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A Case Study in Developing Instruction that Enhances Student Creative Behavior

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A CASE STUDY IN DEVELOPING INSTRUCTION THAT ENHANCES STUDENT
CREATIVE BEHAVIOR

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate Program of the Department of Art and Design at the University at Kearney

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

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By

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Abstract

This case study examines the best practices in developing instruction to enhance student artists creativity. Using a transformative mixed methods approach, this study shows how teacher-directed lessons and choice-based art projects within a learner directed classroom using the practices with the philosophy of Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) can enhance student artist creativity. The goal of this case study is to reflect and evaluate the different strategies I have used over the last five years to develop an art curriculum that enhances student creativity. This case study will reflect the findings from my classroom over the last five years. I realize that these findings may not be true for all art educators but may offer insights into developing creativity in a TAB classroom.

Keywords: Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB), learner directed assessments, choice-based art projects, artistic behavior, creativity

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Creativity is a process formed from a group of characteristics and habits that bring forth a new idea into existence. Creative characteristics include the ability to envision, express, observe, research, play, and develop (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013). Creative characteristics include the ability to envision a new idea, express their envisioned work of art visually and orally, observe their envisioned work of art through inspiration from the world around them, research ideas that help create their envisioned piece of artwork, and develop without a preconceived plan by embracing failures in the process by creatively overcoming the problems to develop an aesthetic piece of artwork. All while developing their studio technique by learning how to use artists tools, materials, and conventions as well as their studio practice by learning how to care and organize their shared studio space, tools, and materials.

In my first year of teaching, I noticed that my students showed less creative behavior and creative confidence as they worked their way upward in their elementary classes. Upper elementary students' willingness to take creative intellectual risks was rare. These students' behavior showed a lack of confidence in creative behavior therefore the lack of creative confidence. "Having confidence in one's creative ability seems necessary for creative behavior" (Beghetto, Karwowski, & Reiter-palmon, 2021, p. 637). Creative behavior is linked with confidence. Creative confidence includes using different art materials, techniques, and artistic knowledge with opportunities to create something of your own (Beghetto, Karwowski, & Reiter-palmon, 2021). Therefore, creative behavior is one's ability to confidently make creative decisions in order to bring a new idea into existence.

As a reflective teacher I started to notice that my younger students would rush through their assigned projects so that they could go to my free draw station for students who finish their work early. It is important to ensure that students have something to do while others finish up in order to give them further opportunity to practice and deepen their creative making skills as well as prevent behavior issues from arising. Therefore, I had a very simple free draw station with coloring books, blank paper, pencils, erasers, crayons and markers. As I watched my students rush through their teacher directed artwork to free draw, I noticed their excitement heighten for a blank piece of paper and their choice between the very limited amount of media I had out for them. This was what made me rethink my teaching practice and observe as well as reflect upon the creativity of my youngest students in comparison to my eldest students in elementary art classes.

My observations on their creativity broke my artist soul. My Kindergarteners were able to fill a blank piece of paper with the most creative ideas, sometimes even multiple blank pieces of paper in just the last minutes of art, whereas only about half of my second graders could do this creative task of free drawing. As for my fourth-grade students, even a smaller proportion of the students were able to creatively fill out a piece of blank paper with their own creative ideas. As I moved upward in observing my students in my Kindergarten through twelfth grade school building I noticed a huge decline in creativity as students got older. “Today’s high school and university educators see far less divergent thinking and creative problem-solving than in the past” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2023, p. 1). Likewise, industry leaders cite concerns over the decline in creative thinkers who will keep our economy healthy and competitive (Bronson & Merryman, 2010).

For my small number of highly creative artists I noticed a lack of excitement in some of my projects that were taught using teacher-directed instruction. This led to a lack of student engagement in making art, a disconnect from the media and historical significance of the project, as well as behavioral issues. It was my observation that not all students were reaching their full creative and artistic potential in order for me to consider them successful due to teacher led instruction. However, I saw high rates of success in creative behaviors when students were given the opportunity to free draw or create artwork in a studio space when they finished their teacher directed project early and had left over class time.

I decided to test my theory that my students lacked creative behavior and confidence by giving my kindergarten students and my fifth-grade elementary students an entire class period to free draw. The only requirement was to fill the entire page, leaving no white space. Every kindergarten student was able to fill two or more sheets of paper with creative artwork without needing help in the creative process whereas my fifth-grade students were intimidated by the blank sheet of paper. The older students showed lack of creative confidence in coming up with their own creative ideas to fill the blank paper. They were asking questions and making statements as follows:

“I don’t know what to draw!”

“Do I really have to fill the entire (emphasis on entire) paper?!”

“Are you sure I can draw anything?”

“Everything I draw is bad.”

“I don’t know how to draw this and get a good grade?”

By the end of the 5th grade art class, 2 out of 16 students completed their drawing by filling the entire page creative new ideas without struggle, 5 out of 16 turned in a blank page without a single mark or eraser mark on the paper, and the remainder of the class were less than halfway through the drawing. As I walked around the room asking students questions and observing their creativity, or in this case lack of creative behavior. I realized this was very hard for them to do. At the end of the class, we discussed why they had such a hard time completing this task? Many students agreed that they were scared of failure, did not know what “I wanted them to draw in order to get an A”, or couldn’t come up with an idea. Some students even said that they “prefer that the teacher tells them what to draw step by step so that they do it right”. This was not due to their artistic ability but their creative confidence.

My observations of my students, in my first few years of teaching, showed that they lacked creativity. Therefore, I made it my priority to develop a curriculum that would enhance student creative behavior. I truly believe it takes an intelligent person to be creative, and creative people develop more intelligent ideas and inventions. With that being said I believe in the education of the whole child. I chose to teach children fine arts because I believe it is an integral part of their education and it develops stronger learners to be educated in areas besides the “core” classes. Not only do I focus on art history, techniques and aesthetics in my classroom, but also I encourage creativity and critical thinking skills as well as welcoming and encouraging reflection on a daily basis.

In order to encourage and teach students the skills to possess creative mindsets I decided to introduce the Teaching for Artistic Behavior or TAB approach into my classroom. The TAB pedagogy is “often referred to as choice-based art education, is a studio-based approach that recognizes students as artists” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012, p. 4). However, I did not want my

students' art education to suffer in the areas of art history, artistic techniques, and the exploration of art media, so I chose to implement a mixed methods approach into my art classroom. This allows room for both teacher-directed lessons to develop students' skills as well as learner-directed lessons for a well-rounded art education that emphasizes creativity that is built off of their prior knowledge from teacher-directed art lessons. This allows the students to develop their creativity by using inspiration from their prior knowledge of art history, artistic techniques and medium knowledge.

I believe that teachers should facilitate student learning, not dominate it. In the past, I have educated students in a way that has allowed little room for the reflection of their own creative ideas along with very specific guidelines in the corresponding rubric on how to successfully master the project with a shiny "A" grade. I chunked the information as we are taught in undergraduate education programs and had students follow my lead step by step in the creating process. However, the finished products all look identical and leave very little room for personal creativity. I have recently, in the last five years, implemented TAB days into my curriculum. On TAB days, I encourage students to pursue their passions in the art room and apply their interest to their projects. As a teacher, I always want to help my students discover more about the fine arts while also allowing them some freedom to discover and express themselves as an individual student artist.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this case study is to examine the best practices for developing instruction that enhances student artists creativity using a transformative mixed methods approach. I will explore how to enhance the creativity of my students by using a mixed methods approach, both learner choice-based art projects and teacher directed art projects. The learner directed classroom

focuses on the practices of the philosophy of teaching for artistic behavior whereas the teacher directed lessons will focus on developing students' studio techniques and practice to help enhance their creativity in their own project. This case study will reflect the findings from my classroom over the last five years. I realize that these findings may not be true for all art educators but may offer insights into reflecting on the creative characteristics of students in other art educational settings.

Research Question

What is the best practices for developing instruction that enhances student artists creativity?

There are a few subcategory questions that need to be investigated in order to enhance the creativity of student artists using a mixed methods approach of Teaching for Artistic Behavior and teacher-directed lessons such as:

1. How can I use both teacher and student directed lessons to enhance creativity to encourage students to use the stations correctly and develop inspiration for their own creations?
2. What does a successful mixed methods approach look like in regard to enhancing the creativity of student artists?
3. Will students become more engaged if they know that they will get a learner directed lesson after each teacher directed lesson?

Chapter 2

Methodology

Study Overview

Creswell (2007) writes that a case study is an investigation of cases conducted through detailed data collecting while using different types of references for information, then taking that information and reporting the case descriptions and themes found through the researching process. Case studies provide the research to obtain data through past researchers materials while also collecting new data from the participants the research chooses to actively study. For my study, I research how art educators design their instructional curriculum in order to enhance their student artists creativity. I have interviewed current teachers currently using the TAB approach, and informally listened to students' opinions regarding how the introduction of TAB in my classroom has enhanced their creative mindsets. I also use my prior knowledge with my observations with TAB projects I conducted in my classroom as well as current observations I see in my classroom.

Why Use a Case Study Approach?

Case Study “research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73) while using a variety of data collecting tools. This research is most commonly used as a qualitative approach that is done over a period of time using a variety of in-depth and time-consuming data collection methods. These data collecting methods involve observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents.

Gerring (2004) states that a case study “is best defined as an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units” (p. 341). Similarly, Freedman (2004d) expresses that there is a dire need to develop research that leads to the development of theory in order for the art education field to increase in sophistication. Therefore, the goal of a case study should be research that leads to the inspiration of theory building practices or a specific theory. Either way, a case study should start as a single case and through the research analysis it should grow and develop into an in-depth analysis of two or more case study research theories.

Conducting Case Study Research

A case study methodology is an approach that uses a multitude of different angles in order to examine and record the gathered information in multiple viewpoints. Creswell (2007) explains the procedure for conducting a case study based off of the approach he studied that was written by Robert Stake (1995). Stake (1995) states that a “case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing” (p. 2). This case study is specific; its focus is on the “how” to enhance the creativity using a missed methods approach. One method being teacher-directed instruction and the second being choice-based projects in a learner-directed TAB classroom. The complex part of this study is the plethora of research tools used in order to gather information and knowledge in order to best solve the case. The case will be considered a functioning thing because the goal is specific and will be studied through different viewpoints in order to research the problem.

Boundaries of the Case

The sample groups I have studied are my second through sixth grade elementary school students. I use purposive sampling for this study because the groups I have selected have had the most experience with my TAB learner directed classroom.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection of this case study methodology will be an extensive, holistic approach that pulls information from multiple types of sources, such as direct observations, participant observations, physical artifact analysis, personal journals, and informal notes based on conversations with students over the last five years of implementation in my classroom.

For this case study I use the following three data collection tools:

1. **Analyze** rubrics and grading policies that participating art educators implement into their TAB based classrooms. These art educators are Becky Cook, an elementary art teacher from Gretna, Nebraska and Bryn Johnson, a high school art educator from Westside High School in Omaha, Nebraska.
2. An **artifact analysis** of visual works of art developed by students in my elementary art classroom.
3. A **document analysis** of written reflections, artist statements and critiques developed by students in my elementary art classroom.
4. My **informal journaling and anecdotal notes based on conversations and observations** with my students and participating educators provide a substantial amount of feedback in assessing students and creating a rubric to implement into my classroom.
5. My personal **observations** of the creative process of participating students allow me to develop and analyze the priority standards in which students should be assessed in the making and process of their art making.

The data collection tools used in this study will consist of the student to teacher directed discussions, student-to-student directed discussions overheard by myself, and my researcher anecdotal notes from observing the students in my classroom. The qualitative data will be gained through the students' visual works of art, written reflections, artists statements and their personal critiques that they write in their personal sketchbooks. My personal researcher journal recordings from individual student critiques and conversations will also reflect the quantitative data collected for this study.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this case study is to enhance the creativity of my students to set them up for success as creative thinkers and problem solvers. This research was conducted over the course of five years of teaching at Elm Creek Public Schools. The research data was collected through assessment rubrics based off of my personal definition of creativity, class discussions, critiques, teacher-student conversations, student journaling, personal observations, and my personal reflection journaling over the last 5 years of my teaching career.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

Many art educators are facing disinterested and disengaged students in their art education classrooms and are looking to choice-based art education as a solution to enhancing the creativity of their student artists. Gude (2013) wrote, “We must be willing to let go of some of the old

familiar projects (and their myriad variations) in order to make room for other sorts of projects and other kinds of art experiences” (p. 6). As an art educator in my early years of teaching this was not a hard task, it was a breath of fresh air. I loved the opportunity to hand over some of the creative process making to my students and watch them develop themselves as a young artist. However, I was worried that by turning my classroom fully into a learner directed environment then my students would suffer in their studio techniques, processes, and art history education. “Self-directed learning can be defined as the outcome of creating an experience that empowers learners to make decisions about the information they want to become proficient in” (Knowles, 1975, p. 2). Robinson and Persky (2020) state that, “a learner directed classroom is dramatically different from a lecture-based classroom where the educator determines the goals, the assessments administered, and pacing of the course content. During the self-directed learning process, the learner sets goals, determines how progress will be assessed, defines the structure and sequence of activities and a timeline, identifies resources, and seeks out feedback” (p. 292). I chose a transformative mixed methods approach that focuses on both choice-based art education in order to create a learning experience that empowers student artists but is inspired by teacher lead instruction that teaches technique, media, process, and art history to ensure students are getting the best of both teaching pedagogies.

Teaching for Artistic Behavior

Teaching for Artistic Behavior is a choice-based practice that reflects a democratic educational setting, where the teacher shares the creative processes to develop a work of art. The TAB pedagogy is “often referred to as choice-based art education, is a studio-based approach that recognizes students as artists” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012, p. 4). Student artists in our educational setting should be called and considered as artists. Pablo Picasso famously said,

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up” (Fineberg, 1997).

Teachers should facilitate student learning, not dominate it. “If we wish for our students to do the work of artists, we must offer them the opportunity to behave like artists, think like artists, and perform like artists” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 5) which is exactly what a TAB classroom allows. “At the heart of a choice-based classroom is the principle that the children are artists and the classroom is their studio” (Toole, 2016, p. 9). In the end, what happens in a quality choice-based TAB environment mirrors the work of an artist in a real-life studio, from the collaboration, the process, development of the idea to finding and using resources to accomplish their envisioned idea.

In most choice-based art classes, the educator teaches a short demonstration of an art technique, media use or skill to bring forth new ideas to the students before opening up the room as a studio space for young artists to start working (Gates, 2016). It is then that the art students are allotted to explore the art classroom as a studio space for art making. Students can use their studio time to develop a new idea inspired by the latest demonstration by the art educator or they can continue to work on ideas or projects from a prior art class. A TAB classroom is typically set up with different stations, usually arranged by media type. Students have the freedom to work independently using all the stations within the studio classroom in order to execute their envisioned work of art using the media and technique of their choice.

The introduction of new media, topics, techniques, and/or themes can be taught by the teacher in many different ways. I have recently, in the last five years, implemented TAB days into my mixed methods curriculum. On TAB days, I encourage students to pursue their passions in the art room and apply their interest to their projects based on their prior art knowledge. As a

teacher, I always want to help my students discover more about the fine arts while also allowing them some freedom to discover and express themselves as an individual student artist.

In art education, the two most commonly used approaches to art education are student-centered or choice-based instruction and teacher-centered or discipline-based instruction.

According to O'Neill and McMahon (2005 as cited in Andrews, 2010):

Harden and Crosby describe the teacher-centered learning strategies as the focus on the teacher transmitting knowledge, from the expert to the novice. In contrast, they describe student-centered learning on focusing on the students' learning and 'what students do to achieve this, rather than what the teacher does.' This definition emphasizes the concept of the student 'doing.'" (p. 28)

The Importance in Using Big Ideas in a TAB Classroom to Enhance Creativity

Roberts (2005) emphasizes the importance of using big ideas in choice-based art making as she has personally seen that "the most successful classroom artmaking problems have been those that have a big idea--a broad, important human issue built into them" (p.42). She encourages art educators that big ideas are topics of inquiry that can be addressed and solved at many levels by student artists. To articulate her success with big ideas, she states that her students stated that they felt that they were able to "establish personal connections and create meaningful artwork they considered successful" (Roberts, 2005, p. 42).

Students tend to see their artwork as a success if they have become intrinsically motivated to create a work of art that they will be proud of once finished. Jaquith (2011) encourages art educators that "intrinsic motivation and student interest are central to creative

problem finding and solving” (p. 15). When students are given a big idea that needs to be solved then it will enhance creativity through the motivation of solving the problem. When students are faced with teacher lead art projects they become unmotivated as they are just following directions and copying the teacher's creative ideas. Jaquith and Hathaway (2012), share the statement of a 10-year-old boy in art class, “art class is where I can picture ideas and what will come out best for me instead of someone else picturing it for me” (p. 1). When a student is given the freedom to be creative, they will see their finished work as a success. Students that experience success in their artwork will lead them to become more creative in their future projects.

Creativity and the act of play go hand in hand. The ability to play is an important skill that sets up students to learn about the world they live in and to create new ideas. “Artists, like children, are masters of play. Authentic art experiences, whether engaged in by master or novice, involve play, passion, and pertinence or purpose” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012, p. viii). Pertinence and purpose can’t happen without motivation and the passion will come from experiencing the joy of playfulness in creating artwork. When a student has the freedom to construct artwork that is self-conceived and personal, it automatically brings forth purpose and pertinence in the creative process which will enhance the creativity of the student artist.

Choice-Based Instruction that Visually Awakens the Artistic Voice of Art Students

Jacqueline McElhany is a middle school art teacher that explains her failures and disappointment of the teaching methods of her predecessor’s interpretation of projects that she was required to teach in her first year of teaching. McElhany’s (2017) article, *Awakening Student Ownership: Transitioning to a Student-Centered Environment*, describes a mask project she

taught and how it brought her to recreate her lessons into open-ended art assignments that left room for students to visually voice their own identity in their artwork.

McElhany's (2017) mask project taught her students the history of West African masks, how and why they were made, and the similarities utilizing the elements and principles of art seen between the masks of this culture. She then expected students to create masks in the same way of this culture and noticed that her students were frustrated with the grading expectations she had given them. She wrote:

“With confidence in my discipline-based teaching philosophy, I ignored student complaints and continued to encourage my students to make masks that looked exactly like the ones shown in my PowerPoint presentation... As the unit progressed, my students continually questioned why they could not use what they wanted” (McElhany, 2017, p. 29).

In a discipline-based or teacher-directed classroom setting teachers are asking students to complete an assignment that was not created by them but by the teacher. All of the creativity of the project lies in the hands of the teacher, not the students. In this type of art lesson there was absolutely no room for students to visually voice their individuality or creativity. This resulted in an educational setting of “apathetic learners with meaningless projects” (McElhany, 2017, p. 30).

It was this mask lesson and the continued complaints of her middle school students that led her to start the shift from a teacher-directed classroom to a choice-based classroom in hopes that she would be able to awaken the artistic voices in her students through their visual art. In order to do this, she decided that “an art curriculum based on big ideas” (McElhany, 2017, p.30)

and allowing students to “use what they wanted” (McElhany, 2017, p. 29) would provoke visual works of art with a plethora of possibilities.

According to Anderson and Milbrant (2005) “An art curriculum based on big ideas stimulates curiosity, encourages exploration, inspires originality, and deepens learning”. McElhany (2005), did just that. She recreated her mask lesson to focus on big ideas, such as personal identity. She first showed her students examples of masks from multiple cultures and made from a multitude of media. Then she had the students brainstorm words onto a piece of paper that are associated with the word mask. The goal of this activity was to help students envision a mask that would represent their personal identity. In order to encourage students to explore and even fail she told them, “I would rather see you try something new and mess up than not try at all” (McElhany, 2017, p. 31).

In conclusion, she was encouraging students to create, explore, and focus on a work of art that visually awakens their identity through artistic expression/voice. She discovered through this experience that her students weren’t “carelessly putting objects together just to finish the project” (McElhany, 2017) but were using the open-ended art assignment to “invent new possibilities” (McElhany, 2017, p. 35).

Developing Criteria to Assess the Enhancement of Creativity in Student Artists

Students should look at creativity with a growth mindset versus an inherent, innate talent. Creativity is a mindset based on how we behave on our new ideas we want to bring to the world; it isn’t a talent that just a select few people have. Creativity can be challenged, developed, and enhanced in environments that allow it. How often have you heard a student artist verbalize a comment that is similar to, “I’m just not that creative of a person”. Students say it as if they are

either born with creativity or born with absolutely no creative abilities whatsoever. Creativity looks different as a person is creating. The behaviors I have seen in the creative process are frustration, excitement, playfulness, and/or calming. These behaviors lead to other behaviors, such as determination, invention, problem solving, critical thinking, and more play. These behaviors are never in a specific order and can be intermixed in a plethora of ways. I have seen a student start a TAB project with so much excitement just to become frustrated within the matter of minutes because their idea was challenging to create. However, that frustration led to a new invention and problem solving. By the end of the class period, they were so involved in their work it was if no one else was even around them, they were so intently working in a meditational way.

John Spencer (2020) encourages teachers to assess creativity through the creative process versus the creative product. This led me to create three categories to assess the enhancement of creativity in my students. These three key paradigm shifts are:

1. Focus on the behaviors of students in the creative process rather than the product
2. Focus on growth and improvement rather than achievement
3. Empower students to create, fail, try again, and behave like a working artist

Spencer (2020) encourages teachers to re-frame the way we assess students' creativity. "Instead of focusing on the creativity of a product or treating creativity as an inherent personal trait, we can re-frame creativity as a process" (Spencer, 2020). Spencer explains that the creative process is not a singular process but includes the following skills:

1. Divergent thinking and the ability to use creative constraints to develop new ideas
2. Connective thinking

3. Making revisions
4. Ideation and the ability to formulate new concepts
5. Original thinking or the coming up with new or unique ideas
6. Lateral thinking and solving problems in a slower, indirect, and creative way
7. Envisioning
8. Invention and problem solving
9. Conceptual thinking to communicate ideas
10. Play, inquiry, and curiosity
11. Hands-on prototyping and experimentation
12. Creative risk-taking
13. Resourcefulness
14. Reflection and personal assessment

These listed actions are just some of the skills in the creative process. For art students to become masters of these creative skills, teachers need to encourage students to think and act like artists at the developmental stages of artmaking. To develop criteria to assess the enhancement of creativity in students, teachers need to assess the process of the artmaking versus the assessment of the final product that was created. The process of artmaking is actions and those actions come from generating creative behavior, therefore assessing the process of the student making the work will enhance creative behavior versus the assessment of the final product in which a student makes.

Developing an Environment for Creativity

In order to enhance student creativity and encourage artistic behavior in the classroom, art teachers need to develop and provide an environment that encourages the creative process.

Teachers need to intentionally create a space that values creativity using the creative process. Spencer (2020) emphasizes that “we value what we assess, and we tend to assess what we value”, as a teacher we need to model as well as intentionally design a classroom environment that emphasizes what it is we value most about our students’ learning. “When we don’t assess something, we tend to under-emphasize it. Students, in turn, might internalize the message that it’s less important. So, while we may value creativity, if we don’t assess it, we might neglect it” (Spencer, 2020) as important creative behavior.

Assessment Criteria for the Enhancement of Student Creativity

I was inspired by the ideology of assessing the creative process by John Spencer in order to assess the enhancement of creativity of my students in my classroom in accordance to their expectations on their choice-based art projects on TAB studio days. I have broken down the creative process into five categories to assess if this instruction has enhanced their creativity. As students work on their artwork as studio working artists I walk around the room and assess their ability to do the following:

1. **Envision, Investigate, and Plan** - The creation of thumbnail sketches and process journaling to visually and verbally portray their future work of art. This will give them a starting point to gather and/or decide on the materials they will use. In this phase students will also decide the techniques and/or methods they will use to communicate their idea by either personally researching the process or using their prior knowledge from teacher directed lessons.
2. **Take creative risks, experiment, Play, Explore, and Study** - The ability to try new ideas in order to make their work of art match what it is they envisioned by taking risks that might lead to failure. Then use that failure to experiment with new ideas until they are

successful with their creation. Watch students play with materials to develop their ideas and grow their ideas as they continue to add more to their original ideas. Watch students study other artists in the room, look through books of different artists to develop new ideas, or use technological devices in the room to study artists, art techniques, and methods of making artwork to meet the needs of their piece of art they are making.

3. **Use Ideation, Invention, and Problem-Solving Skills** - Students show the ability to come up with new ideas and develop/build on previous ideas to add aesthetic artistry to their artwork. As students run into artistic problems, they must show the ability to invent new plans and create solutions to make their artwork look as they had originally envisioned.
4. **Make revisions** - As students receive critiques from classmates, teachers, and even themselves they must show the ability to make changes that they believe are good ideas. They must also be able to show that they are able to defend their ideas and their artwork while communicating about their artwork with others. If they choose to make changes, then they work diligently to make the work better using the behaviors listed in categories two and three.
5. **Be resourceful** - Student artists must show that they are not being wasteful. They need to ensure that they are being careful to use only the materials that they need and are leaving the rest for others to use.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Before the Introduction of TAB into My Classroom

Before the introduction of TAB lessons in my classroom I used strictly teacher-directed lessons to teach students my art curriculum. Right away I noticed that my older elementary students lacked creative behavior because any time they had an opportunity to make a decision in their artwork they would freeze up or panic because they did not know what I wanted them to do to get that shiny “A” grade in the gradebook. However, my younger students would rush through their teacher directed lessons, showing poor attention to craftsmanship just so they could go to the free draw station where they had the freedom to create their own ideas and choose their own art medium to draw with. Comparing the photos in figure 4.0, figure 4.1, figure 4.2, you can see that my students were activating their creative behaviors by developing new ideas, connective thinking, making revisions, and using conceptual thinking to communicate an idea visually.



Figure 4.0



Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2

Analysis of the Implementation of using TAB Alongside Teacher-Directed Lessons

Specifically in my art classroom, I chose a mixed methods approach. Students receive both teacher-led discipline-based instruction on certain units and/or projects. They also get the opportunity to focus on their learning from a studio-like choice-based instructional classroom environment. I have not completely abandoned one teaching discipline for the other. Stations in my classroom are slowly ‘opened’ or implemented into choice-based art projects throughout the school year. Stations are opened after a teacher directed lesson has been taught that corresponds with the media of that specific station.

Days that are solely student-directed, I call TAB days. On a TAB day, students are able to use their prior knowledge from the different discipline-based lessons to create a unique project of their own. Students are expected to know and understand the techniques and media before I allow them to use the particular station independently during TAB projects. Placing value on using materials, tools, and techniques allows students to successfully develop their ideas using the creative process. Figure 4.4 shows students creating a collage of a snowman looking up at the falling snowflakes. Each student is creating the same work of art as it was a teacher directed lesson that taught them about collage technique, artists that use collage, and the different types of materials that can be used to create a creative collage. At the end of this lesson there were 25 works of art that were almost identical to the work of art I created as a finished example.

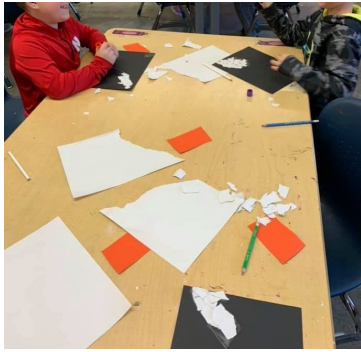


Figure 4.3



Figure 4.4

However, during the teacher-directed snowman collage lesson, I let the students know that if they showed excellent attention to detail and great craftsmanship, I would open the collage station on top of the sculpture, painting, drawing, and printmaking stations that have already been opened throughout the school year as their next project was going to be a TAB lesson. Little second grade voices fill the classroom with exciting cheers of joy in response to my statement. Students love the opportunity to create, but they love getting to create their own ideas even more.

Figure 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 shows the following project with my second-grade students. They just finished doing a snowman, so their theme for this TAB lesson was to create a work of art that represents winter. As I observed, some students made Christmas trees while others made snowmen. Most students in this lesson chose to use recycled materials from the sculpture station, however a few chose to create drawings and paintings. Students were behaving like artists by engaging in creative behavior! They were creating new original ideas, playing with new materials, inventing, making plans, revising plans, creating hands-on prototyping, and divergent thinking skills.



Figure 4.5



Figure 4.6



Figure 4.7

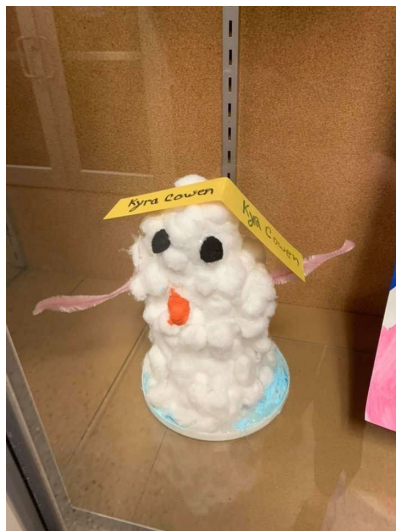


Figure 4.8

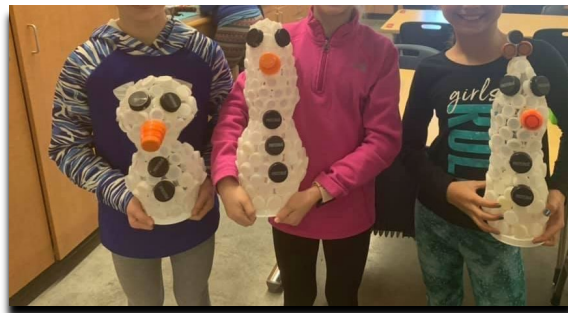


Figure 4.9

These visual artifacts are specific indicators that using a mixed methods approach to teaching art education enhances the creativity of students. Students were able to use the next 4 art classes to create a work of art that accurately represented the theme by using the creative behaviors of envisioning, investigating, and planning. As I walked through the classroom, they

were treating the space as their own creative studio. I watched students take creative risks, experiment with different materials, and play with new ideas as some of their ideas failed to work, explore different ways to make their ideas come to life and communicate with their classmates as artists would in a real-life studio setting. As students came across problems they would invent their own solutions, ask classmates what they did to get their artwork to do a specific technique, and ask the teacher what they needed to do to solve the problem. They would then want to make those revisions themselves; they did not want anyone to do it for them. That was very clear!

Since I started implementing TAB days into my curriculum, I have noticed that my student artists do not lack engagement in the art making process and truly look forward to TAB days. On teacher directed days, students work hard to learn the technique or skills being taught because they know that they will eventually gain freedom to implement the learning in their own project in a future TAB day. Leslie Gates (2016) writes, “The enthusiasm my students exhibited when they could choose the content of their work caused me to rethink the assumption that I should be the one making most of the decisions about my students’ work.” I noticed the same enthusiasm with my students when they finished their teacher directed lesson and were given freedom to “free draw” during the remaining duration of the class while their peers finished up their teacher directed artwork. This enthusiasm is what led me to the search of the TAB learner directed curriculum, allowing more student choice in the art classroom in order to motivate students to create art that they are truly interested in creating. Watching students work freely throughout the classroom is organized chaos, kids are in every part of the room working and creating. However, it is organized and even though students are freely moving around the room

creating their work I have less behavior issues on TAB days than I do on teacher directed learning days.

I have analyzed the PowerSchool log entries (my schools data collection for attendance, grades and behavior issues) for my student's poor behavior on TAB days. The results show that in 5 years I have had only two incidents of bad behavior where students had to go to the principal's office and have their parents called while working in the TAB studio classroom. However, I have had over 20 log entries of behavior issues in art when students were being taught a teacher directed lesson. This data shows that when students are given the opportunity to create their own ideas versus the ideas of their teacher, their creativity captivates their behavior to create artwork instead of creating behavior issues.

I observed my students behaving like artists through the creative process. They critique one another, they help each other, and they ask questions to help make their artwork. They can use all areas within the four walls of the classroom to create their artwork. It is amazing to watch students working so creatively as independent artists. I observed students behaving more creative in their lateral thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, a student was struggling to turn their recycled bottle cap snowman into a sphere, as it looked more cube-like at its beginning stages. So, the student revised her work by changing the angle in which she was gluing in order to create a curved like appearance versus a flat cube-like appearance. Then I watched her use creative risk-taking skills to develop the rest of her snowman as she became more excited about the curving of her sculpture.

Different Angles/Viewpoints of Research for the Assessment of TAB Art Projects

There are many questions that need to be investigated in order to enhance the creativity of student artists using the philosophy of Teaching for Artistic Behavior:

Will students become more engaged in creativity in a learner directed classroom?

How can I encourage students to use the multiple art stations in a creative manner in a TAB classroom if they haven't learned the media or techniques associated with the media?

What does a successful mixed methods approach look like regarding the enhancement of creativity in student artists?

What criteria do my students need to meet in regard to enhancing their creativity?

Mixed Methods Approach

As I build units in my classroom, I ensure that teacher directed lessons focus on priority standards, media, technique and art history that will enhance the creativity of my students when they get to use the TAB stations to create their own work of art at the end of the unit. Every unit I build has multiple works of art that will be created by the student. Some are teacher directed where at least one work of art is student directed. This sets the students up for success as a visual artist working in a studio environment with a multitude of different mediums, brushes, and art tools. They need to know the proper way to use and take care of their materials in order to be successful student artists.

When it came to teacher directed lessons, I encouraged my students to really focus on the practice in order to successfully put this into their own work when they do a TAB project at the end of the unit. This not only encouraged students to put forth their best effort but made them

slow down and really digest the artistic practice I was trying to teach them. Before they would rush through my teacher directed lessons to go to the free draw station in the art room. However, where the students knew that they were going to get to be a studio practicing artist on a TAB day in the future they really showed characteristics of craftsmanship and effort at levels I had never seen before. I also noticed that with more effort and attention to detail came less behavior issues as they were really trying to digest the technique, skill or media so that they could eventually put it into their own creation in the future.

During TAB days my behavior issues almost completely disappeared. Students were creating, walking around the room encouraging other student artists, using techniques and media like true artists. Their attention to their artwork and helping others to problem solve their artistic problems was such a joy to watch.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

During this research project I used a transformative mixed methods approach to enhance the creativity of my students. It may not be true for all classrooms, however for my specific classroom my goal was reached in enhancing the creativity of my students. I saw a huge improvement on the performance of students when it came to their ability to envision, express, observe, research, play, and develop works of art in a creative manner.

Over the last nine years of teaching at ECPS I have seen my students blossom in their creative problem-solving skills, the characteristics of entrepreneurship skills, and collaborative art making skills. Through my personal reflections in my classroom as well as the research I

have conducted I have witnessed success in my classroom and discovered approaches with high success rates in other classrooms nationwide.

“Artists, like children, are masters of play. Authentic art experiences, whether engaged in by master or novice, involve play, passion, and pertinence or purpose” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012, p. viii). Pertinence and purpose can’t happen without motivation and the passion will come from experiencing the joy of playfulness in creating artwork. When a student has the freedom to construct artwork that is self-conceived and personal, it automatically brings forth purpose and pertinence in the creative process which will enhance the creativity of the student artist.

Engaging Learners through Artmaking

I have seen time and time again where my students rush through their projects in order to have more time at the end of class for ‘free draw’ and the freedom to create their own ideas. Choice-based art education takes the ‘free draw time’ and creates an organized place for students to play. The value of play in the art classroom cannot be overstated, especially when it comes to creating art. Play in art form allows for the expansion of our minds in ways that allow us to explore, generate new creative ideas, or allows us to build off of old ideas in order to create new ideas. This type of play, from what I have observed in the philosophical teaching of TAB has allowed students to become inventors, creative thinkers, creative problem solvers, stay engaged in the art making process, and over all think and act in an artistic behavior. TAB allows a teacher to leave room for students to play but learn the process of being a true artist.

Democratic Art Education

Choice-Based art making in a TAB learner directed classroom practices a democratic way of education; the teacher shares the authority of the final product with students. This allows

room for students to learn the process of making artwork and the behavior of an artist. In my TAB lessons, I provide short demonstrations at the beginning of class that help innovate new ideas and processes for the students to build off of or I review the techniques and mediums we have done up to this point and allow students to use their prior art knowledge to create their own creative choice project.

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