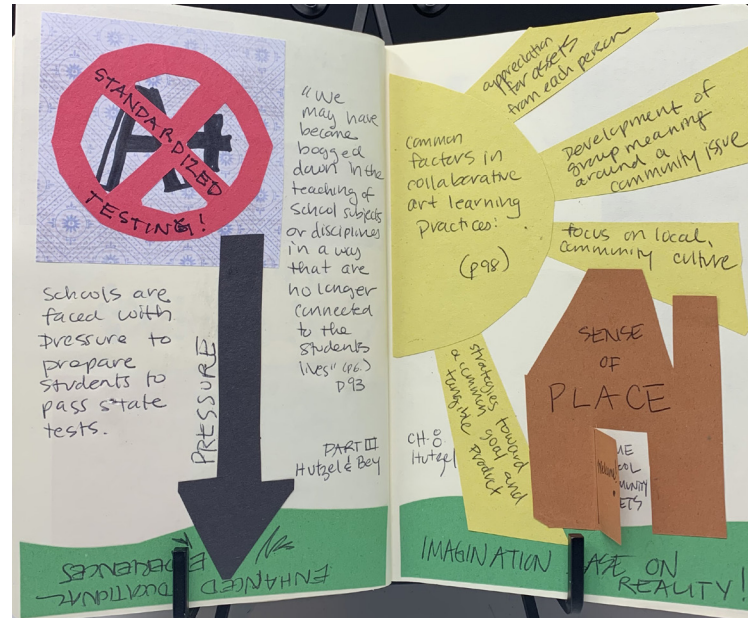


Figure 5
Wilks, *Embracing Ecopedagogy II*,
mixed media, 10 x 7 in.

Figure 6
Gagliardo, Sense of Place,
mixed media, 14 x 5 in.



At the close of our service-learning field placement, PSTs noted the continual flow of their reflective actions/acts through continued journaling. We recognized the need to ground our learning in theory and bring theory into practice. Critical discourse throughout field practice supported holistic learning centered on notions of place and identity. Additionally, we reflected on the impacts of service-learning with the high school students. These students were appreciative of the time spent in guiding them through actions connected to process-learning and meaning-making. The experience of using a writing handout and then developing images to visually express their written words was new to them; our process supported mindful learning, connecting the students in place with their individual identities to highlight and tell their stories.

As a writing and reflecting team, the two PSTs featured and myself as mentor, agreed to share our experiences of how we engaged as service-learners. We focused on embodying a collaborative learning disposition – learning supported

by cohort reflection and dialogue and by building group knowledge about process generated through informed practice. We analyzed by making reflective artifacts – artifacts that revealed a sense of place in identity creation for all participants.

Katelyn highlighted our collaborative learning by articulating place and identity in self-expression and voice recognition. The participants embodied place through personal stories, that in reflection may counter previous stereotypes.

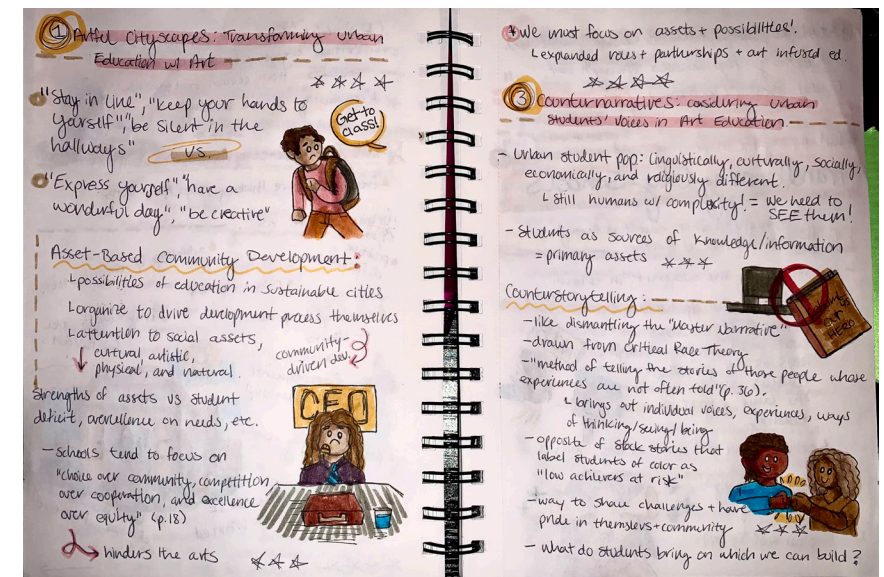


Figure 7
Wilks, Assets and Counternarratives,
mixed media, 10 x 7 in.

The multitextual reflective actions/acts as artifacts showcased an inclusivity of voices and experiences channeled from artful exploration, both for the PSTs and for the high school students. The reflective actions/acts were interpretive texts, helping each PST notice something new and cultivate a sense of wonder or surprise within the unexpected. Mindful noticing helps lead to inclusive practice, "by strengthening the connection between people and their environments" and by "focusing on shared value" for generative knowing (K. Gagliardo, personal communication, November 10, 2023).

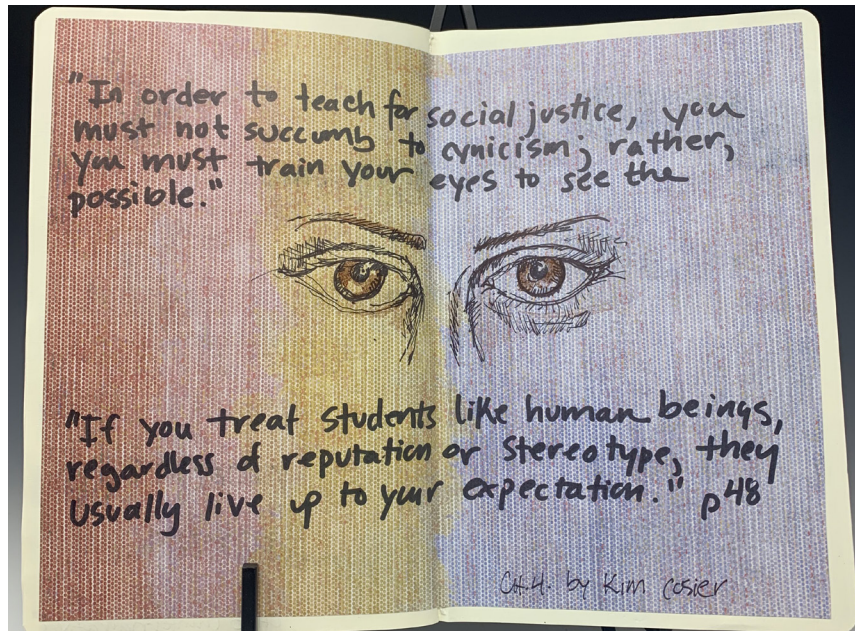


Figure 8
Gagliardo, *Training Our Eyes*,
mixed media, 14 x 5 in.

Overall, our experiences in prepping for – grounding – and carrying out service-learning in a methods course field placement proved transformative for the PST cohort. Katelyn wrote that she found this opportunity, to be "very meaningful because I get to work side-by-side with the young minds in my local community to not only give back to them and their school but also to improve myself as a future art educator

through an engaging and direct learning experience" (K. Wilks, personal communication, November 10, 2023).

PSTs learned to trust process and to see anew the knowledge and experiences embedded into becoming an art educator. Each PST came to embody a set of reflective actions/acts as an essential part of process, noticing, and learning that helped create an inclusive environment and for arts education.



Figure 9
McGarry, *Embodied Reflection*, 2020,
multitextual reflection journal page, 8 x 10 in.
Note. Figure 9 is a collage meant to show an embodied practice of reflection stemming from knowledge creation into mindful artful processes.

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*The words and images used in this essay are included with permission by Kelly M. Gagliardo (<https://kmgarteducator.weebly.com/>) and Katelyn Wilks (<https://kwilks4.wixsite.com/portfolio>). Karen McGarry, PhD, taught the service-learning methods course with these PSTs in Fall 2023 (kmcgarry@oakland.edu; <https://www.kmcgartyed.com/>; <https://www.karenmcgarry.com/>)

Creative journal as a way to myself and others

Keywords and phrases: creative journal, being together, sharing, self expression, communication



Jirina FLIPI

is a PhD candidate at University of Palacký, at Pedagogical faculty, Department of Art Education in Czech republic. In her PhD thesis she focuses on the support of social inclusion and appreciation of otherness in art lessons at primary schools. She used to work as an art educator and a teachers assistant. Currently she works in a project that connects artists and schools. jirina.filipi01@upol.cz

This visual essay describes the author's journey from her own experience of creating a visual diary to her pedagogical work with it in a pupil group. It presents the visual diary as a tool to express and share emotions, feelings and personal values. The diary is used here not only to record observations of the world around us but above all as a means of getting to know oneself and developing the capacity for self-reflection. It also serves to listen to others and their emotions and develop empathy through sharing their work and giving and expecting reflection. Diaries help create a safe class environment in which differences of any kind can be accepted and appreciated, if the basic rules of listening and expecting others thoughts and feelings are shared among pupils. In working with the creative diary, I have drawn on the creative journal method, which uses writing and drawing to practise language skills and achieve a better self-understanding. It consists of simple exercises that the child carries out in his/her diary or personal diary (Capacchione, 2015). I also worked with the methods and approaches of artefiletics which is based on creative expression and personal experiences. Methods of artefiletics aim to reflect, to find self-knowledge, to develop communicative and social skills (Slavík, Eliášová, & Slavíková, 2007).



Image 1 – Working on diploma thesis. (photography). Jiřina Filipi. (2021).

As part of my diploma thesis at University of Palacký, at Pedagogical faculty, Department of Art Education in Czech Republic, I decided to publish excerpts and drawings from my diary, in which I have been recording my life for several years. This event of "publishing the intimate" was truly a revelation for me. Describing my own experiences, sharing them with a wide audience, leaving my intimate experiences for anyone who wants them.

It was challenging to overcome obstacles such as shame in revealing intimate feelings, the need to accurately express my feelings, and to place trust in my thesis advisor. Making my feelings public was a great release, letting go of things that when expressed, immediately feel lighter.



Image 2 - Publishing my own diary in the university corridor.
(Photography). Jiřina Filipi. (2021).

I thought it would be interesting to offer my pupils a similar experience in art classes. Often, they may be weighed down by things that relate to their everyday experience, they may feel alone in their feelings, or on the contrary, they may be thinking about beautiful things that they long to communicate to the world.

I worked with children ages 6 to 12 in three groups, divided by age. At the beginning of the school year, we made our creative diary together, with the covers made of harder paper and the inside pages made of different weights and shades of paper. The whole sketchbook is sewn together in the middle with a simple stitch. This is a very simple way to make a sketchbook/visual diary so anyone can do it with more or less help. At the same time, making a diary can help to create the beginning of a bond between the owners and their journals.



Image 3 – Creative journals.
(Photography). Jiřina Filipi. (2021)

Throughout the school year, children created in their sketchbooks - a creative journal. They learned to use their sketchbooks as a tool to record everything that touches them. The exercises helped find themes that pupils can talk about, think about, and creatively represent. They helped them become more sensitive to themselves and their environment. I presented the exercises to the children as suggestions; I never put pressure on them. The creative diaries were their private friends to whom they confided what they want and need. After the actual creation in the journal, at the end of the lesson or exercise, there was always a moment of reflection where the students could share with others what they had created. The diary were used freely; the following lines show some of the activities we carried out with the pupils. We instructors have worked with the journal in our art classes not only as a tool but also as a theme. We talked about the authors who kept diaries, especially the Diary of Anne Frank, from which we drew inspiration for further exploration and creation.

One can start with a simple assignment -
Draw how you are feeling today.



Image 4 – How do you feel today?
(Photography of drawing). Jiřina Filipi. (2021).

This activity can be applied in different variations at the beginning of the lesson. The activity is used to become self-aware, to make oneself present and to express feelings visually. We tried other variations of this activity with suggestions such as

Who do I want to be?
What am I like?



Image 5 – Who do I want to be?
(Photography of drawing). Jiřina Filipi. (2021)

In these activities, students explored their qualities, skills, personal attitudes, and values that they value in themselves and others. These activities can be supplemented by inviting them to write a poem on the same theme, to accompany pictures with words. The poem is very free-form, it does not have to rhyme. The words can be used very freely to express what the pupils need. We also worked on drawing a self-portrait and adding a symbol to it. Students expressed who they are, and what they like or dislike. To create their symbol they used colours, signs or objects, geometric shapes, or anything that says something about their personality. We drew a self-portrait at the beginning and the end of the year; we then compared how we had changed. Next, we used the creative journal to explore our surroundings, getting to know them by touch and then frottage the surfaces we found.



Image 6 – Exploring our surroundings, finding our place. (Photography). Jiřina Filipi. (2021)

All the activities were aimed at helping students find their voice, listen to what they want to tell others about themselves, explore their surroundings and find their place in the world, and become more self-aware. Our hope was that they would find within themselves the capacity to appreciate the uniqueness of each being and to offer acceptance of it. Through creative journals, students experienced a sense of safety and release, developed spontaneity, gained integrity, learned to communicate ideas, and expand self-understanding, and self-confidence. Developing these skills and areas of life led to an understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the uniqueness and otherness of each of us.

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**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE,
INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS
THAT CULTIVATE THE
CREATIVE PROCESS**