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Katherine M. Avra
University of Kentucky, katieavra@gmail.com
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Katherine M. Avra, Student

Dr. George Szekely, Major Professor

Doreen Maloney, Director of Graduate Studies

Sketch-Plan Book:
A Teacher's Planning Resource
for the Secondary Classroom

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Fine Arts
at the University of Kentucky

By

Katherine M. Avra

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. George Szekely, Professor of Art Education

Lexington, Kentucky

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Sketch-Plan Book:
A Teacher's Planning Resource
for the Secondary Classroom

Teacher planning is a necessary process by which educators establish, facilitate, monitor, and evaluate lessons and learning within their classroom. For art educators, sketchbooks have been a foundational pillar in art curricula. The sketchbook has a lengthy legacy of yielding common, structured assignments. However, recent considerations have reframed sketchbook practices. Contemporary analysis has produced a pedagogical shift in approaches to sketchbooks and planning for sketchbook inclusion in the classroom. The sketch-plan book offers art teachers a streamlined resource to collect and maintain lesson ideas and inclusions, track on-going lessons, and plan for future teaching and learning. The purpose of this work is to explore an art teacher's sketch-plan book usage as a resource and tool in the secondary art room.

KEYWORDS: Art Education, Sketchbook, Teacher Planning

Katherine M. Avra

02/15/2019

Sketch-Plan Book:
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By

Katherine M. Avra

Dr. George Szekely

Director of Thesis

Doreen Maloney

Director of Graduate Studies

02/15/2019

Date

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To life-long learners, thank you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

An artist's sketchbook, journal, or diary is documented proof of the creative mind at work. Frida Kahlo referred to her sketchbook as "the outline of [her] life" (Kahlo, 1954, p.151). Sketchbooks are the woven threads in the tapestry of an art experience by artists and student artists. Each page—a thread, bound and interconnected to the previous page's canvas and the next opportunity in waiting. As an artist, my sketchbooks showcase travel sojourns, media experimentation, spontaneous inspiration, not-to-be forgotten innovations, and sprawling practices in creativity. I immerse myself in the opportunity of a blank page, a fresh canvas, or new plane for my brain to physically express what is has internally visualized. Though at times intimidating, a blank sketchbook page presents opportunities for challenge and accomplishment.

Sketching is a significant artistic practice not only as an artist but for me as an art teacher as well. To frame my artistic inspiration for this paper, a small illustration and personal detail demonstrates the purpose of my teacher sketch-plan book. Each day I carry with me a quote from Vincent Van Gogh. It is written on a small square of plain paper, tucked tightly in my identification badge for school. The quote reads: *My sketchbook is a witness of what I am experiencing, scribbling things whenever they happen*. When I use my keys or swipe my badge I read that quote and a smile appears on my face. At that moment I am filled with energy and creative permission to risk-take, make-mistakes and experiment—even without an end-plan in mind. Van Gogh's inspiration urges me to take that moment and make art.

Often, my art begins in my sketchbook and then emerges into new creations. My sketchbook not only represents my personal art-making investments, but it has transformed into main teaching tool—my *sketch-plan book*. Differing from both traditional teacher plan books and standard sketchbooks, my sketch-plan book offers the capacity for me, as the art teacher, to work independently, to work with students, and to plan for students working independently. Through

implementing and developing my sketch-plan, many opportunities have been provided to plan for art room activities from practice to refinement. Vast applications including experimentation, exploration, and documentation for work both in and out of the art room are revealed via sketch-planning. The use of my sketch-plan book has become my key resource for idea generation, lesson planning, and visual research.

The topic of sketchbooks has been a primary focus and a dominant curricular component of the 2D art course I have been teaching. Undoubtedly sketchbook utilization is a long-established practice in the art room, usually representing a compilation of assigned sketches. The 2D art courses at my school were no different.

In my own classroom, sketchbook work represented over half of the assignments within a grading period. The importance of sketchbook work weighs heavily on a student's overall academic success in the class. In the case of my recent transition from teaching middle school art to teaching in the high school setting, I began teaching 2D art. One of my fellow art teachers and department chair made aware that we would both be teaching this course; thus, our curriculum was to align.

Taking the lead from my colleague, a forty-plus year teaching veteran, all aspects of our shared 2D course were to be united. Not only did our assignments need to mimic one another, but homework, in-class assignments, quizzes, and exams needed to mirror one another. Under my colleagues' direction, I followed a pre-prescribed calendar of academic, more so than artistic, curriculum. Being a new high school teacher, I followed along and taught as she taught, delivering pre-planned project after project and assignment after assignment.

Over the course of the year, a dramatic disconnect emerged between students' in-class work verses sketchbook assignments, homework verses independent work, and short-term verses long-term assignments. There was no continuity between activities taking place within the art

room and assignments being fulfilled outside. With no parallels, students were simultaneously working on assignments unrelated to each other.

There was little to no collaboration between sketches or projects. These predetermined sketches were put in place prior to any consideration for student derived input. Week after week new sketch assignments would be given. Results from this curriculum structure yielded uninspired drawing responses, inauthentic art, and overall resulted in low grades.

Ultimately, I grew to acknowledge that a deep isolation, division, and mis-alignment lead to a complete lack of curricular cohesion. These results were an absence of independent pursuits, creative practice, deep meaning-making, and the independent student voice. In addition to the lack of creative depth, student academic success was negatively impacted. In my perspective, the lack of cohesion and alignment lead to academic and artistic decay of the former 2D art course. The void of uniformity among teaching practices and planning left students' work in peril in terms of grades, academic growth, and artistic gains.

As a teacher, I need to measure and account for student success or the lack thereof. I was persuaded to conduct an intense and profound examination of my teaching practices and planning. During my reflection, I considered my role perpetuating the lack of student success. My next step was to uncover the chief source of this disconnect in teacher planning for success and students' academic achievement. In my examination, the sketchbook emerged as a primary source of suffering grades and therefore, became the prime catalyst for change. The educational inspiration for this paper is my focus on improving student success by utilizing my *sketch-plan book* as a teaching tool.

The sketchbook became my focus in changing my secondary teaching and specifically in my planning. As a teacher, I need to plan for artistic growth, cultivate creative depth, and allow for the unique, spontaneous, and inspirational student experience to self-direct student planning

and learning. I embarked on a journey to change my planning for student sketchbook curriculum. The sketch-plan book focuses on planning for artistic and creative success with student sketchbook work. As a planning resource, the sketch-plan book serves as a reference to document and support transitional adaptations in methodology for a variety of classroom integration including: preparatory practices, in-class activities, independent work, home studies, and long-term assignments. Copyright © Katherine M. Avra, 2019

Chapter 2

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this thesis is to document one teacher's implementation of a sketch-plan book. The sketch-plan book's purpose is to provide art teachers a space for visual exploration, media experimentation, and investigate lesson possibilities. The sketch-plan book represents a singular source for storing academic resources, collecting and constructing artistic goals, and preserving aesthetic concepts in direct connection with curricular structures.

The first goal of this thesis is to illustrate the pedagogical need for one teacher to create a new planning resource. This planning resource is represented through a collection of work that supports student artistic gains within a secondary art room, in a Drawing 1 course, at a Title I school. The sketch-plan book houses artistic lesson components from preliminary drawings, to inspirational concepts, exploratory techniques, academic parallels, as well as lesson-specific content and annotation. The second goal of this thesis is to showcase the sketch-plan book's usage with direct application in the lesson planning. The implementation of lessons featured in the sketch-plan book are linked with representations of student planning and student sketchbooks.

Significance of Sketchbooks: The Sketchbook as a Product

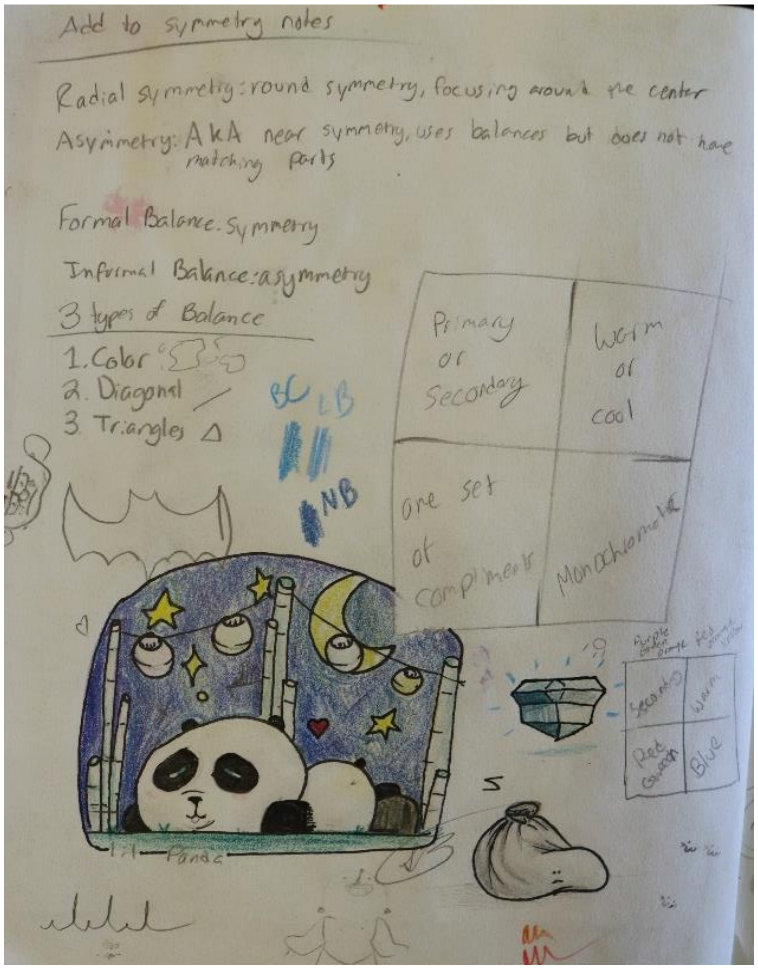
Through the art educators' lens of past and recent practices, the view of a sketchbook as a product, has become an inflexible compilation of artistic outcomes. Highly structured guidelines, exhaustive rubric criteria, and predetermined constructs yield little to no authentic impact on individual art-making. The current state of sketchbooks can be likened to a connect-the-dot or paint-by-number approach to producing an "impersonal, overly structured [collection of graded] assignments" (Shields, 2010, p.4). The traditional sketchbook construct represents a formulaic file awaiting predetermined input, providing little opportunities for individualized approaches to artistic exploration.

The student sketchbook as a product, has become an assemblage of teacher directed assignments. Teachers have implemented sketchbooks as an uninspired collection of student work following a pattern of instruct-produce-grade-and-repeat. These assignments reflect specific teacher-directed content, lacking student inspired inclusions. The current sketchbook, as a product, has removed the opportunities for creative exploration and honing one's artistic voice.

Significance of Sketchbooks: The Sketchbook as a Process

In view of a sketchbook as a process, authentic-art making is prioritized over final conclusive results. Sketchbooks are a process-based interactive log which should be fundamentally linked to classroom endeavors and should serve as a catalog of creative explorations, both guided and independent. Student sketchbooks should serve as a true reflection of student learning, artistic growth, and idea formulation. As figure 2.1 illuminates, each sketchbook page should act as a spring-board for all planning and preparations. This student's sketchbook serves as a catch-all for mark-making, testing, organizing, accepting, and refuting art planning ideas. Page upon page should structure personal investments alongside rehearsals for future art-making. To nurture creative experiences and foster artistic independence, students need to feel supported by their sketchbook's capacity for visual documentation of their work, transitions, and progression. Copyright © Katherine M. Avra, 2019

Figure 2.1: Student Sketch entry: planning, note-taking, color samples, and sketching.



Chapter 3

Review of Related Literature

The literature review for this paper focuses on the examination and analysis of work by theorists, educators, and researchers on topics related to sketchbooks. The first content area defines the sketchbook. The next content area places sketchbooks within a historical context. The third focus area discusses the sketchbook curriculum at use in the art room. The final content area looks at the pedagogy shifts in contemporary sketchbooks.

Defining the Sketchbook

Sketchbooks have been known by many names: diary, notebook, visual journal, art journal, and art book. What makes up a sketchbook varies from artistic and creative plans, ideas, goals, preparations, practice, demonstrations, exercises, records, reflection, and resource organization. Though the usage and purpose of sketchbooks differ vastly, a commonality exists in the personal expression of one's own preliminary work. The pages within a sketchbook represent how artists' thoughts, ideas, and creative freedoms contribute to art-making.

Student sketchbooks present a collection of creative files. Students can access their idea files to set goals for future art-making. Sketchbooks are used to plan, demonstrate, and execute art—bringing students' inspirations to life. The most valuable tool for a student and an artist is a well-explored sketchbook. In the same way a teacher plans for artistic events and activities in the classroom, the sketchbook offers an organizational canvas to reflect and navigate personal interests and inquiries.

From exercises to documentation, creative thinking and process-based learning allows students to interact and explore the art room and the visual world. Their sketchbook is field journal, of sorts, tracking these interactions and explorations, recording them for future creative planning.

The sketchbook offers an exploratory space for studio practices. As students explore their unique artistic voice, they express their unique perspective on the visual world through each sketch. Students are free to experiences the creative trials-and-errors within their sketchbook without the fear of failure that comes with the finality of a completed work of art.

The Sketchbook in Historical Context

Artists using sketchbooks has been well documented. Even beyond art education, "the sketchbook has existed throughout the history of art" (Jones, 2008, pg.45). Leonardo da Vinci, Edvard Munch, Mary Cassatt, Henry Moore, Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso, and Romare Bearden have well-documented sketchbook usage throughout their art-making. Thousands and thousands of pages from these artists reveal thought-capturing, idea-recording, and problem exploring entries. Sketchbooks held the prized innovations of some of history's most significant creators. Each sketch entry was a glimpse into their mind, their thoughts, their creativity breaking through barriers and constructs of their next world-changing invention or creation.

Sketchbook Curriculum in the Art Room

"There's no more important area in the field of education than that of the curriculum" (Eisner, 1965, p.7). Well-respected author and educator, Elliot Eisner, wrote extensively about art education curriculum. Over the past 200 years, curriculum has been used to develop well-rounded, balanced, nurtured, sensitized, and creative-thinking students (Eisner, 1695). In his article: *Curriculum Ideas in a Time of Crisis*, Eisner bolding declares that "whatever effectiveness art educators achieve…must be realized through the curriculum of art education" (Eisner, 1965, p.7).

In his continued writing on curriculum, Eisner, establishes the significance of curriculum and the role of the art teacher in developing curriculum for the art room. In his article: *Creative Curriculum Development and Practice*, Eisner implores art teachers to develop curriculum that

"creates activities and genuinely challenges children and adolescents to think in new ways and to engage in difficult forms of problem solving" (Eisner, 1990, p.69). Here Eisner states in case that the strength found in edified curriculum promotes unique thinking, engages new creative pathways, and activates approaches to visual problems.

Eisner asserts that the highest aim of education is to create artists capable of self-expression (1990). Within education, the goal of all subject areas, not solely art education, is that of developing creativity and the creative abilities of students (Eisner, 1965). This goal has aligned art curriculum and art educators, placing primary focus on providing opportunities for creative potential (Eisner, 1965). Eisner elaborates on the critically important role of curriculum, the art teacher, and art materials to encourage freedom and not constrain (1990). With this format, the sketchbook is a prime example of a curricular component that exercises all criterion Eisner establishes for creative work. The sketchbook is tool for engagement, a tracker of creative pathways, and a playground for problem-solving. Curriculum and lesson planning for sketchbook work continues to draw a spotlight in art education.

Within curriculum, Dewey founds the educators' framework for lesson planning that supports reflective inquiry and personal reflection (1910). Dewey constructs a platform for the active pursuit of learning through visual language and the expression of thought, both significant in the comparative use of sketchbooks. Pairing the visual voice and conveyance of thought depicts true meaning-making and intention in making art. In his book How We Think, Dewey, states that harnessing meaning derived from the expression of "gestures, pictures… and visual images…" establishes the mindset that cultivates desired creative thinking traits and formulating successful mental habits (Dewey, 1910, p.116). Here Dewey establishes that visual and expressive input inform the methods for student learning. Students are absorbing visual information, framing their ideas, and making plans to create their art. Students are using their sketchbooks as an external pathway for their creativity.

Just as teachers compile resources for lesson planning, students utilize their sketchbooks for inform and support their artistic decision-making. Successful student art-making draws upon his or her own free, unique, and diverse approaches to solving visual problems. Dewey asserts that the attitude of freedom naturally enriches the process of thought, the development of experiences, and supports the success of spontaneous external activities (Dewey, 1910). These spontaneous exchanges give way to the free transformation of genuine, authentic art-making and the impulse to act intrinsically (Dewey, 1934). He determines the importance of the natural transition from an interest to activity and the role of imagination. This thinking represents a profound pillar in student art-making and student sketchbooks.

Creative opportunities freely unfold in the art room—a student's studio space. The studio represents a place for uptake and input, expression and execution. The art room provides a venue for trying new methods, exploring media, and exercising techniques. Combined with their own creative ideas, students' independent art springs into formation. The art room unifies art students and the art teacher by providing the setting for exciting art activities and all-encompassing events.

Setting the stage to "create conditions for students thinking to become more complex, more effective, and more intelligent (Eisner, 1998, pg.48) is one of the primary roles of an art teacher. By establishing a curriculum that supports "rather than suppresses individual differences," (Eisner, 1990, p.65) teachers plan for individualized and authentic student experiences. Art teachers "look for methods and approaches to generate involvement…encourage discovery…and provide students with occasions to use their own thinking" (Stout, 1993 p.37).

Another major role of art teacher is to find strategies to for starting children on an exciting adventure that is akin to artistic behavior to share and show students how artists think and work…developing children's research skills through… harnessing…their natural curiosity into worthwhile investigations" (Robinson, 1995). In fulfilling this task, art teachers have long

relied on sketchbooks as a structured component of the art room experience, traditionally defining them as "a space for ideas to take shape, imaginations to wander, and drawing skills to be practiced" (Sanders-Bustle, 2008, p.9). This defines and solidifies the need for habit-forming practice within sketchbooks.

Teachers can and should encourage students to freely inject their own ideas and experiences into their art-making process. The application of sketchbooks in art curriculum serves to promote unique discoveries and result in authentic student art-making. Along with increased student freedom, the process of art-making is evident in the overall strength of student art.

The student sketchbook remains an invaluable resource to capture both interests and activities to spur imagination. By encapsulating ideas, the sketchbook represents the planning process and preparation for the art being produced. The infusion of student interest and imagination in art-making directly correlates with his or her level of investment in the assignment. When students' interests are peaked, their investment in art-making is enhanced.

Pedagogical Shifts: The Contemporary Sketchbook

In the classroom, "the use of sketchbooks, journals, and reflective writing in art education is nothing new" (Sanders & Bustle, 2008, p.9). From a "rough' note-book" (Robinson, 1995, p.8) to valuable tool, sketchbooks have taken on many roles within the art room. As commonplace as pencils and paint, the sketchbook has and continue to be a fixture in art education. The contemporary sketchbook has shaken the outdated and underutilized representation of an "unfinished visual record[s] of ideas to be developed, record[s] of continuity, draft work, [and] experimental stages" (Robinson, 1995, p.15).

Now sketchbooks can be viewed as a collection of thought-provoked, meaning-induced, and creativity-driven possibilities. As educators' transition to this broadened capacity of a sketchbook, expectations must also be reevaluated to accommodate the "closely linked artist's

inner vision…and personal vision" (Robinson, 1995, p.31). The purpose for this *portable studio* provide[s] students with a vehicle through which they can practice their art" (Jones, 2008, p.17).

Further clarifying its purpose, Gillian Robinson, in her book: Sketch-books: Explore and Store, discusses the importance of students using their sketchbooks in exploring their artistic freedoms. These freedoms are reinforced by the absence of highly structured activities or rigid expectations (Robinson, 1995). This attitude yields the opportunity for a sustainable platform for interest-based activities, student derived inclusions, and independent art-making. The sketchbook becomes a significant source for all student-sourced creative possibilities.

The sketchbook has survived many evolutions and thrives through its many purposes and functions. In many ways, the sketchbook has transformed into a classroom piece of artistic equipment—outfitted for a variety of purposes and roles. The sketchbook has become fully functional extension of the teacher and student. From a quick burst of inspiration to the tenth revision of plan, the contemporary sketchbook seems to adapt to fulfill all necessary needs. The acts of working and re-working, clarifying, refining, and "editing one's own thinking yields clearer and more power results of creativity" (Eisner, 1998, pg. 27). The flexibilities possible in sketchbooks allow teachers and students to pursue a cohesive and holistic curriculum within the art room. The impact of this type of accommodation in the classroom has the potential for greater meaning-making and authentic art, but higher levels of creative thinking, and unseen approaches to new visual problems. Copyright © Katherine M. Avra, 2019

Chapter 4

Sketchbook and Artists

To visual artists, sketchbooks have been a primary source of cataloging and recording inspiration, experimentation and methodology. Sketchbooks can act as a diary of self-evaluation and experiences for the artist to understand and monitor their work. These diaries can serve as a portfolio for the artist to think, keep notes, reflect and talk to themselves (Szekely, 1998).

"An artist's work is defined through many sketchbooks" (Szekely, 2006, pg.48). For example, Leonardo da Vinci used sketchbooks as an open briefcase for cataloging scientific and artistic breakthroughs—true leaps into the future of man-kinds' growth and understanding of our physical world. "His journals, of which seven thousand pages exist, contained observations and thoughts of scholars he admired…letters, reflections…, philosophical musings and prophecies, plans for inventions, and treatises on anatomy, botany, geology, flight, water, drawings and paintings" (Bell, 2002).

The sketchbook has been through many evolutions and referred to by many names: art journal, visual journal, interactive notebook (Scott & Modler, 2010). The purpose and function of a sketchbook remains to be an artists' outward reflection of their inward creativity. At its core, it represents a source for visual notes, idea files, and observational inspirations for future art endeavors (Szekely, 2006). The sketchbook "is a place to generate and organize the teachers and student's plans through drawing" (G. Szekely, personal communication, December 5, 2018). From inventors to practicing artist and students of art, the sketchbook is a "vital tool in the planning and development of [student work and serves] as a resource for inspiration" (Robinson, 1995, p.25).

The sketchbook represents a vital tool in the understanding and application of the creative and artistic process of authentic art-making. At their core, "sketchbooks provide a way of

structuring and organizing information received from the world" (Robinson, 1995, p.103). Used for many purposes, the sketchbook is a place to identify foci, clarify and plan goals, track progress, to test, re-work, and prepare for future creativity (G. Szekely, personal communication, November 8, 2018).

Sketchbooks and Art Teachers

"While other teachers are taught to write lesson plans, art students…are trained to think and plan visually in the studio" (Szekely, 2006, p.48). Art teachers are used to keeping sketchbooks as art students. We learn to note ideas and plan visually. However, a division has arisen in the artist's transition to teacher. As Dr. George Szekely suggests in his article on visual lesson plan books, we as art teachers, have been making two sets of plans. With one plan book, we satisfy our administration with a fill-in-the-blank style of planning, and with the other, we design our lessons in our sketchbook (Szekely, 2006). Why write lesson plans for art when it is more natural for art teachers to visualize through working in a sketchbook?

While working alongside students, I have compiled visual and creative investment in each page of the sketch-plan book. In contrast, the formal plan book is a traditional format consisting of typed lesson plans, assessment, and records. Figure 4.2 compares my teacher sketch-plan book verses my traditional plan book.

"Sketching can bring teachers closer to the reality of seeing and experiencing [the art lesson]" (Szekely, 2006, p.48). Art teachers can sketch ideas for what is to be seen, explored, and experienced by students. Never to be lost again ideas can be collected and cataloged for later research and refinement. When the "unpredictable and sometimes allusive lesson idea" (Szekely, 2005, pg.46) arises, the sketch-plan book is an instantly ready vessel.

The sketchbook should become every art teacher's plan book: writing notes, sketching pictures, and including road maps for the classroom. I use my sketch-plan book to record

snapshots of creative encounters, “each page validating and storing…visions on which to later expound” (Szekely, 2006, pg.52). As figures 4.3-5 reveal, my sketch-plan book tracks my travels and records not only the sights but also sounds and distinct occurrences I later draw from for classroom implementation. Conversations I overhear in museums, quotes I read from artist statement and biographies—all anecdotal memories are captured and bookmarked for future planning.

Sketchbooks and Students

The sketchbook in the classroom is a vehicle not only for students to physically bring their ideas to class but also to present their ideas to other students. By bringing and sharing their ideas, students gain a positive momentum from their collective experience with their peers (Michaels, 1983). This exchange of ideas through collaborative sharing presents opportunities for further experimentation and direction for new visual research.

For students, dabbling, practicing, and starting over are valuable experiments. Students can see the results from their attempts and ready themselves with new aesthetic approaches and new handling of materials. In figure 4.6, one student’s sketchbook has color samples, brush-stoke practice, and texture samples connected to the adjoining page with a preliminary watercolor sketch for a large-scale project. Students use each space in their sketchbook to prepare for art-making.

Sketchbooks present opportunities to trek through material experimentation while conducting research with various tools. Students grasp how to express their own ideas and adapt new approaches to art-making. These trials prove that “new ideas can and do grow out of experiments with media (Michaels, 1983, pg.97). The combination of personal interest and creative investment becomes a work surface for student innovation and reflection (Michaels, 1983).

A student sketchbook is physical extension of a mind at work, documenting both process and product. Students escape into their sketchbooks—pouring aspirations of invention, tracking creative pursuits, and capturing their imagination running. The sketchbook becomes the fortress to plot games, make and break rules, study, observe, brainstorm, formulate, list, engage, cross-out, and make something significant (Barry, 2015). Sketchbooks are the fulfillment of a creative playbook—exercising inventiveness on each page, building artistic confidence, and…creative thinking (Robinson, 1995). Figure 4.7 displays a student working through multiple possibilities on the same page. Her sketchbook offers a meeting place for ideas springing from her mind and leaping onto paper. Sketchbooks become a passport to move away from the teacher-led and teacher-run art room (G. Szekely, personal communication, December 5, 2018).

Outside of the classroom, students use their sketching as an outlet for creative invention. Students use their sketchbook as launch vehicles for independent work; they, themselves becoming their own greatest resource (Michaels, 1983). Designs and thumbnails that began life in the sketchbook have emerged as stand-alone art. These artworks serve as examples of authentic, individual and personal creative statements and not just school exercises (Szekely, 2015).

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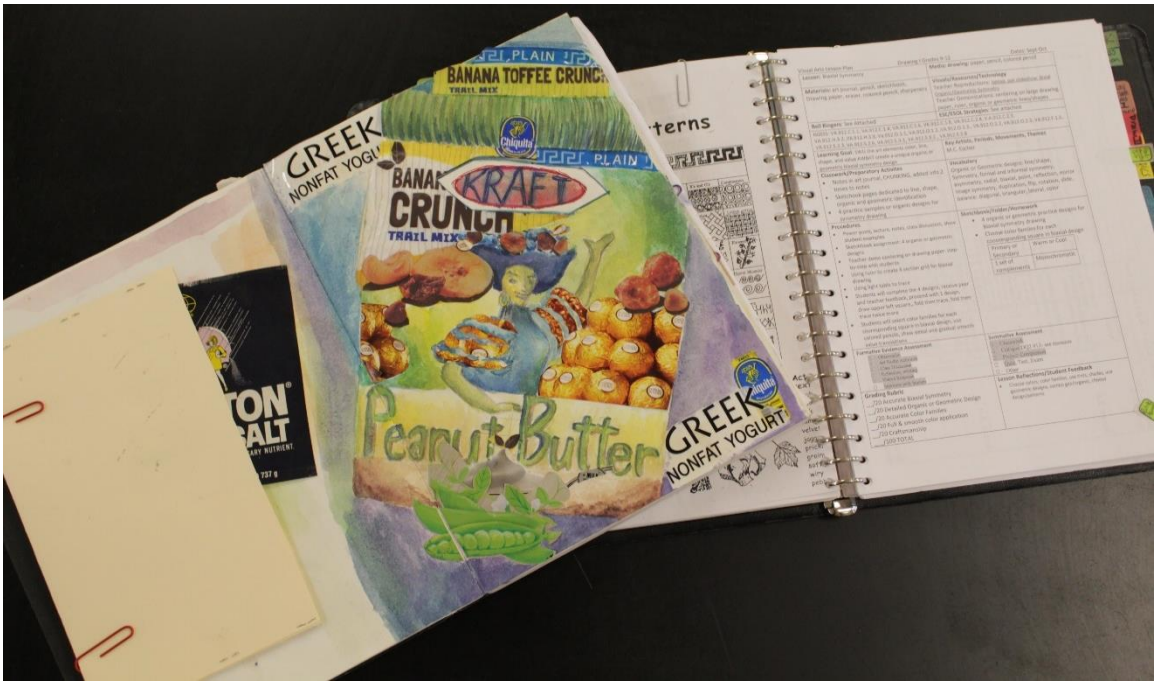
Figure 4.1: Teacher Sketch-Plan Book and Traditional Teacher-Plan Book



Figures 4.2-4.3: Teacher Sketch-Plan Book museum entries: sketches, quotes, and ideas classroom concepts from the Clyfford Still Museum and Denver Museum of Art.

Figure 4.2

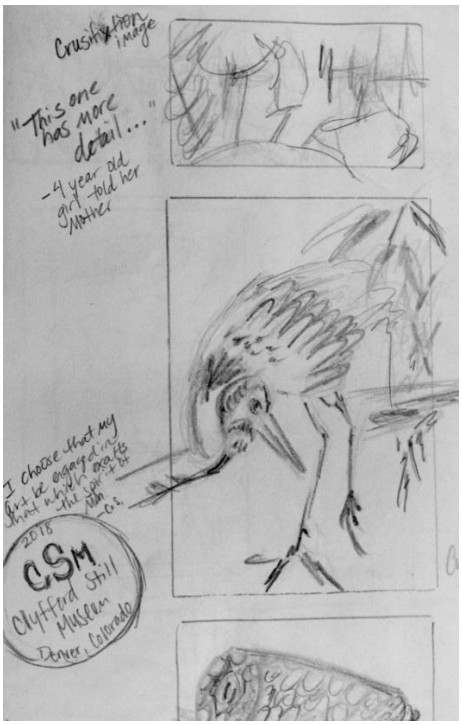
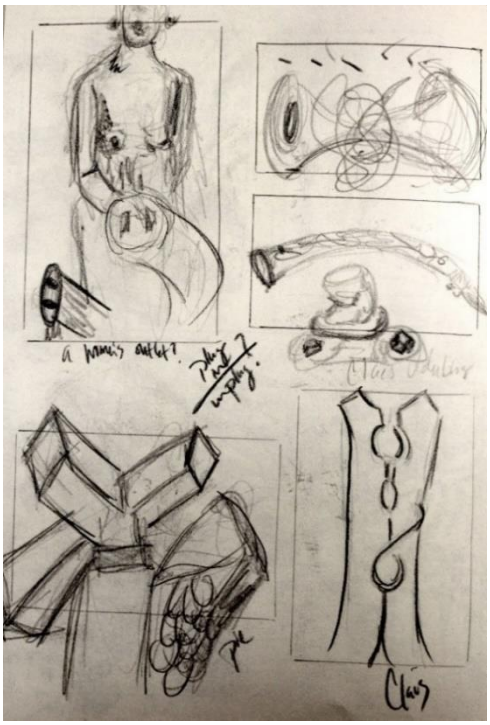


Figure 4.3



Figures 4.4: Teacher Sketch-Plan Book entries: sketches and quotes from the Clyfford Still Museum and Denver Museum of Art.

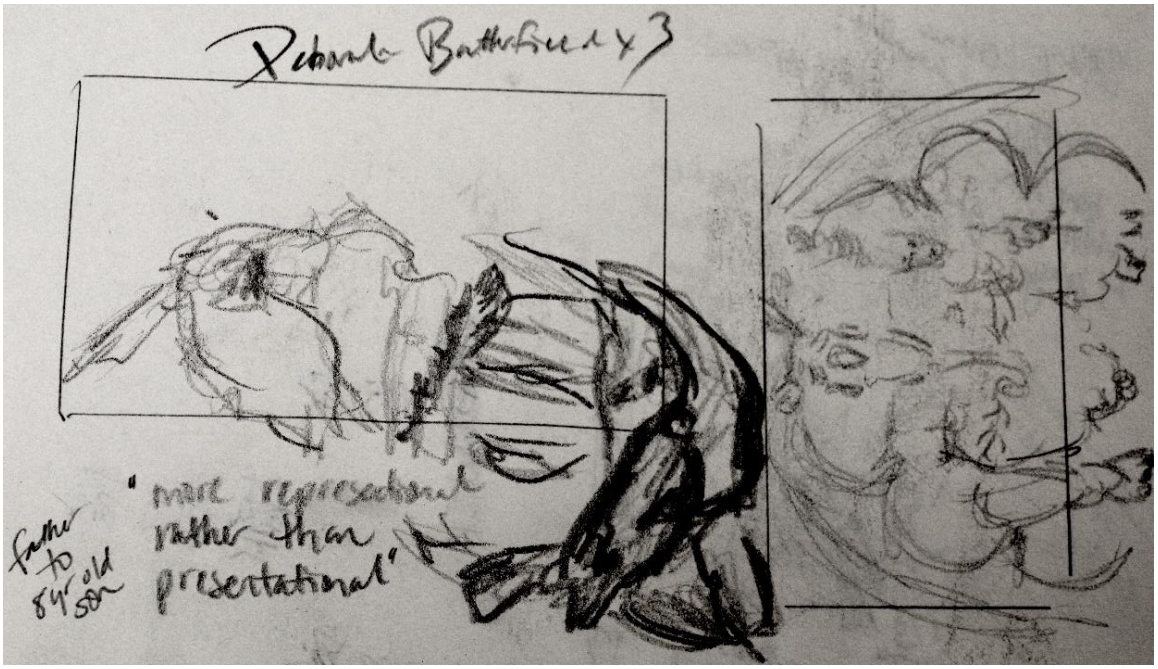


Figure 4.5: Student Sketchbook Entry: media experimentation alongside student sketch and watercolor practice.

Figure 4.6: Student Sketch Entry: idea generation, evolution, and conceptual exploration.

Chapter 5

Teacher Planning and Teacher Sketching

As a teacher, plan books are expected to be a working reflection of teaching, lesson preparation, and classroom practices. As an art teacher, my plan book and my sketchbook merged. A natural fusion occurred—my plan book has been reframed through a focus on my sketchbook and the sketch-plan book emerged.

My sketchbook has become my teacher sketch-plan book—my guide to mainstreaming the student perspective and keeping the pulse of their motivation, inspiration, and progress. In my current teaching, I am keeping my own sketchbook along with my classes. I work along with my students as they work. They sketch—I sketch. They paint—I paint. We practice skills simultaneously and do all the same sketching prompts.

The practice of working alongside students presents many opportunities for growth. John A. Michaels, in his book Art and Adolescence, discusses the opportunity for teachers to work on their own art during class time as demonstration of the teacher's involvement, invest, and interest in students and art. The process of simultaneous art-making was echoed by my colleague, Dr. Sara Scott-Shields. In her dissertation on hermeneutics of art journals, Dr. Shields conducted comparative sketching exercises:

> When my students journaled, I journaled. I cannot stress how important this is in developing a pedagogical practice of journaling in response to content. Instead of circulating and hovering over students as they worked, I sat alongside them and journaled with them. This literally and metaphorically leveled the playing field, allowing my students to see me as I worked with them and not above and around them (Shields, 2014, p.86).

Here Dr. Shields reinforces the value and significance of both parties working as artists. Students witness their teacher's enthusiasm for art and teachers gain the respect of "students by demonstrating his or her knowledge and ability (Michael, 1983, pg.148). This solidifies that art teachers and art students share equally valuable roles in the art room.

Working alongside my students in the art room stretches my capacity for my growth as an artist and for my planning as a teacher. These blueprints for planning have become a critically important venue to test my own ideas for art lessons in class (Szekely, 2005). The starting line for my art room is my sketch-plan book. It is organized to work with the students through their artistic pursuits, visual problem solving, trials and practices. We experiment with new media and techniques and to capture the unfolding and evolving artistic journey. As figure 5.8 shows, I demonstrate techniques and usage of media and materials.

I use my sketch-plan book to sort through possibilities, capture ideas, and translate ideas to plan for future classes. Planning becomes flexible and fluid class-to-class: editing, revising, and updating as I continue through my courses. More importantly, my willingness to revise and accept feedback from my students as well as myself, informs my planning and produces strengthened visual results.

Similarly, conversations with students inform not only my teaching but impacts my sketch-plan book work as well. For example, two conversations with students served to reframe specific teaching methodologies during sketching exercises and furthered my inspiration to follow-through with a sketch.

One significant conversation took place during the fruit and flower still-life drawing. A student adjacent to me began intently watching me sketch. He inquired about my hand-movement and rapid pace. We compared and referred my quick-paced movement to our previous gesture drawings and the importance of encompassing the entire composition rather than the micro-focusing on details. He was very interested in the physicality of how I moved my hand and the operation of using my entire arm as a tool of creating lines. I shared that I lock my wrist and use my entire arm as an extension of the pencil, allowing it to glide across the page without stopping. We further discussed finding and keeping our place in a drawing, using observation to inform the

movement and direction of our hand, not lifting our pencil or stopping, adding brief pauses, drawing-redrawing and the drive to push forward without erasing. This young man acknowledged profound relevance in this succinct conversation. This informative discussion proved to convey great importance more so than a formal lesson or individual practice following a teacher demonstration. Immediately, this student was observed applying new approaches to his art-making. At this juncture the impact was immediately translated into action and informed practice.

Students see the teacher as a fellow artist- also learning, making artistic gains and absorbing meaning through content and experience in daily art-making. These practices provide platforms for prolonged growth opportunities through meaningful artist-to-artist conversations. When the teacher lowers the vail of differentiation between artist and pupil, a new dialogue emerges.

In another learning situation, I used a valuable conversation with one of my students to sketch out a seemingly random construct of two completely unrelated topics. Recently I introduced abstract art and the Surrealist movement. Classes were exposed to highly contrasting visuals that juxtaposed images deeply rooted in the subconscious, dreams, and memories. The works of Salvador Dali, Frida Kahlo, May Ray, Marc Chagall, and Rene Magritte were the backdrop for students as they contemplated their own work. For their prompt, students were encouraged to combine subjects that were not necessarily related. These subjects are intended to yield a strong visual concept with striking visual contrast. To grab student attention and spur initial investment, I used examples of the first two subjects that came to mind: Monster energy drink and earbuds. Two seemingly unrelated concepts that apparently had a previously established position in my brain and at that very moment—came to the forefront of thought. I briefly elaborated on three visual possibilities with these subjects: monster energy drink horizontally or diagonally pouring

out earbuds and music notes, music and earbuds vertically falling into the upright energy drink can, or an actual monster on the can with earbuds.

After our class discussion, I made my way around to each table of students. One of my students and I began a dialogue about the example I had given to the class. She looked up at me with a look of excitement on her face and posed the question: “Have you drawn it?” I replied, “No, but I should.” She reinforced that the concept would be a great drawing and not only that I should create the drawing, but it would be one that she would look forward to seeing.

Then with the fuel of student derived inspiration, the mechanics of tackling my visual topic began. How would I combine these to two vastly different subjects into a streamlined visual concept? My brain retreated to my childhood—taking the word *monster*, I recalled the most feared monster on film from my memories. My mind bridged the association of the energy drink and movie monsters as my initial concept. The act of completing this sketch became a fulfilling and rewarding experience that illustrated the learning link shared between teacher and student, both invested equally in the artistic growth and creative experience. As figures 5.9-10 illustrate, the student who inspired and encouraged her teacher to act on her idea, has her work photographed alongside the art she inspired her teacher to create.

Through-out the process of walking around the class, the cultivated environment yields opportunities to reinforce complex ideas for individuals and small groups of students. This time allows for small sketches and notes to be written from artist to artist and teacher to artist, either left on the table or included in the sketchbook. In figure 5.11, a student has absorbed the feedback given and is ready to implement suggestions into her artwork.

Sketch-Plan Book Practices

Through-out this year, I am listening to a renewed voice and inspiration, the source being fulfilled in my sketchbook. A remarkable and profound sense of dedication to my sketchbook has

strengthened a refreshed purpose and established a source of potential. I crave working in my sketchbook, adding to pre-existing ideas, rethinking concepts, and mapping out further explorations. I take my sketchbook with me to conferences, meetings, and on various short and long-distance trips. In figure 5.12, a training session on art assessment is unpacked through my visual note-taking in my sketch-plan book.

I sketch, plan, draw, re-draw, sketch-over, and repeat. Planning for creativity is a continuous process allowing for consistent influxes of new material. Through-out the planning process, organization emerges as a necessity. To organize my sketching, I use templates as well as freelance outlines. I rotate the orientation, organize boxes, and make lists in my sketchbook. Make-shift templates and space frames are created as needed from discarded mailer postcards and advertisements. The act of improvising reinforces the impulse to capture spontaneous inspiration and eventually plan for additional future creativity. Tracking, labeling and sorting my sketches encourages me to keep drawing and adding to my sketchbooks. It spurs elaboration on the briefest of encounters to the most impactful of pieces. Sights, sounds, make-and-take art experiences, conversations, and sojourns give way to new classroom inclusions.

Because "art lessons require full time planning" (Szekely, 2005, pg. 46), sketching translates directly into planning for classroom activities. Significantly, my teacher's sketch-plan book serves as a classroom support for my art teaching and art-making, just as the students' sketchbook serves as their art-making measures. In the same manner, this portable art-making kit records ideas, inspiration, and events, sketches produce independent platforms for future work. As in figures 5.13-14, students gain perspective in exploring multiple artistic thoughts in a single format, making selections, building strong visual concepts. These preparations inspire students to bring their own ideas into the art room as a part of their overall authentic art-making experience. with the final goal being a completely heuristic student experience.

In my classroom, the sketchbook is referred to as a *working record*—a living, breathing document, a "springboard for further use" (Robinson, 1995 p.36). Our sketchbooks are assembled with experiences, additions, and changes, where "accidents are welcome" (Szekely & Alsip Buckman, 2012, p.106). As figure 5.15 shows, students collect and bring in items of inspiration, selecting which items to include and which to reserve. Undoubtedly, students are exercising their own artistic judgement and decision making with regards to planning their art. Ultimately, "sketchbooks are for teaching artistic independence" (personal communication, Szekely, December 5, 2018).

Within sketchbooks, a "drawing becomes experimentation and play, it is loaded with accidents and possibilities" (Szekely & Alsip Buckman, 2012, p.106). It is of vital importance to not discount the random encounter with inspiration and to invite the unexpected. Students are encouraged to leave pages blank, skip pages leaving room to expand, and reserve unused areas for artistic opportunities as they surface. Our sketchbooks track our progress and monitor our revisions. We count on our sketchbook to propel our creativity towards making significant works of art. Copyright © Katherine M. Avra, 2019

Figure 5.1: Teacher Sketch-Plan Book Entry: watercolor experimentation.

Figure 5.2-5.3: Surrealist Sketches: Student sketch on left, student-inspired teacher sketch on right.

Figure 5.2

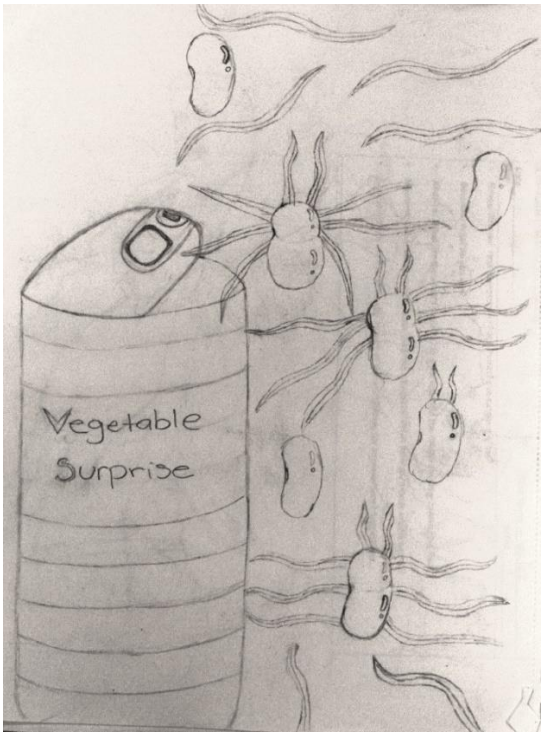


Figure 5.3

Figure 5.4: Student Sketchbook: implementing suggestions and feedback from note.

Figure 5.5: Teacher Sketch-Plan: visual note-taking on assessment.

Figures 5.6-5.7: Student Sketch Entries: during idea generation, evolution, and conceptual exploration.

Figure 5.6

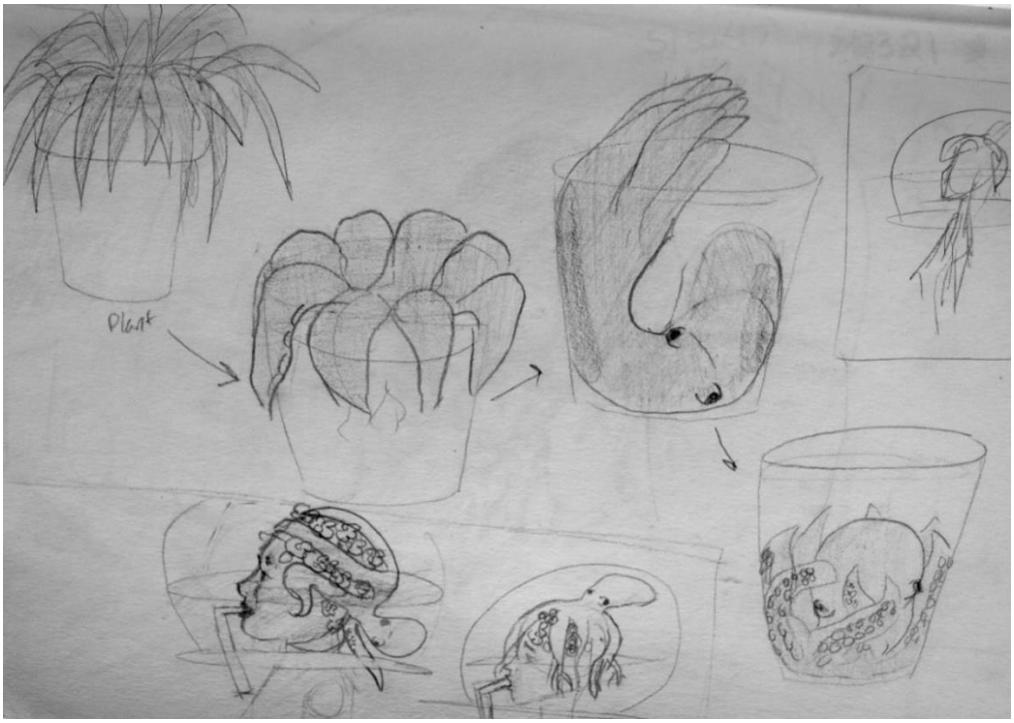


Figure 5.7

Figure 5.8: Student Watercolor Sketch: watercolor added to pencil sketch.

Chapter 6

Reflection and Impact

As an artist teacher, a sustainable artistic vigor has renewed my practice and planning. The sketch-plan book has restructured the way I approach planning and teaching. Reflection on my new sketch-plan book practices has especially impacted student confidence in the classroom, which is a formidable foe I encounter daily.

Drawing is an intimidating subject for many students, especially for those with little or no experience in art-making. Working alongside student, drawing and sketching with then, has shown me that confidence is a powerful tool. The lack of confidence hovers over the vast emptiness of the blank page in a sketchbook and intimidates artists and students alike. The almost insurmountable doubt paralyzes their pencil. For secondary students, even a smudge on a paper or a wrinkle in a corner can block momentum in art-making, (Szekely & Alsip Buckman, 2012) thus adding to the formidable process.

Where to start? How to begin? What mark to make? What if it looks wrong or I can't do it right? All these phrases are commonly echoed in the art studio. This blank cavern of a page seems like free-falling into the abyss of uncertainty. The fear of failure and uncertainty shuts down any forward momentum from built enthusiasm created from the lesson introduction. The opportunities in sketchbooks wait on the students to take the first step.

The significant and profound issue of the lack of confidence is addressed by John A. Michael in his book Art and Adolescence. He writes about the systemic lack of confidence in adolescents as it pertains to art-making. Michael acknowledges two major contributing factors and I would argue one additional factor. Confidence, or the lack thereof, according to Michael, can first be sourced to the diverse development of spatial and visual expression. Michael states that although young children's' brains begin to establish concepts in these areas, no concrete

foundation has yet been formed. He goes on to discuss that during adolescence, most individuals see an increase in spatial notions, including: fluency, access, awareness, and abilities.

Next, Michael continues by addressing the influence of the outside opinion. He names societal examples and public groups as parties that compare student work to that of unrealistic expectations—adult art or photo-real examples. Adolescents can take this public opinion and formulate a negative perception about their own work. This mind-set leads to unreachable expectations by students with little to no art experience.

I would argue that peers also influence student confidence in art-making. In my observations and experience, peers compare their artwork to that of others. Then, students compare their current work to previous work. This organic process happens swiftly in the classroom and over time. Adolescents are quick to judge their pre-mature work with the expectations of perfection and full realism. These judgements result in negative attitudes about students' progress and abilities.

Alternatively, I would add that to overcome such obstacles, often students derive confidence from their peers. While working in their sketchbooks, students often pause, look up, look around, and take the pulse of their progress as well as their classmates'. These sometimes-brief breaks provide opportunities for acknowledging artistic gains. Students spur each other towards further accomplishments. While students can be their own harsh critic, they can also be their own best advocate and source of encouragement.

Students are encouraged to exchange their work with a peer. These informal and in-progress critiques serve several purposes. Not only does it give the artist a chance to look at their peer's work and gather helpful parallels, it also gives the artist a chance to reflect and share a meaningful discussion with their peers. Students are encouraged to take a step back and hold the peer's work so that the artist can gain distance and perspective on their progress as well as

making mental notes for future planning. These artist-to-artist exchanges provide energy and inspiration to not only continue drawing but to propel students to the next idea and the next page in their sketchbooks.

To elaborate, over several class periods students have been studying realistic drawing. Through observational still-life drawings, students captured gesture and movement, defined composition, established vantage points, and harnessed balance. As figures 6.16 shows, students created their own arrangements in the center of their tables uses drapery and baskets to compliment the organic matter. The significance of designing their own arrangement then carefully selected their vantage point for the optimum composition builds confidence and instils in the art-making process.

Students were overheard saying: *Look over here*! *I am standing to get the best viewpoint* and *I was imaging in my mind, as things were being passed out—what I was going to draw and how to include everything*." Students are using their artistic lens to make creative decisions and plan for their most successful outcome.

After walking around each table, encouraging the students to settle into their chosen viewpoint, I also began to draw. The freedom in working with the students builds confidence on all levels. To the students, this displays my willingness to be an active participant in the learning and artistic process. The act of creating art along with the students better informs me on how to structure my guidance and support of their artistic needs. We are all drawing, practicing, improving, refining and challenging ourselves. Figures 6.17-18 show students' and my sketching of still-life arrangements.

While informal sharing happens multiple times daily, collectively sharing our sketchbooks happens weekly. Though the weekly sharing is teacher initiated, it is not teacher led. Students bring in and show their original plans and ideas in sketchbooks. They seek genuine

feedback and encouragement in their interests and their pursuits. A low-risk *show and tell* opportunity to reflect on their work and absorb the reaction of others. Once more, confidence is tangibly gained through the exchange of interests, ideas, feedback, and reflection.

The conclusive results—witnessing truly inspired students claiming their artistic voice. An enormous sense of accomplishment and pride fills their disposition. Students, once overcome with extreme anxiety and frozen from the intimidation of the page, are casting fear aside and diving into their work. The ownership and pride in sketchbooks are obvious with students as they begin to work without hesitation. Their sense of independence is being forged through confidence in their own plans and ideas. One student remarked: *value shading makes my drawing come to life—I feel I am getting into my art and making my sketching look more realistic*, upon reflecting on his accomplishments.

Liken to a leap, confidence and progress pushes students to take the first step, moving the pencil onto paper, refraining from the constant urge to pre-judge and erase. All these steps are journeys towards artistic independence and moving away from teacher led art-making. The sketchbook paves the way, spurring ideas into action and springing to life on the page. Truly the significance in sketch-planning practices has transformed my art room, my students, and my work. The sketch-plan book, its practices, and applications have changed the way my students work in their sketchbooks. I have observed increases in fluency, effort, and confidence. Moving away from traditional pedagogy and toward greater heuristic practices, I have implemented methods for achieving greater artistic and academic success for my students.

Academic Evidence

Was student success impacted by the new sketchbook curriculum and my use of a sketch-plan book? Did the sketch-plan book increase artistic growth along with academic gains? Grade data was collected and compared to draw conclusions and source the increases in student success.

Due to limitations in data access and to maintain confidentiality, teacher and student names were removed, apart from my name. Data from student grades was compiled and compared spanning three-years, for 2D art and drawing 1, with various teachers. Overall, results revealed increases in student success.

Table 6.1 Data Reflection

During 2016-17, I taught 2D art along with my former colleague/department chair. The sketchbook curriculum was my colleague's design and was aligned with my classes. Data reveals that the sketchbook curriculum in place during 2016-17, saw low student grades. The 4th quarter grades from our 2nd period classes yielded a total of eight failing grades, six from her classes and two from mine. The amount of "A" grades was equal to amount of failing marks—both eight in total. The highest number of students receiving the same mark was a grade of "D," the lowest passing grade. Table 1 represents the lowest depiction of overall student success. Not only was student success suffering but student enthusiasm and deep, aesthetic connectivity was negatively impacted from this pedagogy.

Table 6.2 Data Reflection

I aligned the 1st quarter grades of 2D and Drawing 1 courses taught by me from the 2016-17 through 2018-19. Overall, data reveals there were zero failing grades in Drawing 1 as compared to five failing in 2016-2017 and two failing grades in 2017-2018. The decrease in failing grades establishes the increase in student success. The only curricular component to be restructured was the sketchbook curriculum.

Table 6.3 Data Reflection

In comparing my Drawing 1 class with the two other Drawing 1 instructors, students had relatively, high levels of passing grades from all three instructors. In total, there were 34 "A's" earned and only one failing grade. My Drawing 1 course saw nearly equal amounts of grades A, "B," and "C." The consistency of passing grades indicates an intentionally implemented

classroom structure. The new sketchbook curriculum is an obvious indicator impacting student achievement.

It is worth considering that during 2018-19, having three instructors for drawing, as opposed to two instructors previously, impacted student achievement. Class size became more manageable, easing tensions on space, materials, and teacher attention. Freshmen through seniors were balanced between each instructor bringing stability to the dynamic of each classroom environment. Teachers are also afforded more opportunities to teach to their strengths rather than ushering students through and introductory course to satisfy their required fine arts credit.

Recommendations

For pre-service teachers, continue to treat your sketchbook as your studio assistant. It has been your resource for all-things undergrad and beyond. The exercises you study during your pre-service years cultivate substantial experiences for classroom-readiness. These exercises should not be lost as you prepare for your own students. In leaving the college classroom for your own classroom, your sketchbook can be the link from planning to practice. Be encouraged to keep your sketchbook as the invaluable asset through-out your teaching career.

For career service teachers, be encouraged to review your current planning practices. Ask yourselves about the practicality and implementation of your lesson plans. Consider your current plan book and your personal sketchbooks. We perhaps have moved away from our sketchbooks of the past, replacing them with a stagnate, output-only, plan book. Gather ideas from your previous work and build on new lesson ideas. Just as we as teachers can experience artist's block or lack of creativity, revisit your sketchbooks and consider them a source of potential lesson planning. Unfurl and reinvent your sketchbooks with the creative well-spring offered by sketch-plan books. Make your sketch-plan book a tool for resource sharing and planning for creativity.

While consistency in the classroom is vital component for classroom management, day-to-day structure can be adjusted to encourage diversity in prepared lessons. Allow us to consider the need for refreshed teacher approaches to lesson planning and avoiding repetition of lesson from the past. Use your sketch-plan book to design not only the lesson components but that environment for the lesson delivery.

Let us highlight new approaches to the layout of the room, material access, and student work spaces that cultivate innovative sketching possibilities. Show students your designs for the room and for the lesson and involve them in the construction of the lesson both physically and creatively. While we teachers are the "stimulating spark plugs" (Michaels, 1983, pg. 3), we ignite the imagination in the students to enrich their own space prior to artmaking. The art room is then immersed with a sense of positivity, pride, and respect yields a level of classroom artistic investment that bolsters students to produce their strongest work.

Art teachers can alter the room to support desired learning outcomes. Props, displays, arrangements, showcases, and bodies of work can promote specific creative environments for planned lessons. (Szekely, 2006). When students see our plans, sketches, and ideas, they can better understand the source of the lesson and us as teachers (Szekely, 2006). This collaboration demonstrates the teacher's willingness and desire to promote students to artists with equal investment in what happens creatively in their shared classroom. Not only is student interest peaked, but enthusiasm and motivation are bolstered (Michaels, 1983).

Dream, act, repeat! Simple encouragements for students in their sketchbook journey—walk with a sketchbook in hand, wonder about the world, and capture new encounters. Fuel your sketchbook daily with inspiration for not only your own art-making but to share in your studio with your fellow artists, including your teacher. Cultivate, create, and encapsulate your ideas in your sketchbook—each page is your mind's centrifuge of creative collections.

Table 6.1: 2D Art: Avra and Teacher D

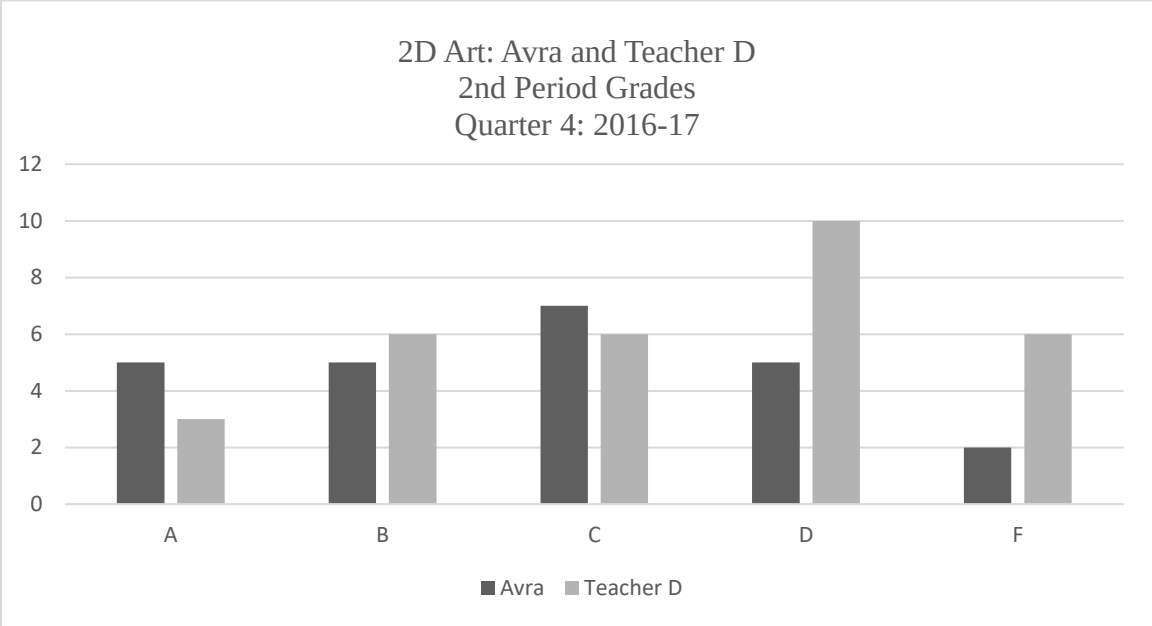


Table 6.2: 2D Art and Drawing 1: Avra

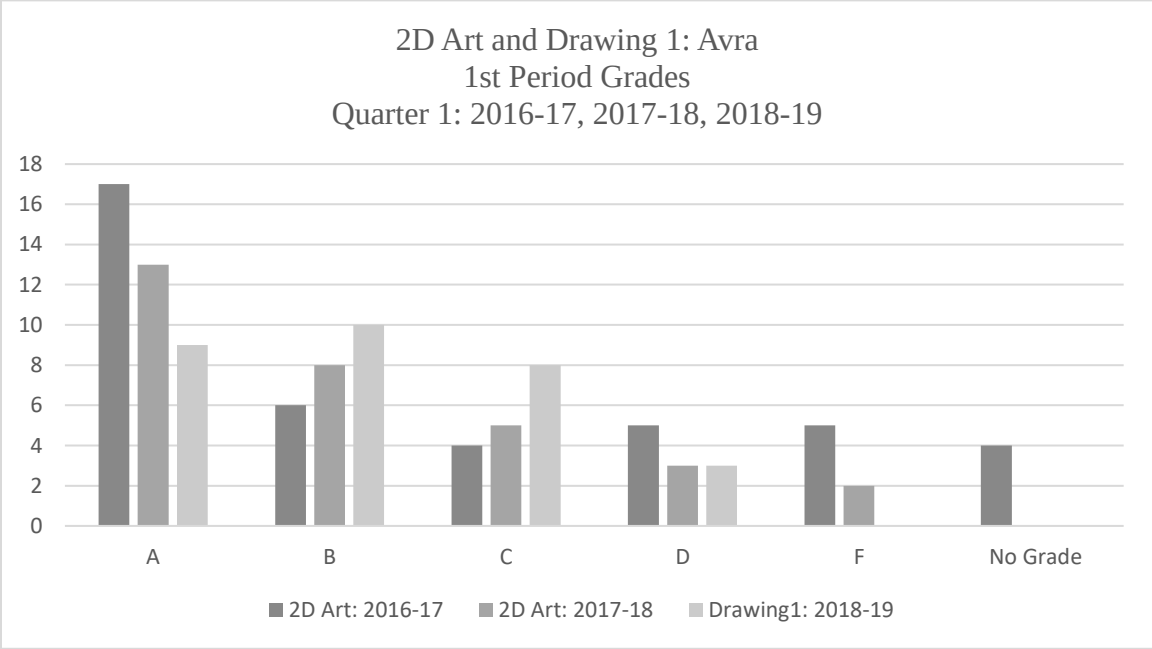


Table 6.3: Drawing 1: Avra, Teacher B, Teacher C

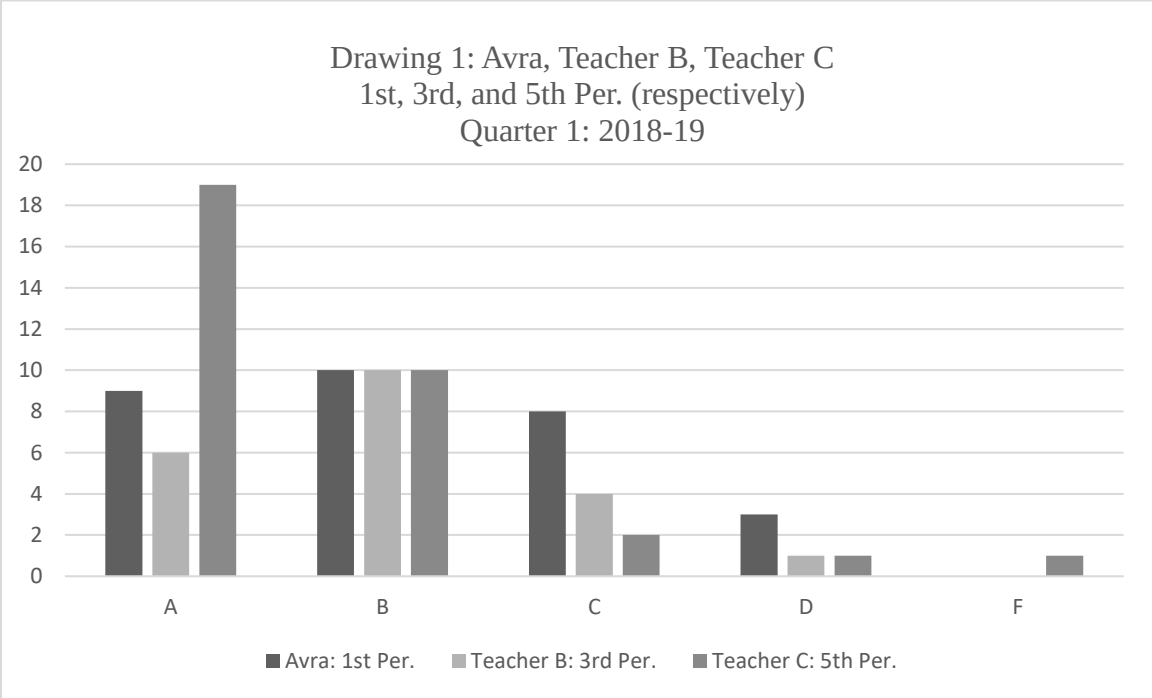


Figure 6.1: Observational Drawing: student-designed organic still-life sketching.

Figure 6.2. Cut Fruit Still-Life Drawings: Sketches showcase gesture sketching techniques, compositional arrangement, and proximity. Teacher artwork on left, student artwork on right.

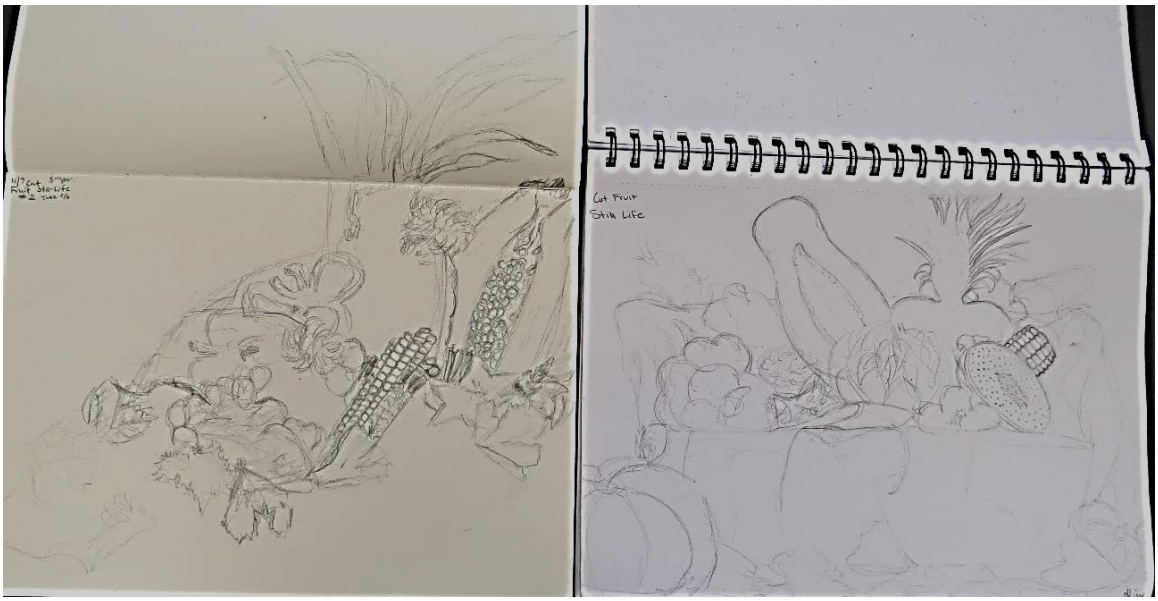
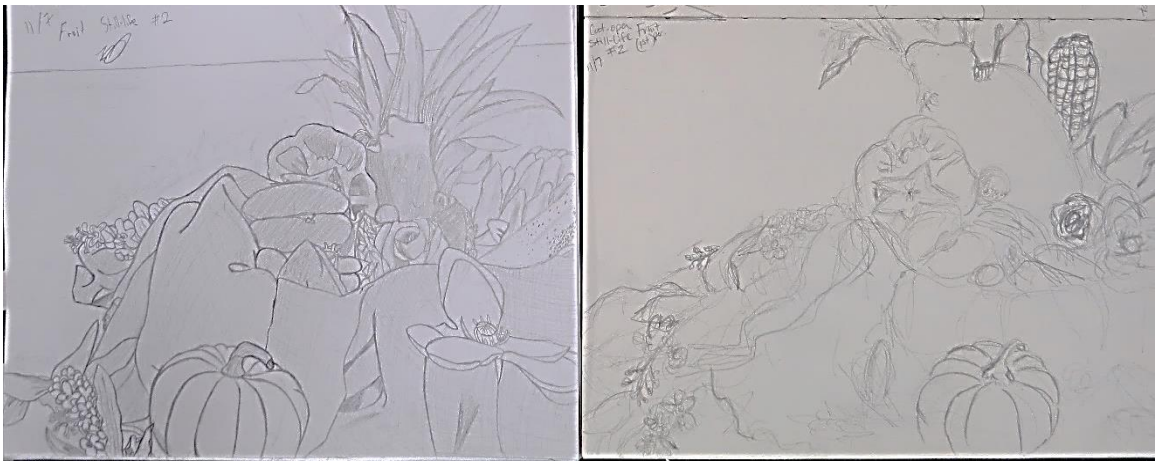


Figure 6.3: Cut Fruit Still-Life Drawings: student drawing on left, teacher drawing on right.



Appendix

Sample Sketchbook Grading Rubric

__/5 Independent creativity demonstrated; shows unique approach to visual problem-solving

__/5 Balanced; filled composition, art extends off-page

__/5 Demonstrated controled use of media and techniques

__/5 Used diagonals, overlapping, variety of scale

__/5 Included detail, enrichers

__/5 Craftsmanship

___/30 TOTAL

Sample Learning Goal

Observational Drawing Lesson: *Still-Life Arrangements*

Student Learning Goal:

Students will understand observational drawing and, after designing their own still-life arrangement, will be able to create realistic still-life drawings.

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KATHERINE M. AVRA

EDUCATION

- Northern Kentucky University, Bachelor of Arts

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- Art Teacher • Fort Pierce Central High School
- Art Teacher • Southport Middle School
- Art Teacher • Kids Need More Art
- High School Division Chair • Florida Art Education Association

PROFESSIONAL HONORS

- Teacher of the Week • Fort Pierce Central High School • two-time recipient
- Teacher of the Year • Southport Middle School
- Collaborative Teamwork Award • Southport Middle School
- Student Art Teacher of the Year • Kentucky Art Education Association
- Outstanding Student • Northern Kentucky University • College of Education

KATHERINE M. AVRA