

TRENDS

THE JOURNAL OF
THE TEXAS ART
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION



Visual Stories - Creative Writings - Traditional Research

2025

Letter from the

PRESIDENT

As we move into a brand new year, I want to take a moment to wish each of you an inspiring, and fulfilling start to the school year. Whether you're setting up your classroom, delivering professional development, or simply getting ready for all the amazing students to enter your classroom, know that the work you do truly matters.

Remember, you're not just teaching art, you're shaping and molding the way your students see the world and themselves. You give students the courage to express themselves and the tools to transform their ideas into something meaningful and beautiful. You are more than teachers and educators, you are visionaries and change agents that make a difference.

This year, I encourage you to embrace intentionality in your teaching and compassion in your daily connections. Celebrate small victories, lean on your fellow educators for support during challenging times, and remember that your work has a tremendous impact that extends far beyond your scope of work.

Together, as a community of artists, we will be rooted in purpose and continue to transform, inspire, and motivate the next generation of artists, individuals, and human beings.

Have a great year, and I'll see you at the TAEA Conference in Round Rock, TX.

Linh Nguyen

Texas Art Education Association President

TAEA BOARD



Amber Forgey (Vice-President Elect Youth Art Month), Matthew Wright (Treasurer), Linh Nguyen (President), Sara Chapman (Executive Director), Sandra Newton (President Elect), Brady Sloane-Duncan (Secretary), Angela Coffey (Vice-President Youth Art Month), Myron Stennett (Vice-President Membership); Missing: Moe Doebbler (Vice-President Elect Membership) and Ricia Kerber (former Commercial Exhibits Director)

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In Loving Memory of

Sara Chapman



Sara Chapman lived a long and active life, dedicating her career to the field of education—most especially, to the visual arts. A devoted art educator, Sara inspired generations of students, mentored fellow educators, and championed the advancement of art education across Texas and beyond.

Throughout her remarkable journey in art education, Sara blazed a trail that left an enduring legacy in the hearts and minds of people from all walks of life. She had a gift for listening, encouraging, and uplifting others. Whether helping a student realize their dream or supporting a colleague, she did so with grace, generosity, and joy. She took immense pride in seeing others succeed, including in the organization she dearly loved—the Texas Art Education Association (TAEA). Her commitment to TAEA and its members was a gift freely given, rooted in love.

Sara could just as easily spark laughter with a funny story as she could lead a thoughtful discussion on the importance of high-quality arts education. She made everyone feel seen, heard, and valued—truly listening with intention and care.

Sara will be remembered for her unwavering positivity, generous spirit, and deep love of art. She believed in the transformative power of creativity and made it her mission to help others discover their artistic voice, regardless of age or background. She left the world better than she found it—lifting others without ever asking for anything in return.

Sara was also committed to expanding discourse in art education through her continued support of *TRENDS*. Her leadership, guidance, and impact fostered ongoing dialogue about art education to advance the visual arts and inform theoretical and pedagogical practices through the annual publication of *TRENDS*. This year's issue is dedicated to Sara who will always be remembered for championing *TRENDS* and supporting art educators across Texas and beyond.

If you were a student, a friend, or a member of TAEA or NAEA, Sara considered you family. Her legacy lives on in each of us and in the creative spirit she so passionately nurtured.



REVIEWERS

WEAVE

Mary Margaret Swets

Mary Margaret Swets is an artist, art historian, art teacher, and writer. She received her bachelor's degree in Art History at Arizona State University, a master's degree in Art History at The University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and a master's degree in Teaching at Mississippi University for Women. She teaches Digital Art in Mansfield ISD and is an adjunct professor at Tarrant County College. She loves to write about art, sharing art with others, and finding connections through a love of art.

William Nieberding, Ph.D.

Dr. William Nieberding is Associate Professor of Art Education at Stephen F. Austin State University with over 20 years of teaching experience in photography and art education. His current research explores arts integration and tintype photography with STEM to explore the interactions where chemistry and art intersect. Nieberding holds a Ph.D. in Art Education from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in photography from Purdue University.

Ricia Kerber

Interim Executive Director

EDITORIAL

Storytelling encompasses the exploration of memories, meaning, and making by drawing upon past, present, and future experiences over a continuum of time. Art plays a unique role in storytelling through its ability to transform the ways stories are told, interpreted, and shared across different spaces. When storytelling is situated within learner-centered pedagogies, students are authentically engaged in investigating, generating, and communicating their own stories and the stories of those around them. Students also meaningfully engage in reflecting, revising, and revisiting the stories they tell through a myriad of multifaceted decisions. As art educators, we must encourage and support students to engage in learning experiences that empower them to construct, respond to, and act upon visual stories that are relevant to their lives and experiences.

The 2025 issue of TRENDS features collaborative and narrative inquiry approaches to visual storytelling in K-12 and higher education settings. The featured articles draw upon multiple modes of artmaking and highlight the important role art education plays in supporting students and educators in developing and expressing their stories in personal, communal, and digital spaces.

The first article presents the framework of an interdisciplinary Interpretive Arts Show that blended visual literacy with English Language Arts to showcase diverse perspectives and shared stories among a community of middle school aged learners. Collaboration across disciplines was used to fuel the storytelling process, guiding students through a transformative journey of critical thinking and visual literacy that culminated in a campus-wide exhibition. The second article presents a collaborative project that transformed the personal narratives and affirmations of high school students into a public mural. Students explored historical and contemporary artists while reimagining their own self-perceptions, memories, and identities by weaving together individual works into a collective story. The third article presents an innovative partnership between different age groups of students that fostered collaborative exchanges rooted in storytelling and shared values. Meaningful exchanges outside of the classroom space and collective artmaking resulted in a series of cross-generational murals that communicated values through art that were important to students and their community. The concluding article presents storytelling through an auto ethnographic visual narrative that explores personal experiences from adolescence to adulthood. Reimagining storytelling through a narrative lens with different forms of media supports students and educators in developing personal agency and a nuanced sense of self.

As Co-Editors we hope this issue will inspire and challenge you to incorporate storytelling into your art education practices and to facilitate opportunities for your students to authentically share their stories and the stories of others.

David Moya, TRENDS Co-Editor

Keri Reynolds, TRENDS Co-Editor



Maddie B.
The Boston Fire Escape
2025 Gold Seal Winner

CO-EDITORS



David Moya

I have over 10 years of teaching experience and 8 years in administration. I currently work at a community college. Previously, I was a Director and a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Dallas. I have taught a variety of courses and programs for various levels and audiences. My core competencies include professional development, events, skill development, and educational programs. I have a strong interest in the impact of arts in education, and building new and innovative programs that foster student learning. I have a Master's in Instruction, an MA in Humanities, and a BFA in Fine and Studio Arts, and I am currently pursuing a PhD in Education.




Keri Reynolds

Dr. Keri Reynolds is a National Board Certified Teacher with a variety of age levels ranging from kindergarten to adult. She has taught at the secondary level. Her experience at the secondary level includes AP Photography, AP Drawing Portfolio and AP 2D Design. She is passionate about learning through art with students and fellow art teachers. She is a past president of the (NAEA) Secondary Research commissioner. Her research interests include art education. She has presented across the country at TAEA, NAEA, and the Journal and School Arts.



Gabriel Flores

With 14 years of experience, I am currently an Independent School District. I have expertise in graphic design and transition to education. I have achieved significant success in Texas Art Education Association.



currently serve as the Department Chair for Visual Arts and Humanities at Dallas University of Houston - Clear Lake. I supervised, managed, and taught art education include art education, curriculum development, program management, grant writing, I am passionate about integrating arts and STEM, advocating for the value and creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. I hold an EdD in Curriculum and constantly learning and expanding my knowledge and skills in my field of expertise.

Teacher and Secondary Fine Arts Lead in Houston, Texas. Her teaching experiences transcend across a variety of settings and include specialization in teaching studio art courses. Her secondary level includes teaching Art I, Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, Digital Art and Media, Graphic Design, and Art History. She values the importance of being a lifelong learner, being receptive to new ideas, and instilling a love for art in her students! She also serves as a National Art Honor Society sponsor and as the National Art Education Association's representative for Texas. Her research interests focus on contemporary art and community-based art education with underserved populations. She has presented at TAEA, AEA, and AP Annual Conferences, and her recent publications include articles published in TAEA's TRENDS.

es

With his experience in art education, Gabriel currently serves as the Assistant Director of Fine Arts for the Pasadena Unified School District. He holds a BFA in Media Arts and Design, and a MA in Educational Leadership. Gabriel has experience in graphic design, 3D animation, and film, having previously worked in the oil and gas industry before making the transition into art education. His work has garnered multiple Telly, Pixie, and Summit awards. Under his guidance, his students have achieved significant milestones in numerous local, state, and national visual art competitions. Gabriel also serves as the Association's Media Facilitator and Photographer.



Natalie E.
Pile of Power
2024 Gold Seal Winner



Open to Interpretation

Morgan Vickery & Ella Duran

Pieces of Positivity

Erica Jones

Fostering Collaboration and Community Through Cross-Generational Murals

Keri Reynolds

In the Midst

Leah Smith



OPEN TO INTERPRETATION

A REVIEW ON THE COLLABORATIVE AND
MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERPRETIVE ARTS SHOW PROCESS

By Morgan Vickery and Ella Duran



Exploring the dynamic blend of visual and written literacy through the Interpretive Arts Show, middle school students engaged in a multi-step process to expand their creativity. Collaboration across disciplines fueled the storytelling process, guiding students through a transformative journey of critical thinking and visual literacy. The culmination of this journey was a curated exhibition showcasing diverse perspectives and shared storylines, fostering a deep sense of community and self-expression. This immersive experience highlighted the art classroom's pivotal role in encouraging visual storytelling, enriching students' expressive communication, and building community among learners.

The Interpretive Arts Show

Step into a world where brushstrokes mark imaginative tales, photographs spark a writer's words, and each artwork becomes a portal into student-crafted narratives. Welcome to the storytelling unfolding within the multidisciplinary canvas of our new Interpretive Arts Show. As art educators, we often meticulously plan curriculum that not only hones technique but also encourages students to express themselves. Additionally, we seek to incorporate contemporary art alongside historical art movements to increase student understanding and instructional relevance. The Interpretive Arts Show experience was designed to do all of this and more, embracing the roles and risks of student-led inquiry and narrative phenomena.

As art educators at a suburban STEAM focused middle school, we wanted to create cross-curricular opportunities for our students that would prove beneficial across multiple contexts. We utilized feedback from recent exhibitions, teachers, students, and data to craft this innovative style of art exhibit. Our objective was to provide students with a platform to explore the studio habits of expression and persistence while interpreting stories and creating artworks in a connected, multidisciplinary setting. Similar to Housen's (2001) research, we observed that a focus on visual thinking strategies (VTS) in the interpretive process gave us insight into not only how students perceive artwork, but how the practices of visual literacy can transfer skills to other content areas. Throughout the unit, students were encouraged to translate their ideas and narratives into various forms, shaping classrooms and content areas across the school into vibrant and mutualistic storytelling spaces. Designing the interpretive process was fun, complex, and humbling. We aim to give you a behind-the-scenes look at the goals and objectives, the intricacies of the collaborative process, and the exemplars and logistics we found necessary to support facilitation.

Goals and Objectives

We knew we wanted to prioritize the relationship between visual and written literacy. Throughout the curriculum design process, we aimed to address two fundamental questions:

- How can we effectively teach art content and skills while nurturing individual artistic expression?
- What collaborations with other educators can enhance the interconnectedness of learning?

Charman and Ross (2004) assert that "there is an intimate relationship between interpreting art and making art" (p. 2), and it is the space in-between that provides a meaningful experience for our students. We did not, at the beginning of this experience, know where it would lead or how it would be received by students. In our interpretive pilot year, we were pleasantly surprised by the way in which embracing the space between art interpretation and art making transformed not only the students' learning experience, but also our identities and philosophies as teachers.

Collaborative Process

The implementation process was a collaborative effort that engaged multiple disciplines across our campus. When designing the process, we sought to funnel the steps through a continued “attitude of questioning” and “range of perspectives which inflected with and informed each other” (Charman & Ross, 2004, p. 40). A general diagram of the nomenclature and flow is located in Figure 3. It began with students in Audio Visual/Tech (AV/Tech) classes who were tasked with themed prompts designed to capture the essence of visual storytelling. These prompts guided students as they demonstrated mastery of photography concepts, laying the visual foundation for the interpretive journey that would unfold.

Building upon this foundation, eighth grade English Language Arts (ELA) students gallery-walked the photographs provided by the AV/Tech students, selecting one image each, and wrote a story that resonated with the captured photos. Their creative writing pieces served as the written literacy bridge that would later inspire and inform the artistic interpretations in our show. In Art 1 classes, students took the written narratives and translated them into captivating artworks, exploring the fusion of language and visual expression. In reading and selecting the narratives, they employed a multitude of annotation and analysis strategies. This phase of the process allowed students to practice the nuances of storytelling and comprehension through visual mediums, infusing their artworks with personal interpretation and creative flair, while honing essential ELA skills.

This continued in Art 2 classes, where students selected an Art 1 artwork along with its accompanying writing through a similar process. They were tasked with reimagining these pieces into new artistic renditions, adding layers of creativity and interpretation to the narratives embedded within while honoring the voices and choices of the students before them in the interpretive pathway.





Art 3 students took the reinterpretation process further by selecting an Art 2 artwork and its corresponding writing and Art 1 piece, breathing new life into these creations and showcasing the continuum of creative exploration that defined our Interpretive Arts Show. We did not want the photos to muddy other visual interpretations, so they were revealed only after our artists completed their artworks in the interpretive pathway.

As the interpretive artworks took shape, Art 3 students assumed the role of curators, overseeing the entire campus exhibit. Students were grouped and challenged to create proposals to communicate their visions for the show. After all groups presented their proposals in class, the resulting exhibition became a collage of the best ideas from each team. This curatorial leadership fostered organizational skills and provided insight into art careers. It also nurtured a sense of ownership and pride among the students, showcasing their abilities to lead and collaborate effectively.

Throughout this process, choice played a pivotal role, empowering students to tell stories that held personal significance in various mediums, combining both written and visual literacy. This fostered a classroom culture where students' voices were valued and celebrated through their artistic expressions. Additionally, the delineation between response and interpretation was cornerstone to the process, as explained by Charman and Ross (2004, p. 18),

"Responses are informed by the 'connotational baggage' brought by a viewer to an artwork...It is about the connections a viewer brings to their reading from their experience of the world...An interpretation of an artwork is constituted through a process of looking which takes into account a range of perspectives for thinking about the work beyond the personal."

While both are essential, it was the choices and reflections made through the ongoing looking that allowed students to engage fully in the interpretive storytelling process.



Figure 1. Art 2 artwork from pathway F, interpreting the “broken” theme.



Figure 2. Student artwork from the C pathway, interpreting the theme of “glamour”

Exemplars and Logistics

Essential to student understanding was the inclusion of teacher exemplars. This allowed us to trial run the process and gain a respect for the levels of critical thinking and problem solving we would be asking students to employ. We utilized a random photo generator online to create the foundation of our interpretive pathway, and then we used ChatGPT to write a creative short story about the photograph. Next, we took turns mirroring the Art 1, Art 2, and Art 3 roles of the pathway, each analyzing the writing and artworks provided and creating a unique visual interpretation. We provided these examples to students as we introduced the unit, letting them see and ask questions to better understand the flow of events.

Additionally, we used a strategic nomenclature system to meticulously track each contribution. We started with six photographs, each labeled with a unique letter A-F. These were referred to as ‘pathways’ (example: the A pathway). Then, we worked alongside the ELA teacher to select two writing samples per photograph. The letter of the photograph as well as a number were used to identify the writings (example: A1, A2, B1, etc.). Once our art students began creating their portions of the pathways, we selected two artworks per writing and tacked on an additional number to the nomenclature (example: A1-1, A1-2, B1-1, etc.). As such, we were able to present the branching pathway routes during the Interpretive Arts Show. We featured a total of 89 works at the exhibition.

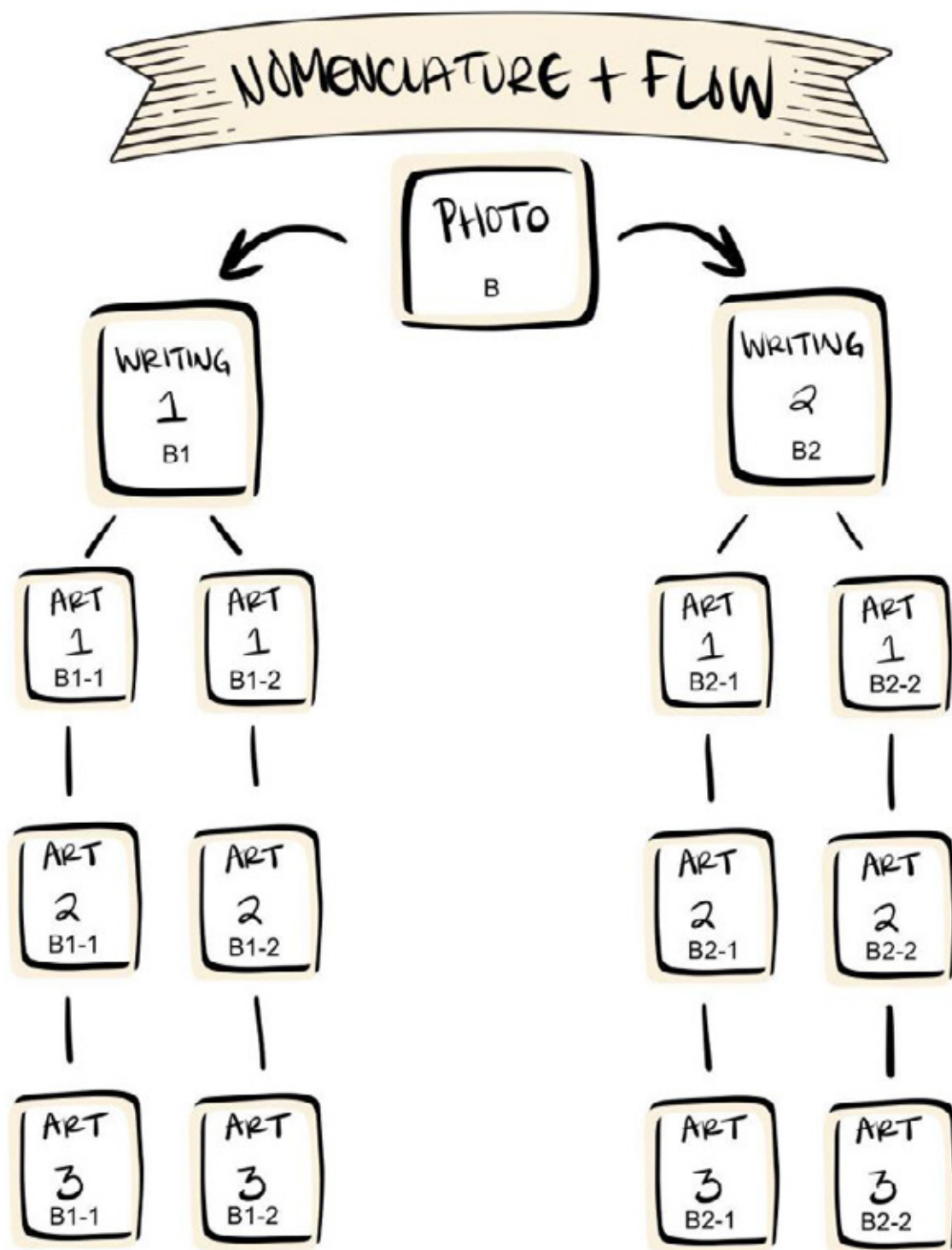


Figure 3. Diagram detailing the nomenclature system and flow of events in the Interpretive Arts Show process.

Exhibition and Community Involvement

The Interpretive Arts exhibition was an engaging showcase of student creativity and collaborative learning, carefully curated to highlight each pathway as a whole. Each artwork was thoughtfully connected through color-coded ribbons, creating clear pathways for viewers to navigate and explore the interpretive connections. Students took charge of setting up the show, meticulously hanging all artworks, and assuming roles as attendants in the gallery space, engaging with visitors and sharing insights into the creative process.

One unique aspect of the exhibition was the interactive component where viewers were invited to submit votes for their favorite overall pathway, encouraging active participation and feedback. Additionally, viewers were encouraged to take a writing sample home, inviting them to interpret the story in their own ways and bring back their interpretations for future exhibitions, fostering ongoing dialogue and facilitating meaningful art-making across generations. The impact of the exhibition was further validated by the visit of district curriculum personnel who commended the critical thinking and multidisciplinary skills showcased in the exhibit, affirming the value of collaborative and innovative approaches to arts education.



Figure 4. Student hanging up artwork during set-up. Author Image.



Figure 5. Students were very proud to show off their artwork and bring their parents to see the Interpretive Arts Show. Author Image.

Reflections and Discussion of Our Experience

The Interpretive Arts Show exemplified the potential of creative collaboration and interdisciplinary learning in nurturing students' artistic growth and expanding skillful storytelling. This approach enriched the educational experiences of AV/Tech, art, and ELA students, and also forged meaningful connections within the school community and beyond. Visual storytelling in the Interpretive Arts Show became a platform for constructing cultural and community knowledge. Students drew inspiration from their culture, memories, community experiences, and societal issues, infusing their artworks with layers of meaning and significance. This process not only celebrated diverse perspectives but also sparked dialogue on shared values, traditions, and challenges within the campus community. Overall, we observed the following outcomes:

- Students honed studio habits of mind, embracing expression and persistence in their creative endeavors.
- Artworks became vessels of storytelling, showcasing diverse perspectives and imaginative interpretations.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration fostered a deeper understanding of skills while promoting a sense of community among students and educators, as well as community members.

In keeping with our goals, the show nurtured self-expression, confidence, and empathy as students explored their identities, connected with others' experiences, and found their voices as storytellers. This process of creative expression empowered students to navigate complexities, embrace diversity, and envision possibilities for personal and social growth. Moreover, while our Interpretive Arts Show process did not explicitly investigate the role of VTS that Housen's (2001) research studied, we noticed similar trends. Housen defines VTS as "an art viewing program originally designed to develop aesthetic understanding: the range of thoughts and feelings that occur when looking at art" (p.99). In the VTS study, she noted that when given a structured opportunity for visual literacy, students improved their analytical reasoning, evidentiary thinking, and content transfer (Housen, 2001). Through anecdotal evidence and teacher reflection across our AV/Tech, ELA, and art classrooms, we arrived at similar conclusions as a result of student participation in the Interpretive Arts Show.

Additionally, an intentional structure of productive struggle encouraged students to face challenges in their interpretation and artmaking head-on, fostering a sense of empowerment to problem-solve their way through obstacles. As they navigated the complexities of the creative process, students discovered a newfound belief in themselves, leaned on each other for support, tapped into deeper realms of imagination, and felt a compelling urge to share their experiences and work with others. This transformative journey left them with a shared sense of pride and accomplishment, having overcome challenges they once thought insurmountable.

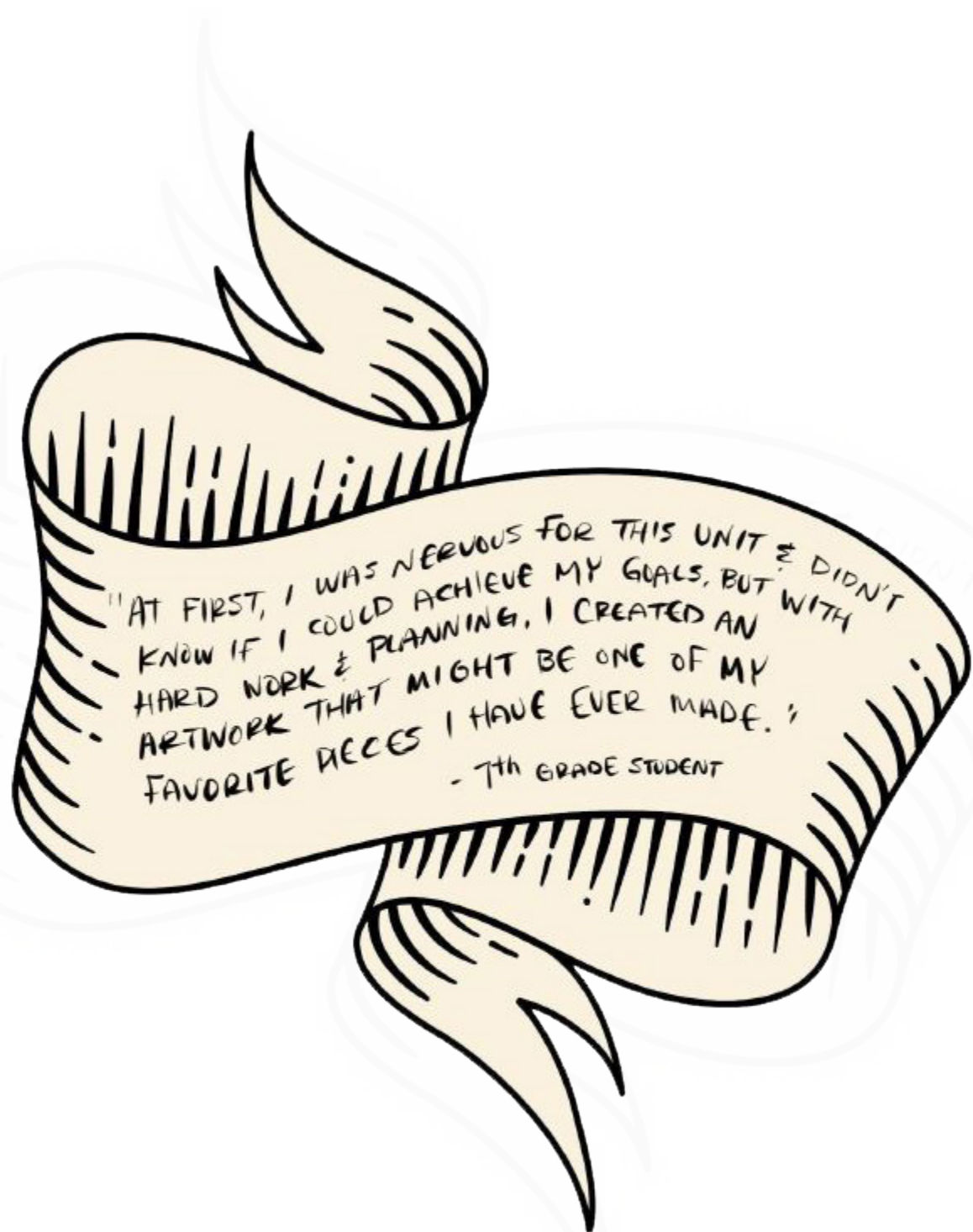


Figure 6. Reflection from a 7th grade student's artist statement regarding the Interpretive Arts Show unit.

Conclusion and Forward-thinking

“Send us students who can really, deeply think” are the words bestowed upon us recently by the high school educators in our district. While we can’t answer, solve, or even comprehend some of the issues plaguing art education, we can confidently assert that we’ve unlocked a new level of critical thinking and visual literacy in our students through the implementation of this unit and exhibit. Each artwork became a window into the diverse perspectives, experiences, and emotions of the students, showcasing a rich tapestry of narratives that resonated with audiences. Thinking forward to next year, we intend to implement the following changes and/or expansions: Implement deeper interpretation using the specific VTS questions from Housen’s (2001) study for increased critical thinking skills and content transfer.

- Expand the process to include other campuses and grade levels within the district.
- Provide the opportunity for performing arts students to participate.
- Refine the community participation prompt to increase the number of non-student interpretations submitted through the exhibition process.
- Build in opportunities for developing art career skills in the Art 1 and 2 classes through student-led interviews and cross-grade level critiques.

This mutual exchange of creativity and expression not only showcased the transformative power of collaborative learning, but also underscored the vital role of the visual arts in fostering empathy, understanding, and shared narratives among students and community members alike.

References

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PIECES OF POSITIVITY

By Erica M. Jones

The *Pieces of Positivity* affirmation puzzle mural is a collaborative student art project that transforms personal narratives into a collective visual story. Rooted in self-affirmation, historical artistic influences, and the power of public art, this project showcases how students use visual language to tell their stories, connect with cultural and artistic histories, and reimagine their self-perception over time. Each student selected an affirmation that resonated with their personal experiences and designed a painted puzzle piece inspired by one of thirteen historical or contemporary artists. The final installation visually weaves together individual expressions into a communal artwork, symbolizing the evolving nature of identity and resilience. This article represents a photographic documentation of the project's process, student reflections, and the completed mural, illustrating how affirmation-based artmaking bridges personal memory, cultural influence, and collective storytelling.

In an educational landscape where personal identity and self-worth are increasingly central to student well-being, the Pieces of Positivity affirmation puzzle mural provides a unique opportunity to merge self-reflection with artistic exploration. This project, completed by a ninth grade art class, aimed to empower students by transforming affirmations into visual expressions that contributed to a collective narrative. The mural was constructed from puzzle pieces, which were sanded, primed, and painted with acrylic. Each student integrated a personal affirmation into their design. The completed puzzles were assembled into a large-scale mural displayed in the school, reinforcing the concept that individual voices contribute to a larger, interconnected whole.

The project began with students selecting personal affirmation statements of self-empowerment, resilience, and encouragement. These affirmations became the foundation of their visual storytelling. To enhance the artistic depth of their work, students studied thirteen historical and contemporary artists, choosing one as inspiration for their background design. The selected artists included Keith Haring, Yayoi Kasuma, Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami, Mondrian, Kaws, Romero Britto, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Basquiat, Jen Stark, Alma Thomas, and Enrique Picardo. Drawing inspiration from artists allowed students to engage with art history while personalizing their creative interpretations.



Figure 1. Students priming the puzzle pieces.

Layering text with artistic influence, each puzzle piece became a personal reflection of the student's journey and identity. Students demonstrated the integration of historical artistic influences, personal narratives, and reflections on how affirmations shaped their identity over time.

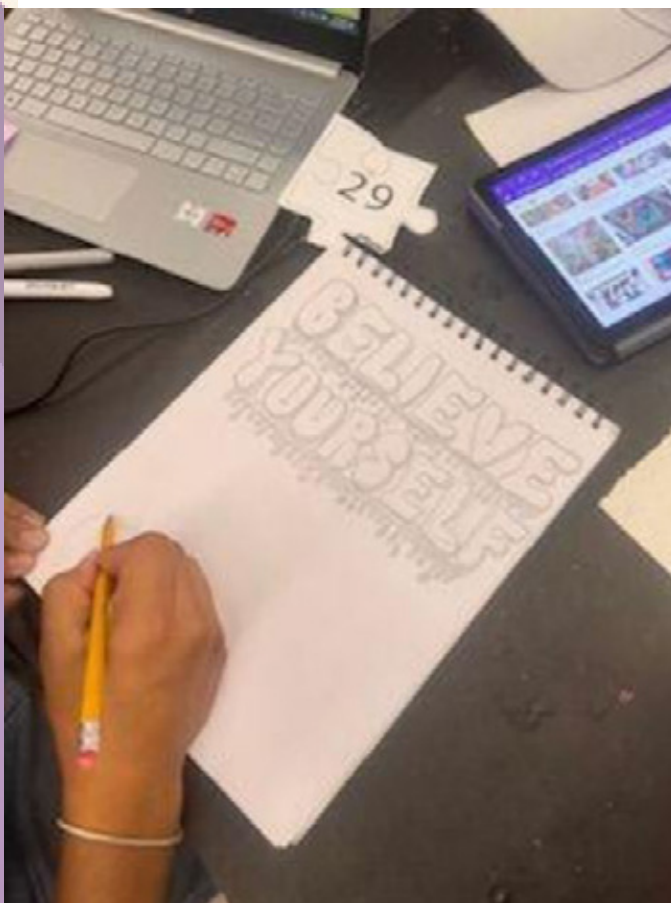
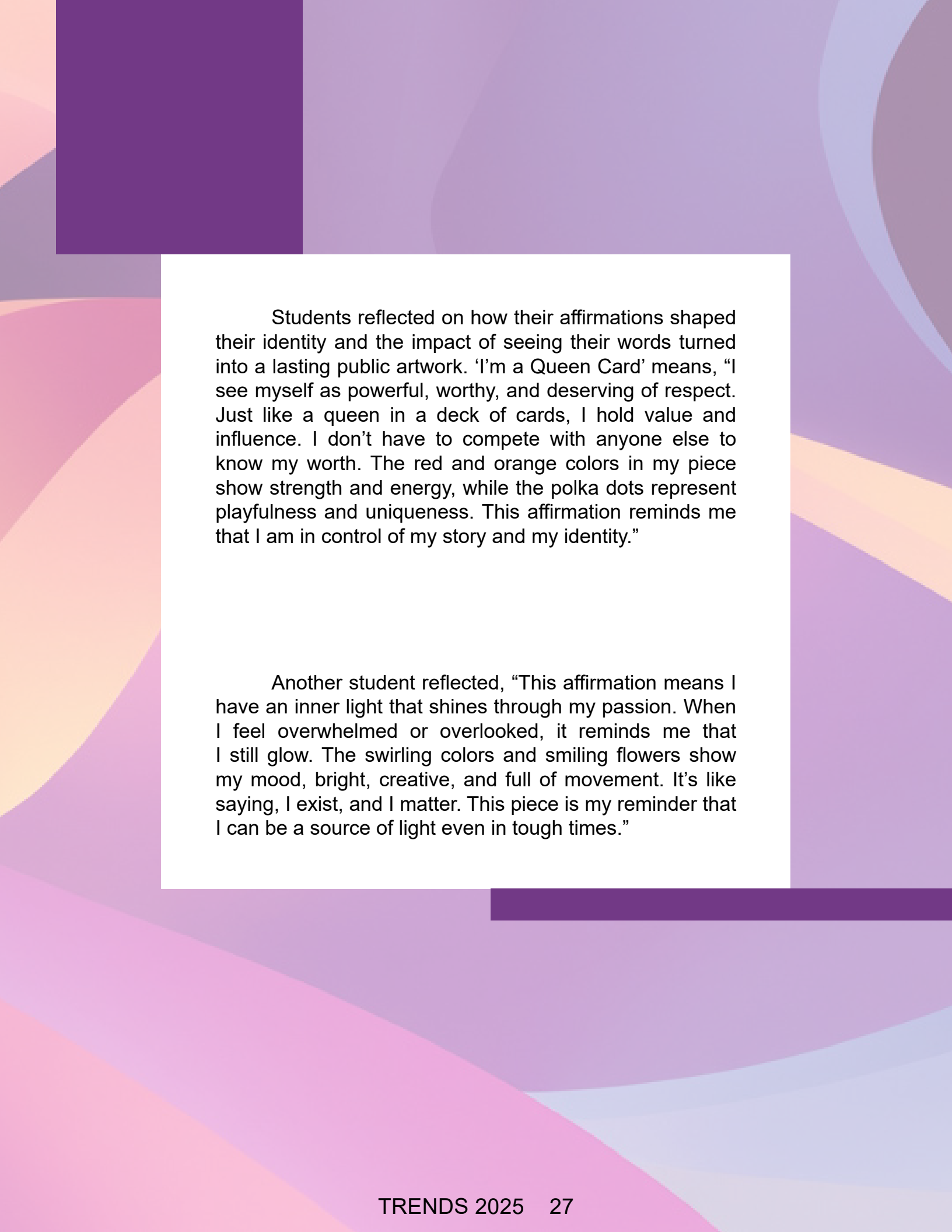


Figure 2. Students developing personal affirmation statements.



Figure 3. Students applying inspiration from artists into their backgrounds.



Students reflected on how their affirmations shaped their identity and the impact of seeing their words turned into a lasting public artwork. 'I'm a Queen Card' means, "I see myself as powerful, worthy, and deserving of respect. Just like a queen in a deck of cards, I hold value and influence. I don't have to compete with anyone else to know my worth. The red and orange colors in my piece show strength and energy, while the polka dots represent playfulness and uniqueness. This affirmation reminds me that I am in control of my story and my identity."

Another student reflected, "This affirmation means I have an inner light that shines through my passion. When I feel overwhelmed or overlooked, it reminds me that I still glow. The swirling colors and smiling flowers show my mood, bright, creative, and full of movement. It's like saying, I exist, and I matter. This piece is my reminder that I can be a source of light even in tough times."

Likewise, a student explained, “To me, ‘I am brave’ means I can keep going even when I’m scared. I chose cool blues to show calm strength and added patterns that feel bold and layered, like how I’m made of many stories. This affirmation pushes me to try new things and stand up for myself. When I see this puzzle piece, I remember I’ve made it through hard things, and that’s what bravery really is.”



Figure 4. Layering of text with artistic influence.



Figure 5. S



Student's Affirmation, 'I'm a Queen Card'



Figure 6. Student's Affirmation, 'I am Incandescent'



Figure 7. Student's Affirmation, 'I am Brave'



Figure 8. Student's Affirmation, 'I am Independent'

A student also reflected, 'I am Independent' "reminds me that I can trust myself. I don't always need someone else's approval to make choices. My puzzle piece shows that I stand on my own, but I'm still connected to others. The design reflects how I think freely and take pride in figuring things out for myself. This affirmation helps me believe that I can lead my own path, even if it's different from others."

The completed Pieces of Positivity mural showcased 84 unique voices, interwoven into a collective tapestry of affirmation and artistic storytelling. This mural demonstrates the power of affirmation-based art in fostering both individual storytelling and community-building through visual expression.

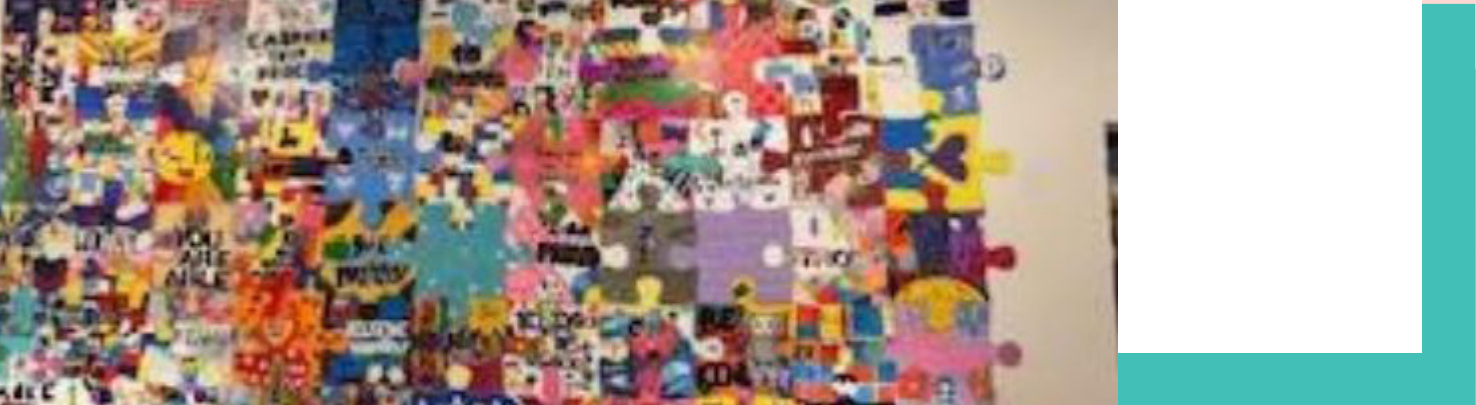


Figure 9. Mural Installation



Figure 10. Co

Through this project, students explored the relationship between language and visual art, reimagining how personal and cultural narratives are preserved through artistic choices. Students explored affirmations that resonated with them personally and researched historical and contemporary artists to inspire their visual backgrounds. The puzzle format serves as a metaphor for the interconnected nature of personal growth with each piece serving as an individual reflection, yet essential to the collective story.



Completed Mural

FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY THROUGH CROSS-GENERATIONAL

MURALS

By Keri Reynolds

This article explores how students conveyed visual stories beyond classroom spaces through collaborative artmaking processes. Examples of visual storytelling in practice are presented within the context of a cross-generational mural project that involved collaboration between different age groups in a large urban school district. Incorporating collaborative exchanges into art curriculum supports student-driven outcomes that communicate values through art that are important to students and the community.

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Expanding the reach of students' communicative capacities beyond the classroom

Education in the United States today is characterized by accountability and left-brain oriented curricular approaches which prioritize productivity and data driven-results at the expense of creativity, innovation, and personal development (Synder & Cooper, 2015). However, art education is uniquely positioned to augment personal development through meaningful learning experiences and provides opportunities for students to creatively communicate their ideas to others. The content of art is unmatched in its ability to engage students in learning about what it is to be human and how to visually express their feelings and emotions (Hobson et al., 2020). When learning is grounded in collaboration and connected to shared values, students become empowered to take responsibility for telling their own stories and the stories of others through artmaking.

Communicating Visual Stories through Artmaking

Visual storytelling supports students in communicating their ideas through art and promotes critical awareness about the world through the lens of the artist and the interpretation of their art by others (Hobson et al., 2020). Visual storytelling also embraces an active learning stance requiring students to engage at every stage of the artmaking process to construct their own outcomes of what and how they want to communicate. Students direct the execution and exploration of their own ideas, feelings, and stories, while teachers serve as facilitators to support visions that transpire from the students themselves (Kim & Miyamoto, 2013). By engaging in student-centered active learning, students generate their own ideas rather than passively absorbing facts and information (Kohn, 2015). Communicating stories through student-centered approaches encourages creativity, new perspectives, and increased self-esteem in authentic spaces where students shape their own learning (Synder & Cooper, 2015).

When active learning is combined in tandem with collaborative artmaking processes, students can engage in real-world problem-solving to communicate ideas collectively. Collaboration involves working together towards common goals and requires brainstorming ideas and planning effective ways to visually communicate those ideas to others, with each student playing a meaningful role in the outcome of how their stories are told (Lawton, 2014). Likewise, collaborative artmaking is responsive to the stories and lives of individuals (Schlemmer, 2017), and transforms the classroom space into a mutually supportive environment that can harness the power of visual storytelling and communicate shared ideas and values with others. Collaborative artmaking also provides multiple pathways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and prepares students to communicate and work cooperatively with others in 21st century society.

Connections beyond the Classroom

Expanding the reach of students' communicative capacities beyond the classroom has vast potential in encouraging visual storytelling and the co-construction of meaning through artmaking. The process of learning and communicating involves interdependence and connectivity between students and their environments. Thus, when learning experiences are extended beyond the classroom to reflect the needs of local environments, students can build meaningful connections through artmaking that inspires collective transformation (Lawton, 2019). Embracing community connections through visual storytelling can positively impact and alter the dynamics of learning and the ways students communicate their stories and ideas with others. Making these types of connections outside of the classroom yields fresh approaches to artmaking that encourage new ways of viewing the world and participating in social dialog (Schlemmer, 2017). Students also gain understanding and knowledge with and from each other in a caring community which cannot be achieved by isolated learning activities (Kohn, 2015).

Likewise, communal artmaking projects foster students' sense of self, place, and belonging within the community (Lawton, 2014). Forming a sense of community and collective responsibility helps students to situate themselves in expansive circles of influence and care to improve the experiences and lives of others beyond themselves (Kohn, 2015). The co-creation of visual stories through collaborative artmaking supports students in developing respect and understanding of diversity in real-world settings and provides them with opportunities to apply their learning to benefit their local community (Lawton, 2014). Such opportunities encourage students to engage in critical thinking and reflect upon how their experiences inform their understanding of the stories they tell (Hobson et al., 2020).



Cross-generational Murals

In addition to telling visual stories and supporting connections outside of the classroom, collaborative artmaking yields possibilities for socially transformative experiences through fostering understanding and empathy among different age groups (Whiteland, 2013). Believing in the value and importance of developing empathy and understanding across different generations, I wanted to facilitate collaborative opportunities for high school students to meet the needs of different aged individuals in the community through art. I also wanted high school students to use their creativity and artmaking skills to transform a space beyond the classroom.

To initiate this process I partnered with two administrators at a neighboring school in the local community that serviced students in grades fifth and sixth. At this campus there was a desire to enhance the school environment from sterile blank walls towards a visually inspirational space that represented and connected with the students who attended there. Working with their students, the campus administrators came up with five phrases that represented the school's values. The phrases would then be interpreted by the high school students and developed into five murals to visually communicate the values of the younger aged students who attended the school.

When I pitched this project to the high school students they were immediately on board and thrilled to represent a younger generation in the same community they grew up in. Connecting different age groups together through a shared goal was motivating for everyone involved in the project. The high school students managed planning, designing, and executing the murals collectively. They also communicated with the staff and younger students at the neighboring school throughout the process via photographs and electronic communication.

During the initial phases of developing the murals the high school students self-divided into groups based on the phrases they most identified with and sketched ideas for possible compositions. Working collaboratively sparked meaningful conversations about different compositional approaches and ideas that could be used to create and communicate visual stories inspired by each phrase. Students continued working together in groups to develop the mural compositions on large pieces of plywood based on combinations of their thumbnail sketches.





Figure 1. Initial stages of idea development. Author Image.



After the preliminary sketches were completed, I discussed with students the importance of selecting colors that tied into their intended message and the importance of font choice and placement within the compositions. Most groups decided to use primary and secondary colors in their compositions because they felt those colors would be cheerful, eye-catching, and best represent the younger generation. After discussing and agreeing upon color choices, each group worked together to begin staging the color placement onto the canvases and applying base layers of color using acrylic paint.

Figure 2. Staging color placement and layers. Author Image.



Throughout this process students drew upon their individual strengths to contribute to their groups. For example, some students worked on the text areas, while others worked on the background areas or representational details. In this way every student, regardless of their expertise with painting, was able to meaningfully contribute in co-constructing the murals.

While students worked I also documented the progression of the murals and shared photographs with the campus administrators at the school where they were going to be installed. Each completed mural featured the original phrases inspired by the younger students and innovatively conveyed those phrases through a variety of compositions. Likewise, the stories told through the murals portrayed a variety of subject matter that resonated with the younger students including video games, sports, nature, and animals.



Figure 3. Painting in collaborative groupings. Author Image.

After the murals were completed, they were transported and permanently installed over the summer break. The murals were unveiled at the start of the subsequent school year and celebrated for their positive contributions to the community. The high school students were also invited to visit the campus to meet the staff and younger students who the artwork was inspired by and created for.



Figure 4. Mural installation. Author Image.



Figure 5. Mural unveiling and visit. Author Image.

Reflections and Closing Thoughts

Engaging in the process of planning and co-creating cross-generational murals empowered high school students to communicate the values of younger aged children in the community through visual storytelling. High school students harnessed the power of collaborative artmaking over the course of five months to create large-scale works of art representing a younger generation. They also developed a sense of pride for their collective contributions in enhancing the environment of another school within the local community. Staff and students at the school where the finished murals were installed expressed their gratitude and admiration of how their values were translated into visual stories by the high school artists. They admired the high schoolers' dedication, innovation, and motivation in following through with the collaborative murals from inception to installation.

More authentic student-centered collaboration is needed in schools today, and art education provides meaningful opportunities for community building and translating the positive outcomes of collaboration to students in ways that will carry over with them into their adult lives (Lawton, 2014). When artmaking fosters visual storytelling through collective social actions, art becomes a means for individuals to engage in shared activities that surpass traditional boundaries and resonate with their own experiences (Schlemmer, 2017). Creating the cross-generational murals connected students of different ages together in the local community through the collective process of visual storytelling. Incorporating these types of collaborative opportunities into art curriculum supports choice-based student-driven outcomes that inspire sharing visual stories and communicating values through art that are important to students and the community.

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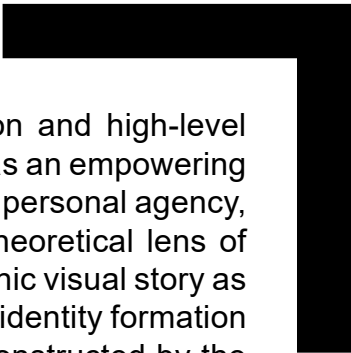
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IN THE MIDST

A Narrative Inquiry Approach for Visual
Storytelling in the Art Classroom

By Leah Smith



Adolescence is a time of foundational identity exploration and high-level stress. In response, the art classroom can use visual storytelling as an empowering experience for students to develop a nuanced sense of self, claim personal agency, and entertain possibilities. By reimagining “story” through the theoretical lens of narrative inquiry, this article uses the author’s own autoethnographic visual story as a model for art education practices that wish to promote narrative identity formation in students by considering the self as existing on a continuum constructed by the social, visual, and relational.

Letting the door slam behind me, I walk down the hall in overlapping states of anxiety, excitement, and anticipation. Joining the mob ahead of me, I become one more body jostled by the thousands. I crane my head to the left, thinking I see one of my friends, only to collide headfirst into the backpack ahead of me. Bumped back, I'm knocked into a stranger who screams in my face, "Watch it, 'less you wanna start something!"

Eyes wide, I cringe back to make myself small and quickly move to my right, back into the mass of bodies. A quick right down the hall, then another two lefts, I wind up in AP English just as the tardy bell shrills above. Exhaling deeply, I sink into my seat as the teacher starts to pass back essays.

Like many, I've endured my four years of high school. In each class and activity, I have distinct groups of friends where the only commonality is me. While nonetheless real, I know in my gut that these friendships are curated, maybe even conditional. I'm sharing myself carefully with them to maintain the persona I know they want. Like a twisted puppet master, I pull my own strings to explore and act and make it through.

I bet my teachers don't see it. I'm too confident and successful for them to question the level of my anxiety and insecurity. They, too, are only shown select pieces of who I think I am. For them, I'm Rory Gilmore: the hard worker, the mature one, the student with promise. To the friend on my left, I'm the impulsive girl who snuck into a public pool to skinny-dip at midnight. To the boy in art class, I'm a shy, creative, hipster with great taste in alternative indie music. Which is me, Chameleon, Imposter, or Liar?

The journal stowed carefully in my bedroom tells a story I don't share and that others don't see. Harboring every secret act, suppressed desire, and rambling thought, these pages scream of my loss, of being lost. I write the words, but I don't know how to accept them... how to discern meaning and purpose and selfhood. Down to my core, I have this unshakable certainty that if I shared how lost I feel, I would be cast off. Sharing too much risks ridicule, disgust, rejection... too much. Better to push through until high school ends and I can start fresh in college: somewhere else as someone else. Maybe this time, I'll discover that person is actually me.

In high school, my sense of self was unstable and unsure. Discerning the meaning that ran through the current of my experiences was hard to find, and so it was ignored. Far from unique, this experience resonates with many students in our classrooms. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) defines adolescence as a time of significant mental and social change. Generally, this period is characterized by identity exploration (Erickson, 1968), high-level stress (Kelsey & Simons, 2014), a desire for peer relationships, and an increased attunement to society and culture (Orben et al., 2020). Through increased awareness of self and others, students may feel a disconnect from their lived reality and who they are told they should be (WHO, 2024). Far from linear, adolescent identity development is relational, fluid, and emergent (Wexler & Eglinton, 2015), especially as young people see themselves differently with peers, parents, and teachers (Harter, 1998). Taken as a whole, this life stage lays the groundwork for each student's sense of self and may have long-lasting effects on their future in terms of resilience, health, and opportunity. As such, helping young people make meaning of their experiences should be central to the goals and purpose of the art classroom.

Before we can begin to question what stories are being shared through student artwork or how our classrooms can encourage storytelling, we must question what a story is, what stories students tell themselves, and how stories affect their sense of self. According to Giroux (1992),

it is necessary for teachers to incorporate into their pedagogies a theoretical understanding of how the production of meaning and economies of pleasure become mutually constitutive of students' identities, how students see themselves, and how students construct a particular vision of their future. (p. 31)

As both audience and author, our students are the ones most impacted by the stories they craft. Yet, as my introductory narrative expresses, these stories are often hidden, ambiguous, and shifting. Discerning the narrative becomes a complex task.

In what follows, I suggest an alternative approach to storytelling that highlights the beauty of being in the middle of change and becoming. Taking cues from the arts-based research methodology narrative inquiry, this article provides educators with both theorization and practical application by exploring an example of how I have personally undertaken an autobiographical visual, digital storytelling project that could be modified to the adolescent context. Based on my own experience, I believe this proposed process holds promise for empowered meaning-making in the secondary and post-secondary art classroom as it allows students to consider choice and envision possible futures through introspection and speculation.

Theorizing the Story

Stories are not merely beginning-middle-end. They are constructed, complex, relational, unfinished, and lived. A narrative, especially a life narrative, is not a capturing of existence: instead, it is a temporary rendering of what is meaningful about experiences as they are understood in the present. These meanings may shift and impact one's sense of self. Narratives shape our lives (Sandelowski, 1991) and thus shape us, for "our very identities as human beings are inextricably linked to the stories we tell of ourselves, both to ourselves and with one another" (Huber et al., 2013, p. 214). They are integral to human existence, for we all live interconnected, storied lives that unfold over time. We are each in the midst of experience, and swimming in a "sea of stories" (Bruner, 1996, p. 147). As such, our stories not only stand witness to our lives; they also compose them. By approaching storytelling from a theoretical frame of fluidity, connectedness, and becoming, we enable a more open view of time, existence, and knowing. Through stories, we can begin to make sense of our lives.

Seeking to study human experience through stories, narrative inquiry holistically merges theory and practice, and sees participant experiences as complex, situated, and multifaceted. In this approach, a story becomes a gateway to and through experiences of ourselves and others (Polkinghorne, 1988). It requires us to look in as well as out, considering how our stories are constructed within a broader view of temporality, sociality, and place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Visual-based narrative inquiry holds significant promise for the art classroom. Digital storytelling, in particular, is a newly emergent form generally comprised of a three to five minute video made up of images, personal narration, and occasionally music (Kim, 2016). Typically done in community groups, participants create and interpret their narratives. With adolescent needs in mind, digital storytelling holds particular promise as it has been shown to increase agency, expand a sense of self, visualize meaning-making, help participants expand how they might "frame" their experiences and be cathartic (Gubrium, 2009).

Students as Researchers

Narrative inquiry is a common practice in educational research, frequently used to study teachers, classrooms, and their stories. However, narrative inquiry also houses potential for our students to be researchers of their own experiences, desires, and identities. What would it look like to create a lesson that prioritized guiding our students to deeply examine their lives as composed of and by stories? How would our approach to personal, visual storytelling shift when we show students that by being in the world, they are in the midst of an unfolding narrative? How can art enable them to consider new possibilities for their futures by investigating their realities through temporality, sociality, and place? By promoting our students as autobiographical researchers for their

identity development, we may also reposition them as agents of meaning-making and change. Just as our students are artists rather than people learning to make art, they are also capable researchers in their own right, especially of their own experiences and selves. Though they may need guidance to develop coherent meaning, they come to our classrooms already brimming with tacit, practical, embodied understandings of who they are and how they wish to be in the world. Regardless of years lived, our students' stories are nonetheless messy, complicated, lived, and worthy of consideration.

Adolescence is when our students begin to craft narrative identities and internalize their life stories (McAdams, 2001), making secondary and post-secondary art classrooms the prime context for student-led, visual narrative inquiry. As art educators, we know art can tell a story, with or without words. When authentically made, it expresses something representative of the artist's life experience and generates personal meaning as it is created. However, authentic art experiences that promote extended, complex self-knowledge are lacking in abundance when compared to simplistic, pre-defined "identity" projects (Gude, 2007). Combining text and image, or more specifically, linking visuals with narrative, may encourage expanded awareness for students about how they are consciously formed through storied, entangled experiences.

Even though it may be a foundational and valuable experience, crafting an engaging and well-constructed story can be difficult for many students. This may be the first time they have been encouraged to craft a semblance of an autobiography, directly confront an inner struggle, or seek out a "plot" within the seemingly disconnected experiences of their lives thus far. Making meaning of our stories is a skill that requires persistence, but it is well worth the effort. Research shows that writing openly about life experiences can promote emotional/cognitive processing and improve well-being (Pennebaker, 1997). In particular, those who have experienced trauma or feel inhibited, marginalized, or othered may find it to be particularly empowering. Though done infrequently with youth, expressive writing interventions have found that when at-risk individuals write their narratives and make meaning out of them, rather than merely recounting, their well-being improves (Smyth et al., 2001).

When combined with visual imagery, self-narration can increase agency and develop a sense of identity by objectifying the self (Hatfield, 2005). By intentionally offering visual, autobiographical narrative experiences, we shift the art classroom to embrace being in the midst of life. As a result, our students might be better able to envision their lives and identities as continuously becoming and unbound, while simultaneously recognizing how they are shaped by people, places, and experiences. To illustrate this, I offer an autoethnographic visual story as a model for what could be done in an art education context to encourage a storytelling reality and exploration of expanded, empowered self-knowing.

Concerning Motherhood (2024): An Autoethnographic Visual Story

One year ago, I created an autoethnographic digital story for my final project in a graduate-level course. Though the assignment suggested speculating about how my life might look had I taken a different path in my past, I decided to dwell on a choice I was wrestling with in the present: the choice of motherhood.

The 20-minute animation shows an illustration digitally drawn on the screen, while my recorded voice narrates and describes the thoughts, feelings, wishes, and fears about the possibility of not choosing motherhood. In total, 26 smaller images make up the larger composition, with words and quotes interspersed. Comprised of digitized photographs and manipulated/appropriated imagery, each expresses the internal and external voices speaking over me when I consider this life change. Some are full, such as my husband and I walking together in old age, while others are ambiguous, cropped to show only skin, hands, and feet. Boxes group similarities similar to a storyboard. Vines and flowers weave amongst them all.



Figure 2. Concerning Motherhood (detail), image courtesy of the author



Overall, the work explores the complexities of motherhood, and the narrative of the yoga scenes helps to explore the possibility of not choosing motherhood. To this end, I wove vignettes that explore the possibility of not choosing motherhood.

The animation breathes and still my mind. The narration continues to explore the possibility of not choosing motherhood in the present. The story of the possibility, I embrace the possibility and agency over the future. The work is up and heart open.



Figure 1. Concerning Motherhood (2024), image courtesy of the author

work can be divided into three parts: the left depicts life as is (childfree), the right shows the possibility of motherhood, and the middle illustrates a figure meditating in various yoga poses. As a metaphorical scenario to bookend my story, I create unity and a sense of movement through what would otherwise be a rambling stream of consciousness. The panels and ideas to seem like an internal conversation, all while in a fictionalized yoga studio class.

The story begins with me digitally drawn in the center of the screen, standing in tree pose. Here, I am trying to find my mind, but finding it impossible. As a result, my anxious brain spirals, eventually landing on motherhood. My story explores two possible worlds, two speculative futures, while occasionally snapping back to the yoga studio. The story ends being at peace with the future and myself, whichever version that may be. Rather than picking one over the other, I embrace the present. My narration ends by expressing the validity of my fears and desires, finding a sense of peace with the future. Visually, we find that I am at the end of my yoga practice: in child's pose, lying face down with hands



Figure 3. Concerning Motherhood (detail), image courtesy of the author

Reflections and Significance

As I consider this work, I am reminded that I began without an end in mind: from start to finish, it was an instinctive process. By writing intuitively, then weaving the pieces into a coherent whole, I found an inner voice leading me towards accepting being in the middle of potential, life-altering choices. As I formed an overarching narrative and created an “end”, I actively internalized and solidified its significance for my current being in the world. I chose the meaning, the result, and the purpose of it all. In this way, my art and story simultaneously created purpose and meaning in my reality, becoming a safe space for questioning and a source of self-reflection (Kay, 2020).

As I wrote, drew, captured, and animated, I manipulated myself as the object of attention, taking control and allowing for a play with ideas that, in reality, would be difficult to consider as they oppose the cultural master narrative linking femininity and motherhood (Shapiro, 2014). By being in a state of play, and becoming an advocate for the fictionalized version of my various temporal selves, I recognized what mattered most and my very real agency in the present. As such, I found this visual story to be an active pathway to myself, others, and the world. According to Levine (1997), when we allow ourselves to become-with the artwork we make, we engage in poiesis, an act that shapes the world, not merely the art. This mode of visual storytelling allowed me to imagine possible worlds while simultaneously bringing one into being: a reality where my anxieties dissipate and fragmented parts of me are embraced. This visual story, in process and product, became my guide on a path toward realization and restoration (McNiff, 1992), and though never intended for catharsis, healing from my suppressed anxiety emerged.



Figure 4. Concerning Motherhood (detail), image courtesy of the author

Possibilities for the Classroom

This digital story is only one example, and a very personal one at that. Regardless, it holds promise in both product and process for secondary and post-secondary art classrooms. Adolescents are in a significant time of identity formation and exploration, of discovering their story. Thus, offering an experience that allows students to speculate on the possibilities and power of choice may help them better understand who they are in the present and how they develop over time, while discerning the emerging self that they wish to cultivate in the future.

Imagine a project in which students consider not only what they want to do after graduation, but how these possibilities might alter their life in the now. They let it all play out in their mind and on the page, with nothing off limits. They expand their perspectives to question why they think this way in the first place: Am I choosing something different than what I've always known in my family, or something familiar? How does my visual culture influence me? They write stories that compose who they are and who they long to be. Rather than producing another cliché about identity, such a project would encourage students to expand their self-awareness, critiquing their development in light of the trajectory of their interconnected experiences.

While students can create something similar to my example, using programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Adobe After Effects, other options exist. Beyond animation and digital art programs, students could find and take photographs, put them into a presentation software, and then record their voice to add their narrative. The same could be done with photographed artwork or sketches. Furthermore, this project does not have to be digital. Artwork made in an advanced studio course could easily relate to a student's interpretation of this central premise. Instead of only providing titles and an artist statement, each work would inform the other directly, with accompanying stories or sections of a larger narrative complementing each piece. Though an open-ended project like this can never be fully prescribed, I suggest the following considerations and guidelines for success:

- Prioritize a class discussion over what a story is, how it affects both the audience and storyteller, and how meaning-making develops personal identity. Emphasize the importance of finding meaning in experience rather than only relaying experience.
- Unpack the power of rhetorical devices such as metaphor and symbolism. Metaphors help to develop rich meaning and a fictional reality, while still leaving a measure of ambiguity (Kim, 2016). Once students have selected their most significant ideas, encourage them to write detailed short stories that engage the senses when possible, rather than only explaining.
- Explain the guiding questions: What is a choice coming up in your life? How would the future look different based on each choice? Give examples: choosing a college, a future career, a relationship, or where to live. Technically, any part of a student's life can become a focus. Regardless of the topic, encourage them to look critically at the choices that brought about that experience and how things could have played out differently. Though requiring a higher level of critical thought, some students may wish to explore a choice made by someone else that inadvertently affected their own lives and sense of self.
- Have students begin their brainstorming by writing intuitively through journaling or by listing with a mind map.
- Highlight that authentic writing often involves vulnerability. Encourage students to open up, but to also consider that ideas and situations can be alluded to without being explicit.

Conclusion

At its best, art education helps students discover “how one’s sense of self is constructed within complex family, social, and media experiences” (Gude, 2007, p. 8). As such, truly meaningful artistic production should reflect the rich complexity of each maker’s life story as evolving, for people, like stories, are not static. Through critical self-reflection, writing, and making, students can see avenues for embracing who they are while gently developing and affirming agency for continued becoming. Visual storytelling created in the light of narrative inquiry holds significance for this aim by bringing about both the possible and the real through living narratives.

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TRENDS 2026 Call for Manuscripts

Theme: Integrating Emerging Technologies into Art Education

The TRENDS 2026 Call for Manuscripts invites artists, educators, and researchers to address the complexities of how emerging technologies are being integrated into the teaching and learning of art. This issue will explore how new technologies including Artificial Intelligence are rapidly reshaping education and studio practice as teachers face the challenges that accompany them. This theme acknowledges the risk and reward of integrating emerging technologies into pedagogical practices as educators navigate how technology and machine intelligence coexist with human imagination.

New technologies can expand creative possibilities, personalize learning, and generate new ways of visualizing ideas. Yet, the presence of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom also raises critical questions: How do we remain authentic, maintain authorship, and keep our human voice? What happens when overreliance on generative tools stifles creative growth or diminishes the struggle necessary for authentic learning?

Submissions may address how emerging technologies are used to expand creative possibilities, provide new avenues for inquiry, or complicate notions of authorship and originality. Educators are invited to share classroom strategies, curricular frameworks, or research examining how new technologies can facilitate learning, critical thinking, and artmaking. Authors may also explore ethical, authentic, and creative dilemmas that accompany Artificial Intelligence, and how students interpret, question, or collaborate with technology in their artistic practice.

We encourage submissions that address how art educators:

- Integrate Artificial Intelligence tools into curriculum to enhance creativity, reflection, or visual literacy
 - Support students in making ethical and authentic creative choices when using technology
 - Encourage critical dialogue about authorship, originality, and ownership in digital creation
 - Nurture student understanding and awareness of the differences between technology usage as a resource and reference
 - Balance traditional media and digital experimentation to promote meaningful learning
 - Facilitate reflection on the role of technology in shaping the future of art and design
- Some questions you might consider are:

- How is technology transforming the way students conceptualize and produce art? In what ways can art educators design curricula that cultivate both digital fluency and creative agency?
- What ethical or philosophical considerations arise when integrating machine learning into creative practice?
- How can educators maintain authenticity, imagination, and critical inquiry in Artificial Intelligence-assisted classrooms?
- How might technology reshape the relationships among artist, audience, and artifact?

The editors invite manuscripts that examine practice, theory, and reflection on applications of emerging technologies in art education across all learning environments: K–12, higher education, museum, and community contexts.

TRENDS is a peer-reviewed journal published annually by the Texas Art Education Association. Original submissions for the 2026 Call for Manuscripts are due by May 1, 2026 and should follow the TRENDS author guidelines posted on the Texas Art Education Association website.

Please contact trends@taea.org with any questions.