

ABSTRACT

Ann Margaret Ledo-Lane, USING CREATIVE PRACTICES TO FOSTER ARTS INTEGRATION: SUPPORTING EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHERS (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello), May 2023.

Few educators receive experiential professional development and coaching that support them in articulating and nurturing their creative voices and mindsets. The purpose of the participatory action research (PAR) study was to examine how supporting the pedagogical experiences of three teachers in an arts integrated school influenced their professional identities as they transferred arts integrated practices to classrooms. The theory of action for the study was: If teachers engage in arts-based, creative practices, they can co-create and implement arts integrated instructional experiences for students. I used participatory action research methodology informed by activist research methodology to investigate how teachers' artistic experiences influenced their teaching. As a result of engaging in creative practices as adult learners, they expanded their capacities to design and implement arts integrated curricula that promoted equitable access and rigor. Two findings are: (1) Teachers who articulated their creative practices strengthened their teaching through self-power and being art forward in their thinking and practices; and (2) teachers who engaged in experiential learning re-imagined themselves as teachers who nurtured their creative mindsets, found joy in teaching, and transferred the creative practices to classrooms. The findings have implications for schools and teachers in expanding and deepening their capacities to change curricular and pedagogical practices to promote equity.

USING CREATIVE PRACTICES TO FOSTER ARTS INTEGRATION:
SUPPORTING EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHERS

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by

Ann Margaret Ledo-Lane

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Director of Dissertation: Matthew Militello, PhD

Dissertation Committee Members:

Lawrence Hodgkins, EdD

Roshaunda Breeden, PhD

Lynda Tredway, MA

Ladan Rahnema, EdD

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DEDICATION

To my sons, Eero and Aalto, for your love, patience, and joyful celebrations of curiosity.

To my daughter, Hollis, for acknowledging the importance of inner healing.

Para a minha mãe e o meu pai, for inspiring persistence and strength.

To my husband, Sebastian, for believing in me, and for our life adventures that fuel me.

Para o meu irmão, Henry, for celebrating my journey since childhood.

To my friend and mentor, Julia Marshall, for sharing her artful brilliance.

And in memory of meu avô, who instilled in me to live creatively and with passion.

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CHAPTER 1: NAMING AND FRAMING THE FOCUS OF PRACTICE

To learn something and to constantly practice it, isn't that a pleasure?

–Confucius

Throughout educational history, the arts have frequently been viewed as secondary to academic curriculum and an additional or extracurricular activity with limited value, despite evidence to the contrary (Dewey, 1934; Rosenblatt, 2006; Winslow, 1939). However, this view has shifted substantially to include a perspective that recognizes the value of arts integration as critical to enhancing student academic achievement, but more importantly, supporting student voice, access, and equity in today's classrooms (Burnaford et al., 2007; Eisner, 2002; Gardner, 1983; Hetland et al., 2007; Kennedy Center Education, 2020; Sawyer, 2014). Arts integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through art forms. To accomplish the integration of the arts, students engage in creative processes that connect an art form with a content area and meet the learning objectives of both (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2009; Werner & Freeman, 2001). To fully integrate arts into all curriculum and instruction, teachers are the linchpins; their ability to plan and implement the arts as a regular part of the student experience is a prerequisite for arts integration. However, if educators do not engage in creative practices themselves, they are less likely to connect the arts to other content areas in the curriculum, and the value of arts integration for student engagement and learning is diminished (Drago-Severson, 2012; Kennedy Education Center, 2020). This participatory action research (PAR) project and study focused on how teachers who have deep experiences in creative practices transfer their learning and experiences to art integration for students.

Creative practice is the term used to identify the intentional practice of creating—learning, making, and using craft, artistic, intellectual, and creative skills. If educators are

engaged in an intentional creative process or practices, they are more likely to transfer their experience in creative practice to classroom use and support arts integration as a tool for understanding, meaning making, critical thinking, and social emotional development (Kennedy Education Center, 2020). Engaging in creative practices involves learning to be creative, which can augment *possibility thinking*, for making choices in everyday life (Loveless, 2002). Secondly, if educators are to fully engage in integrating anything considered new to their pedagogical practices—in the arts or other fields—they must have deep experiences so that they feel comfortable with the innovation (Mehta & Fine, 2015). Thus, in the PAR project and study, I engaged teachers in creative practices and supported them to integrate the arts more fully into their classrooms.

The framework for understanding creative practices is rooted in the work of Vygotsky who viewed creativity as an essential aspect of learning (Dezuanni & Jetnikoff, 2011; Sawyer, 2014). Vygotsky (1978) expressed that “wherever in the process of understanding or in the process of practical activity, the creation of some kind of new concrete structure, new image of activity is necessary, a creative embodiment of some idea, there fantasy comes forward as a basic function” (p. 165). Engagement in creative practices leads to the teachers embracing possibilities—in their curriculum and in students. Because this process involves tapping into imagination, the use of creative practices can elevate an educator’s capacity to imagine alternative and equitable pathways in the classroom. Greene (1988) emphasized the importance of “the ability to make present what is absent, to sum up a condition that it is not yet” (p. 16). Thus, educators who commit to creative practices develop their abilities to support the arts in the classroom as a critical pedagogy by making the arts an intrinsic part of the curriculum and authorizing and implementing learning conditions for students.

Arts integration is a valued component of school culture and pedagogical choices that include creative learning, and they are becoming more common for use across a school or institution (Duma & Silverstein, 2014; Russell & Zembylas, 2007; Thomson et al., 2009). In this participatory action research project and study, I examined arts integration through using the creative practices with three teachers from the Creative Arts Charter School (CACs), a K-8 public school dedicated to helping students become creative, collaborative, and inquiry-based learners. We engaged together by keeping visual journals of our process, which is a key creative practice (Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011; Sullivan, 2010). Secondly, teachers chose creative practices in which to deeply engage and record their participation and reflection. Finally, we collaboratively planned how each teacher transferred the learning about creative practices to classroom curriculum and instruction. I observed those classrooms and had coaching conversations with teachers throughout the implementation process. As a result, we supported schoolwide experiential arts learning for the entire staff.

For over two decades, The school has been committed philosophically to having students engage daily in the arts, through studio courses and arts integrated curriculum, to inspire creative expression in which students embody a mind-body connection. Thus, students at CACS had experiences in going beyond traditional classroom pedagogy through comprehensive engagement in visual arts, dance, music, and theater. However, several factors influenced teacher practice, and not all teachers were completely comfortable with the arts integration focus of teaching and learning. To fully enact the espoused mission and vision of the school, we needed to develop a process for orienting all teachers to arts integration; as school leaders, we needed to ensure that they had the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to fully integrate the arts into the curriculum and instruction of the school. Adults need experiences in the types of content and

pedagogy we expect in classrooms before they are fully confident about implementing them in the classroom (Drago-Severson, 2012).

As the longest-running charter school in San Francisco, CACS has served the San Francisco community since 1994. Located in the Western Addition neighborhood of San Francisco, CACS has 460 students from across San Francisco, with nearly 14% living in Western Addition. The recipient of the California Distinguished School Award and Arts in Learning Award, CACS is a diverse public for school children and families of San Francisco. Over the past six years, CACS has increased enrollment trends for several significant student populations: Latino students, from 12.6% to 16.7%; mixed race student enrollment, from 4.6% to 10.6%; and economically-disadvantaged students, from 17.2% to 25.0% in 2017–18.

Local parents and teachers founded CACS; they envisioned an innovative, arts integrated, public school option for children. To that end and to ensure that students achieve at high levels, the school emphasizes the arts in all content areas and grade levels. To center educator mindset in arts integration and its intersection with equity, the school’s leadership team developed the school’s essential question:

What will it take for us—individually and collectively—to remain urgently, relentlessly committed to interrupt adult-centered and Eurocentric (or white supremacy cultural) practices in our school and hold ourselves and each other accountable for anti-racist, art-centered classrooms rooted in love that insists on the success and sense of belonging of our Black students and our students with IEPs (Individual Education Plans)?

(Creative Arts Charter School, 2019)

Based on this essential question, as a school, we are committed to engaging teachers in creative practices to support arts integration teaching and create equitable learning pathways for students.

To describe how I addressed our essential question as the overarching inquiry for the participatory action research project and study, I discuss the rationale and the focus of practice (FoP), the assets and challenges related to the project, the significance that the project might have to practice, policy, and research, and the PAR connection to equity. Then I describe the PAR research process and the considerations for research.

Rationale

In providing a rationale for the PAR study on arts integration, I discuss the school's demographics, including staff and students and the 2018–19 testing data, which reveal that Black and Latinx students are not achieving at the same levels in traditional literacy and math assessments as their White peers (see Table 1). In this table, I make visible the inequities in the school's approach to fully serving its Black and Latinx students. We could utilize art-based methods as a strengths-based approach to increase student voice, choice, and agency. Secondly, I enunciate the school's mission in using the arts as a critical vehicle for addressing the persistent opportunity and achievement gap.

Within a school committed to nurturing creative, collaborative, and inquiry-based learners, there are invisible barriers that impede our full enactment of our mission. The use of creative practices, first with teachers and then with students, can be a path forward for creating more equitable classroom conditions for all students. As we consider how to provide an enriching learning environment for students at this school, we strive to deepen understanding of the impact of creative practices on a teacher's approach to arts integrated instruction. Freire (1997) defined education as the practice of freedom. hooks (1994) expanded upon Freire's concept by expressing that to “begin always anew to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bureaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process-live to become . . .”

Table 1

CACS Testing Data 2018–19

Demographic	Assessment	2015	2016	2017	2018
Schoolwide	ELA	66%	68%	71%	73%
	Math	53%	53%	55%	68%
White	ELA	74%	75%	83%	82%
	Math	63%	61%	60%	77%
Latino	ELA	56%	67%	68%	62%
	Math	41%	46%	41%	61%
African American	ELA	7%	14%	10%	20%
	Math	0%	0%	10%	26%
Asian	ELA	71%	68%	67%	89%
	Math	63%	60%	60%	77%
Two or More	ELA	90%	80%	78%	76%
	Math	60%	50%	69%	65%
Econ. Disadvantaged	ELA	47%	50%	45%	67%
	Math	32%	31%	32%	68%
English Learner	ELA	-	-	-	60%
	Math	-	-	-	40%
Students with Disabilities	ELA	25%	29%	28%	32%
	Math	12%	9%	13%	12%

(hooks, 1994, p. 1). A focus of practice on arts integration is necessary to explore how teachers can have deep experiences in creative practice and then transfer their learning and experiences to students, and through this process, dismantle power structures that impede a creative teaching approach. Examining teaching through creative practices is rich in generative learning possibilities and contributes to enacting freedom within our students, because, as hooks stated, “to educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn” (hooks, 1994, p. 13). However, cultural politics within CACS come into play with the individual and collective actions of its teachers. Arts in learning has the possibility to interrupt school-based cultural reproduction that impede transformation. Thus, this focus of practice is critical in creating conditions in which new learning as teachers can lead to a fully integrated arts approach in classrooms.

Thus, the PAR focus of practice was: Use creative practices as an arts-based strategy for developing teachers’ abilities to integrate the arts into the classroom curriculum and instruction. Creativity, a foundational aspect of creative practices, works best across academic disciplines (Robinson, 2001). As a result, teachers’ experiential learning influenced their confidence and *possibility thinking* in teaching through an arts integrated lens. My belief is that if we employ arts-based methods as a cornerstone of our teaching approach, we may be able to create more equitable pathways in the classroom for all students undergirded this study.

Analysis of Assets and Challenges

In describing the context and demographics of the school community, I identify potential assets and challenges related to supporting equitable practices in the classroom (see Figure 1). In line with the analysis of assets and challenges, a clear focus of practice guides the inquiry: Support teachers to engage in creative practices and develop art-integrated instructional practices

Assets and Challenges

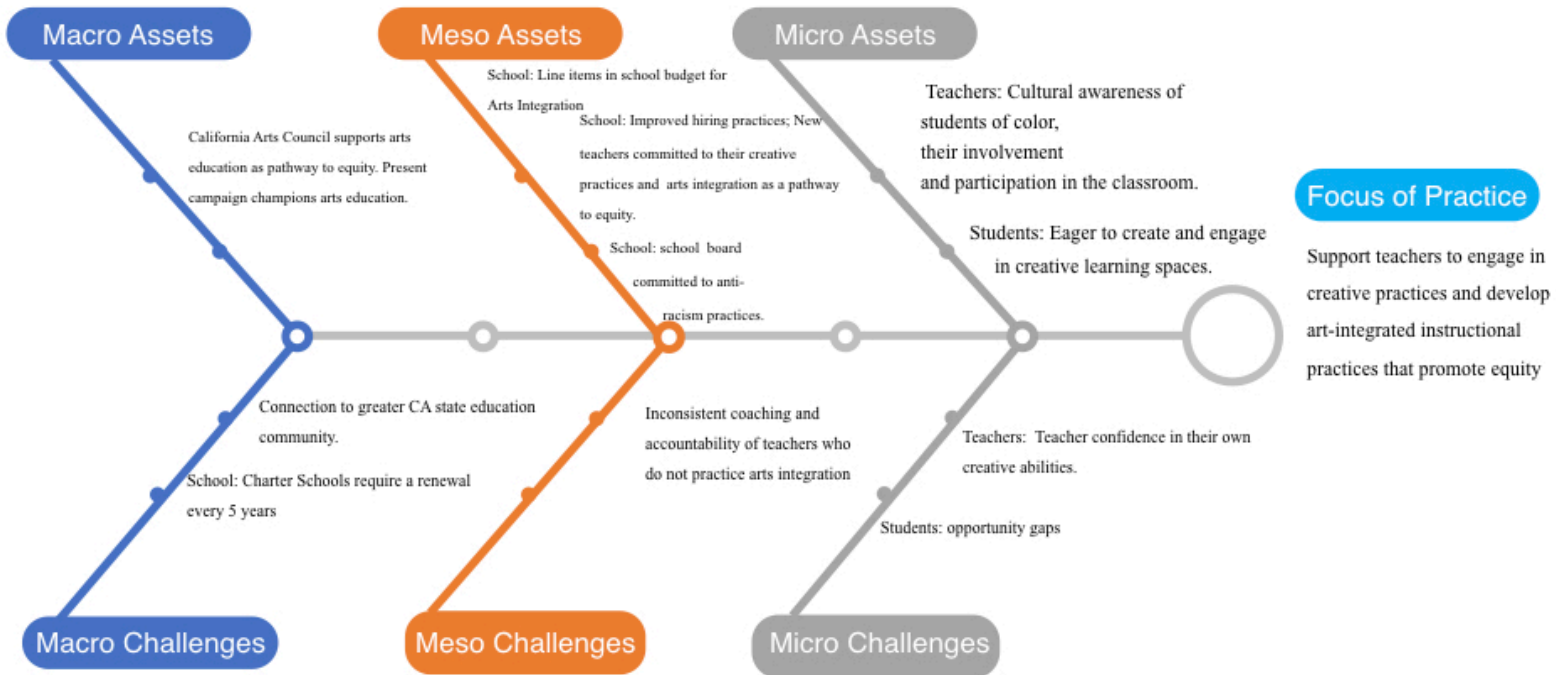


Figure 1. The fishbone diagram provides an analysis of assets and challenges related to the focus of practice.

that promote equity. At CACS, 75% of the teaching staff are white women, followed by the three percent white men and 22% teachers of color. The school served White middle-upper class students (54% of the 440) of San Francisco. During the 2018–19 enrollment period, CACS received 386 kindergarten applications for 44 spaces. Of this applicant pool, 20% were from families who identified as Hispanic/Latino and 8% were from families who identified as African American or Black. The school increased diversity in the 2020–21 enrollment year as a result of the 2019 charter renewal process in which the school was able to change its random lottery preferences to prioritize those entering Kindergarten and 6th grade students who currently reside in San Francisco Public Housing, not to exceed 10% of kindergarten capacity and not to exceed 5% of 6th grade capacity. As a result of shifting student demographics and working with a majority of CACS White educators who do not engage in creative practice in their classrooms with their students of color, the focus of practice is a necessary tool for inquiry and equity to support the school community in the further development of the overall mission.

At CACS, the arts are an important strategy in addressing the persistent opportunity gap in San Francisco by using arts integration more effectively and supporting growth instead of perpetuating a fixed mindset about the strengths and abilities of students of color (Gunzenhauser & Noblit, 2011). According to Fiske (1999), students in schools that include a core focus in the arts are more successful at reducing the achievement gap than students in schools that do not, and that learning in and through the arts reduces the drop-out rate for at-risk students. Such research supports the rationale for a focus of practice grounded in creative practice that will determine how art-based methods can enable educators to connect with students who are placed at-risk for academic inequity and increase access and rigor in classrooms for students of color (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). In addition, the focus of practice intended to examine how

individually, educators can disrupt adult-centric barriers to learning that come into play and that do not allow for equitable pathways in classrooms. Adult-centric barriers included a fixed rather than a growth mindset when considering students and their learning needs. Teachers who perceive teaching and learning from growth mindsets consider the talents that all students bring to class despite their racial, ethnic, or socioeconomical background. According to Create/CA (2020): California's Statewide Arts Coalition Declaration of Student Rights, "All students have the same right to fully develop their creative potential at every grade level and to not be excluded for any reason" (p. 1). In this study, I supported shifts in teacher mindsets to address needs of students of color at CACS. Specifically, a shift towards a creative mindset, through which teachers embraced dispositions and invoked creative stances necessary for approaching obstacles and dilemmas in teaching and focused their creative practice. The micro, meso, and macro level assets and challenges informed the PAR.

Classrooms, including students, and the specific teachers are the micro level of the study. The teachers were on varying levels of developing creative practices and integrating the arts in the classroom in all content areas. The students of color were an asset in the school community, but some teachers considered them a challenge. At the meso level, the school supported the development of creative practices and arts integration methods by allocating line items in the budget to support these equity-oriented endeavors. Such budget allocation removed the possible barrier that a teacher may raise regarding funding to support arts integration methods. The school had also evolved its hiring practices to make explicit the commitment of its educators to arts integration and its relationship to equitable outcomes. However, the school provided inconsistent accountability measures and coaching of teachers who demonstrated reluctance with prioritizing arts integration as an instructional approach. During the course of the study, the California Arts

Council's support of arts education as a pathway to equity was an asset; since 2017, CAC had launched a statewide campaign to champion its stance on arts education and equity. Nationally, state examples of arts integration (Burnaford et al., 2007), and national organizations, including Council of Chief State School Offices (CCSSO) supported arts integration. The Kennedy Center Changing Education through the Arts (CETA) project supported arts in the schools through arts curriculum and arts-integrated curriculum (Kennedy Education Center, 2020).

Micro Assets and Challenges

The school's explicit essential question related to equity directed the focus of practice: *To engage the educators in methods that can result in arts-centered and equitable classroom spaces and, through the process, disrupt adult-centered and Eurocentric teaching practices.* The school staff were aware of the students we were teaching and that the demographics would continue to evolve to include increased enrollment of students of color. As Kennedy Education Center's (2020) research indicated, students require methods of engagement that counter traditional, Eurocentric curriculum and methods. However, according to a 2019 mid-year staff survey, teachers felt unable to find time or felt they lacked the experience to develop their personal and professional application of creative practice for themselves and their students. Thus, the teachers exhibited reluctance to embrace arts integration.

A second challenge was how teachers defined the challenge; they often characterized the issue as the achievement gap rather than an "opportunity gap" (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Though subtle, the achievement gap rationale tends to place responsibility on the students, and the teachers may unwittingly relieve themselves of the responsibility of providing the necessary opportunities. By engaging in creative practices, teachers can develop a growth mindset for themselves. They may shift their perceptions about students if students have opportunities for

arts as an integral part of literacy and math curriculum and instruction that amplify student voice, choice, and agency. As a result, I expected that teachers may have a stronger willingness to ensure arts integration.

The teachers I invited to participate in the research project represented varying levels of creative practices and use of arts integration in the classroom and ranged from novice to proficient in their instructional experiences. They were enthusiastic about examining their creative practices or developing them, which in turn informed the role of arts integration as an equitable pathway in their classrooms. The opportunity to engage the teachers in creative practice and analysis was an asset and reflected their openness in growing their creative practices to serve students. In addition, the analysis initiated dialogue that resulted in professional development to support the remainder of the school's educators in the implementation of arts practices in support of equity in the classroom.

Meso Assets and Challenges

The school was committed to instilling in their students a love of learning and an appreciation for intelligence in its multiple forms by working to equip students with both a strong academic foundation and valuable life skills. The school leaders and teachers believe that learning through the arts is essential to the human experience and that teaching students how to think *as* artists will equip them with strategies and skills that are essential to leading a life rich in continual learning and desire to make necessary changes in their world. At the meso school level, several changes evolved over the past several years through leadership's observation, staff and family surveys, and direct experiences with teachers, families, and students. First, a revised leadership structure and newly appointed school board members for the 2021–22 school year are

committed to transforming their leadership approach through an anti-racist lens. Secondly, the school's improved recruitment and interview practices resulted in hiring teachers who were committed to their creative practices and arts integration as a pathway to equity. Third, the school budget for the past ten years has shifted to support arts integration and professional development for teachers.

Finally, and perhaps most impactful for this project and study, the school shifted to a different emphasis for professional learning. While the professional development for years preceding the 2020–2021 school year included a focus on developing equity in the classroom by looking inward as educators, the results were minimal. There was limited transparent and critical dialogue among the faculty to impact change. Beginning this school year, 2020–21, the school partnered with an artist educator to initiate a monthly series with staff focused on practicing anti-racism in the classroom. This particular asset supported the focus of practice, as the “Practicing Anti-Racism in the Classroom,” series required teachers to engage in affinity groups to unpack their teaching approaches and their contributions to developing arts-centered classrooms that supported the school's students of color (see Figure 1 for an analysis of the assets and challenges).

Another factor that aligned with the school's commitment to equity was the shift in school demographics. Due to concerted efforts to attract students and families of color, we had increased our enrollment of students of color. Since the 2019 CACS charter petition resulted in approved lottery preferences, the school's demographics continued to change with increased students of color in grades kindergarten and middle school. The changes evolved over the past several years through leadership's observation, staff and family surveys, and direct experiences with teachers, families, and students.

In 2018, the school implemented the Danielson Framework for Teaching for instructional coaching (Danielson, 2007) in support of the students and the teachers who taught them. Coaching and clear evaluation methods had been inconsistent over the years, resulting in low accountability measures for teachers who indicated they were uncomfortable with creative practices and arts integration even though the school's stance has been explicit: arts integration is a tool for supporting our most vulnerable students in the classroom.

Over the past nine years, the school attempted several initiatives to support teachers in the development and implementation of arts integration methods. Qualitative observational data gathered during coaching cycles indicated that despite school wide community partnerships with arts organizations, artist in residence programming, and weekly planning sessions with the Director of Arts, many teachers either did not consistently implement arts integration methods into their daily teaching or may leave arts integration as part of a student performance assessment at the end of a lengthy unit of study instead of using it as a strategy to explore content or make personal meaning. Conversations with teachers, their direct supervisors, and parents provided evidence that to address inconsistent arts integration across kindergarten through eighth grade, further research and action on teaching approach and capacity was necessary.

The combination of the micro assets of the three teachers engaging in this project and study with the meso level commitment to arts integration and equity had a bearing on the focus of practice and possibility for change in the school as a result of the PAR inquiry.

Macro Assets and Challenges

The meso assets aligned on a macro level with the California State level initiatives led by the California Arts Council that supports arts education as a pathway to equity. Present campaigns champion arts education as an essential component of a child's education. For

example, the “The Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning” (Create/CA, 2020) outlined what is needed. This macro level asset supported by California Statewide Coalition’s Create California (Create/CA) was launched through a statewide effort to promote the declarations which outline each student’s right to have access to high-quality public arts education, regardless of their background, culture, language, or geographic location.

The students’ right to access public arts education opportunities presented a macro challenge related to this FoP. At a charter school, there is often limited access to support systems such as the California Arts Council due to the public perception that all charter schools are a private industry; thus, due to their positionality in the school system, charter schools have more limited access to public education resources. In addition, several challenges surfaced in being a charter school. This included the mandatory renewal processes every five years that could result in the possibility of non-authorization and shutdown. Charter schools, as a policy, could perpetuate inequities in education reform, evidenced in the student enrollment of CACS, a public charter. As Kantor and Lowe (2016) described, led by business people and their political counterparts, charter schools were birthed to “restructure public systems around the principles of flexibility, competition and choice” (p. 48). Unintended or not, charter schools, including CACS, entice families to pursue specific educational opportunities that public schools may not offer, and, at CACS, this opportunity was arts integration.

In summary, the assets informed our approach; however, we understood that significant challenges, including teacher's low confidence in their creative practices and failure to recognize opportunity gaps in students of color, could impact the development of the work. The teachers’ possible reluctance to trust how creative practices could have a positive influence on equity presented challenges, which provided insight into the applications and practices of arts

integration. I planned my study with the goal of inspiring and motivating educators to actualize their creative practices in support of student learning that will ultimately result in equitable outcomes. The implications of these outcomes can benefit the school and other schools with a focus on the arts.

Significance of the FOP

In discussing the significance that the focus of practice on arts integration could have in the school setting and particularly schools that claim to have an arts focus, I examined the significance in relation to practice, policy, and research. Educators who receive support in their personal development of arts-based, creative practices can provide opportunities for the development of instructional strategies that support educational equity, and this small study in a setting that is dedicated to the arts should offer a process for other schools that claim to be arts-focused. In the final chapter of the dissertation, after the PAR project has concluded, I will discuss in-depth recommendations for practice, policy, and research.

Practice

Creative practices in the arts are often identified as essential strategies toward attaining educational equity (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999) because they tap into the multiple intelligences of students (Gardner, 1983) and they integrate brain functions of what we have come to know as right and left brain (Hammond, 2015). Through integration of the arts into daily instructional approaches, teachers provide opportunities to support students' identities and voices. In addition to developing creative practices in educators, the research may be essential in re-imagining school-based systems and professional learning models that influence equitable access and learning in the classroom.

Policy

Kendi (2019) advises us that our responsibility as anti-racist leaders is to affect policy at micro, meso, and macro levels. Thus, the results could inform school policy as well as share with other schools and non-profit learning spaces. Key components of this research could be used to enrich policies at schools that serve diverse students and support frameworks that promote arts in learning. The arts learning framework may be relevant in the areas of policy for equity, including culturally responsive practices and anti-racist practices in the classrooms and schools.

Research

A set of research efforts explores the effects of arts education using different frameworks and with diverse settings using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies (Thomson et al., 2009). While the evidence is divided on the direct link between learning through the arts and academic achievement, researchers have begun to look at the unique contributions the arts bring to student learning (Ashbury & Rich, 2008; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007; Sawyer, 2014; Winner & Hetland, 2001). Furthermore, for students who do not respond to traditional teaching methods, including those from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with disabilities, engaging in the arts is beneficial (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999). Applications of how the project could instruct teaching communities to use participatory action research in their contexts is an important goal of the project and study. As activist researchers committed to social justice outcomes, teachers and leaders should always be engaged in analyzing their work to diagnose and design how to improve (hunter et al., 2013; Spillane, 2013).

Connection to Equity

The opening line of the CACS mission states: Creative Arts Charter School engages K-8

students in an equitable and academically rigorous education through arts integrated and interdisciplinary study. However, we do not fully enact this espoused mission when it comes to serving students of color in our school (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Despite the value of the arts and professional development for all teachers in arts integration, teachers at our school often do not fully integrate the arts into daily instructional approaches. Arts education is an essential strategy of supporting equitable access by supporting multiple ways to learn (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999). Specifically, the approach of arts integration and the root of arts integration offers a vehicle for stronger student success focused on the opportunity to learn instead of the achievement gap (Burton et al., 2000; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al, 2007; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). When students have opportunities to make mistakes and engage in a cyclical process of imagining, creating, and experimenting, they gain more confidence in their abilities to learn independently. Creative practices, I propose, is what drives the consistent implementation of arts integration, which can lead to more equitable classroom experiences for children, and often support the learners who are experiencing difficulties in the typical classroom practices.

In the participatory action research project and study, I supported teachers to develop an arts-based creative practice for themselves. In addition, I used their experiences to provide opportunities for developing instructional strategies that support educational equity through the arts. Three equity frames supported the focus of practice and provide theoretical and research-based support for choosing the focus of practice. I first use the psychological framework, using the work of Steele (2010). Secondly, I explore how the political-economic framework impacts our school. Lastly, I examine the socio-cultural framework of Freire (1970) to establish how the arts can be used to challenge oppression in our school.

Psychological Framework

Our school's essential question, which is systematically woven into school procedures asks how we can interrupt adult and Eurocentric practices and *“hold ourselves and each other accountable for anti-racist, art-centered classrooms rooted in love that insist on the success and sense of belonging of our black students and our students with IEPs?”* (Creative Arts Charter Schools, 2019). The question requires that educators examine their teaching approaches. The question encourages us to unpack our stereotypical thinking about Black students that may include biases about the students and how they learn. Steele's (2010) framing of education as inequitable asserts that lackluster opportunities in education are prevalent due to “socioeconomic disadvantage, segregating social practices, and restrictive cultural orientation” (p. 47). In addition, for students of color, Steele describes how the role of identity threat impacts the classroom experience of many students of color. As Steele (2010) states, “Being threatened because we have a given characteristic is what makes us most aware of being a particular kind of person” (p. 73).

Steele (2010) offers strategies to contradict identity threat so that students experience more equitable learning: nurturing personal narratives that contribute to a sense of belonging, demystifying core academic abilities, and employing child-centered strategies. For example, instead of viewing arts as an academic leverage point, teachers think Black and Latinx students need to acquire basic academic skills; integrating the arts impacts their teaching time and they are worried that the students do not have basic levels of academic progress. In other words, instead of viewing the arts as integral and a conduit to all learning, teachers view the arts as extra. Despite the substantial resources in arts-based professional development and instructional

materials to cultivate arts-integrated teaching, students of color are often left out of this engaging approach.

Political Framework

The political framework helps to explain how charter schools demonstrate the assumption that the issue with education is not class- and race-based inequities within the bureaucracy of education but with accountability and allocation of resources within schools. As Spillane (2013) states, “the success of a particular reform package in a particular school will ultimately depend on how its script is put into practice—performed on the ground” (p. 38). Charter schools, as a policy, perpetuate inequities in education reform, evidenced in the student enrollment of my current school, a public charter. As Kantor and Lowe (2016) describe, led by business people and their political counterparts, charter schools were birthed to “restructure public systems around the principles of flexibility, competition and choice” (p. 44). Unintended or not, charter schools, including my own, entice families to pursue specific educational opportunities that public schools may not offer. However, once here, the students do not receive the full complement of our programmatic mission in an equitable way.

As an arts-integrated K-8 school, CACS professes to be a unique and idealized program through which educational equity is achievable. However, as the student enrollment reflects, the school is primarily serving the White elite (54% of the 440 students) of San Francisco. Despite concentrated efforts in outreach to low-income and diverse families, we have not fully succeeded in attracting a diverse enrollment. Families of color seek access to schools that could provide their children with an alternative to the tracking and watered-down curricular approach often experienced by Black and Latinx students (Kantor & Lowe, 2016). In order to function in contrast to its market-oriented roots, charter schools, like mine, need to serve the most vulnerable

students in our district and those already within our school by offering an approach that is equity focused and “will reduce disparities in opportunity and engage students in serious intellectual work” (Kantor & Lowe, 2016, p. 52). Knowing this, I embarked on PAR with a collaborative group of inquiry-minded practitioners to investigate the role of creative practices as a pathway toward equity, as is the intention of our school’s mission and essential question.

Socio-Cultural Framework

Freire (1997) speaks of education as the practice of freedom. Teaching and leading through creative practice are generative and contribute to enacting freedom. I implemented the project at a school that strives toward arts integrated teaching methods as a strategy to address educational equity. Through the PAR, participants actively engaged and reflected on their creative practices and their perceptions of its impact on educational equity in the classroom. One parent recently spoke of how she chose our school because she wanted her Black son to not be stereotyped into just being good at basketball. Instead, she wanted him to explore the arts to empower himself as a learner, broaden his interests, and to have access to other cultural aspects of society. Engaging students in critical dialogue is a feature of creative practices. Freire (1997) names dehumanization as an outcome of injustice. I aimed to make that visible through the PAR and co-created methods derived from creative practices to support equity in the classroom.

As stated in Create/CA’s (2020) Declaration of Student Rights, “All students have the same right to fully develop their creative potential at every grade level and to not be excluded for any reason” (p. 2). Teachers who employ arts integration can provide opportunities to support student identity, voice, and creativity. By identifying the essential qualities of creative practice, we could potentially cultivate them in our teachers, leading towards educational equity in the

classroom. It is the intention of this research to provide strategies and pathways to motivate educators to root themselves in a creative practice to drive educational equity.

Participatory Action Research Design

I introduce and discuss diagnostic thinking as integral to the design of participatory action research (PAR). Then, I discuss improvement science as a framework to engage participants in exploring how creative practices could develop equitable pathways in the classroom.

Diagnostic Thinking

In designing a participatory action research (PAR) project and study, I examined “how elements of our situation enable and constrain interactions; then redesign[ing] these elements or design[ing] new elements to enable interactions and to transform the focus or substance of existing interactions” (Spillane, 2013, p. 40). This was an iterative and albeit messy process of experimentation and co-creation, much like the artistic process itself (hunter et al., 2013). With these core tenets in mind, I surfaced the use of creative practices among teachers and documented their classroom applications for the integration of the arts to enhance equitable pathways for CACS students.

In addition, teachers needed to develop a diagnostic mindset in which practice took shape in social interactions, which promoted inter-dialogue among the teachers. I invited these teachers to become a co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group, a collaborative team that remained close to the project and study, engaged with me as lead researcher, and provided feedback on the PAR processes as well as the analysis of the evidence from the PAR data. The CPR group, as a professional learning community, applied reflection tools and activities to intersect with their initial understandings of creative practice and its relationship with arts integration to specifically

define the problem. In addition, they gradually adopted a diagnostic mindset toward the practice of leading and managing instruction to design for the improvement of that practice is essential (Spillane, 2013).

Improvement Science

Bryk et al. (2015) promote improvement science as a framework to solve practical problems in education. The authors characterize improvement science as a set of guiding principles, key tools, and inquiry processes that a networked improvement community, known as the CPR team in this PAR, used to support improved effectiveness, greater efficiency, and enhanced engagement. As we engaged in iterative cycles of inquiry, using the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) process, we experimented first with learning to use visual journals to document our individual and collective learning. Then, teachers chose and developed creative practices and to enhance the arts integration of their classrooms. As the lead researcher and an arts curriculum specialist, I guided the inquiry. As we planned and experimented with creative practices, I documented and analyzed the evidence from these activities; and we used the analysis to determine what we needed and what was useful in the classroom.

Purpose and PAR Research Questions

In restating the purpose of the study, I introduce the research questions. Then I reiterate the PAR theory of action. The purpose of the in-depth participatory action research (PAR) study was to support teachers in their development of arts-based creative practices so the teachers could develop and implement instructional strategies that supported student learning. In addition, to support structures of creative practices and arts integration while I worked with a co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group, I understood that the participating teachers had varying levels of teaching experience and experiences in the arts. In a Pre-cycle and in two participatory

action research cycles, we explored how we could develop their individual and collective capacities as creative educators who instill creative conditions that would improve equitable pathways in the classroom through arts integration.

The overarching research question was: *How do educators develop creative practices to support pathways for equity?* The sub-questions followed:

1. To what extent do teachers who engage in creative practices develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions about arts integration?
2. To what extent do teachers implement curriculum and instruction that reflects arts integration in classrooms?
3. To what extent do teachers who engage in creative practices develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions about arts integration?
4. To what extent do teachers implement curriculum and instruction that reflects arts integration in classrooms?
5. How do I change as a leader by effectively supporting teachers to develop creative practices and implement arts integration?

These research questions guided the participatory action research (PAR) and informed the theory of action.

Theory of Action

The exploration of creative practices and their implications for arts integration as an equitable pathway in the classroom influenced the three educators in the study and served as direction of our schoolwide professional development. We have a clear espoused theory of arts integration in the school; we wanted to know how to fully enact our vision of the arts as an equity strategy. Thus, the theory of action for this project and study is: If teachers engage in arts-

based creative practices, then they can co-create and implement arts integrated instructional experiences for students.

Proposed Project Activities

I invited three teachers to be part of a co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group; they ranged in teaching experience, content areas, and number of years at CACS. As the lead researcher, I guided the group through a Pre-cycle of inquiry in fall 2021, and two subsequent cycles of inquiry. The activities and data collection for three cycles of inquiry are detailed in Chapter 3 and are summarized to provide an overview of the proposed project.

In the Pre-cycle, the CPR group members engaged in arts-based inquiry to develop their creative practices. I documented their creative practices and arts integration methods through arts-based visual journals or visual documentation (Shields, 2016) and a creative practice that they chose (i.e., visual, dance, music). They collectively developed an arts integrated mindset by identifying essential qualities of creative practices that impact arts integration methods and thinking.

In PAR Cycle One (mid-November 2021–April 2022), the teachers developed arts integrated classroom practices. They continued to use the creative practice of visual journaling and developing their creative practices. I met with them together and individually to support curriculum design and observe classrooms and have post-observation conversations with them to continue to provide evidence about arts integration and equitable practices.

In PAR Cycle Two (April 2022–October 2022), we continued the activities of prior cycles and designed professional learning for other staff at the school. Concurrently, I engaged the CPR group in member checks to examine the evidence to date before analyzing the findings from the project.

Study Considerations: Limitations, Validity, and Confidentiality

This qualitative research project included careful consideration of these qualitative research project elements: limitations, validity, and confidentiality. First, possible limitations may include the small size of the study; however, this study occurred over an eighteen-month period and involved a “dynamic interaction between the researcher and the participants and context under investigation . . . [in which] the researcher is able to develop a ‘thick’ descriptions of participants, the context, and the dynamic processes that occur between and among them” (Gerdes & Conn, 2001, p. 186). As well, my influential role in the school could have impacted participants from fully expressing themselves during the data collection cycles. Therefore, I used several forms of qualitative evidence to triangulate the data, the requirement of qualitative research as a process, and conducted member checks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

I addressed validity through attention to trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study pertained to my extensive time in the field of arts education and within the school which contributed to in-depth understanding; that pre-knowledge contributed to credibility to the narrative account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. By pinpointing these elements of trustworthiness, as the researcher, I responded to standard criteria and trusted the evidence and analysis from the study. Lastly, I considered the key activist researcher criterion for validity—usefulness to participants (Hale, 2008). The evidence from the study should be transferable to the context of the people involved (Guba & Lincoln, 2000).

Finally, I ensured confidentiality and data security. All participants signed consent forms to participate (see Appendix C), and their anonymity was maintained in reporting the data. The

data collection and storage present confidentiality and ethical considerations. I maintained confidentiality in these ways (Creswell & Creswell, 2018):

1. Important and personal papers and data files were stored in a locked file cabinet.
2. All electronic forms for data collection were in a password protected file.
3. Data and copies of reports were shared with the CPR group for purposes of transparency, improvement, and reflection.

A more complete description of these study considerations is in Chapter 3.

Chapter Summary

Transforming a school's learning environment to include successful and sustained arts-integrated instruction required participation by the whole school community (Betts, 1995). In this study, I worked with a purposeful sample of teachers in the hope that our work and study would produce results that were transferable to the entire school. Because the results of arts integration can be instrumental in establishing equitable pathways in the classroom, this was a critical project and study for our school and for schools like ours. Through developing a growth mindset for their creative practices, teachers changed their practices, and, as a result, elevated student identity, voice, and agency and began to dismantle barriers that impeded equity in the classroom and perpetuated lack of support for all learners. To fully build an arts-integrated approach and enact the espoused values of the school of using arts to enhance equity, teachers engaged in arts-based, creative practices, and, as a result, they developed and implemented more equitable, instructional practices for students.

In Chapter 2, I provide an in-depth review of the theoretical, normative, and empirical research surrounding the focus of practice including arts integration, art impact on students, best practices in arts learning for equity, transforming learning environments to cultivate arts learning

and teacher professional development. In Chapter 3, I describe the context of the participatory action research project, including a description of the people, and outline the research design as well as data collection and analysis methodology. In Chapter 4, I describe the context in detail and the evidence from the Pre-cycle. In Chapters 5 and 6, I discuss the results of the two cycles of inquiry (PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two). In Chapter 7, I discuss key claims that emerged from the study, provide implications, and examine how my leadership developed and changed as a result of participation in this project and study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, I proposed that the arts, specifically how creative practices support arts integration in all classrooms, are critical in ensuring equitable student learning. The arts, broadly viewed through the lens of learning theory, are a source of improving student outcomes and personally enriching students' lives. However, integrating or fusing the arts with other content areas go well beyond those benefits because they provide access and rigor in all content areas. Finally, the use of creative practices on the part of teachers and students is a critical process for achieving our goals of arts integration. When teachers have deep learning in the arts through developing their creative practices, which includes the use of visual journals as critical form of creative practices, they are more likely to engage in comprehensive arts integration in their classrooms.

I concentrated on three key areas to analyze the role of creative practices in arts integration: (a) Learning theory and the benefits of arts integration to schooling; (b) the role of teachers' creative practices in shifting their classroom pedagogy; and (c) school structures—academic, social-emotional, managerial, and equitable—that support the development and full implementation of arts integration. Critical to my practice as an arts educator and practitioner-researcher, I offer examples of my visual journal in the literature review to demonstrate how using a visual journal, a foundational creative practice, is helpful in my research and learning. For example, in Figure 2, I responded to a graduate class activity in which we identified factors about ourselves as school leaders. In this mandala arts activity, I saw the overall purpose of this PAR as arts as a process of finding joy. That became a confirming drawing for deciding on the focus of practice and undertaking the PAR, and joy was central to teachers' experiences as they transferred what they experienced and learned to classrooms.

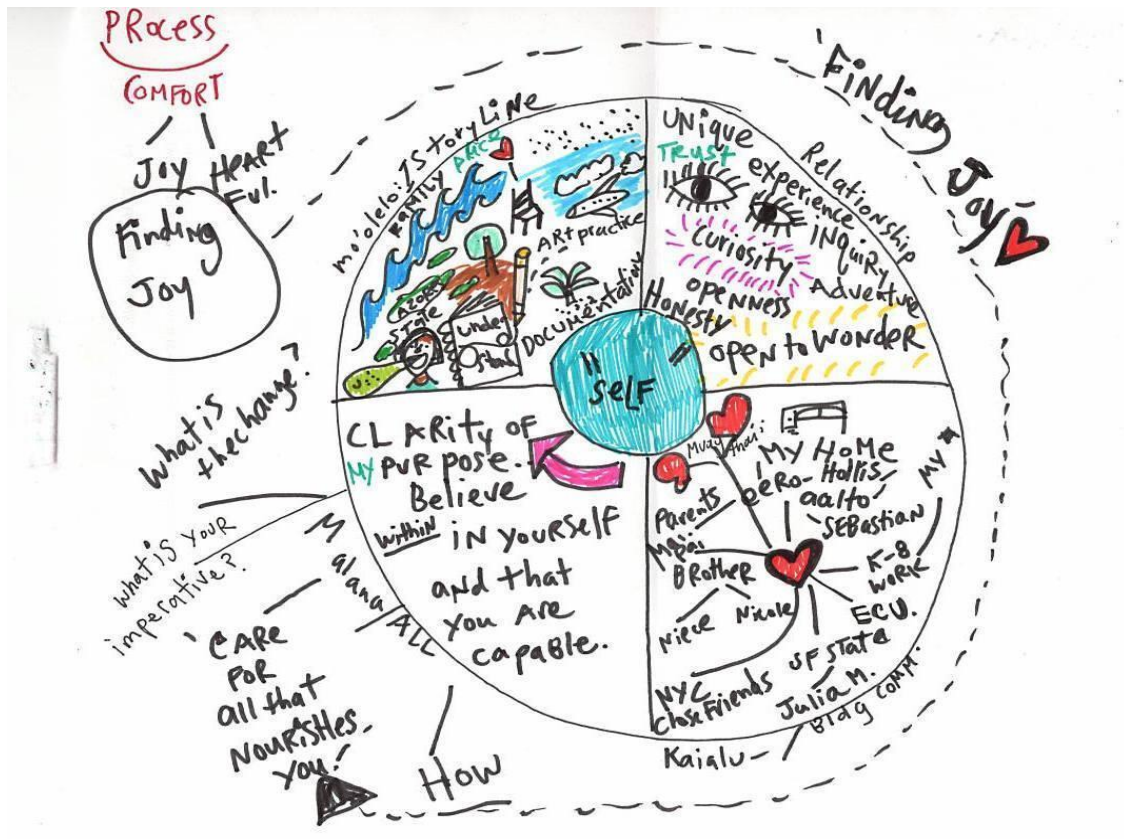


Figure 2. From the Ledo-Lane visual journal, June 2020.

Arts Education

Arts education has the possibility to create connection, community, inclusion, equity, and joy. The catalytic force within arts education propels an interrelationship among the brain, learning theories, and the arts. An excellent arts education is not just about the implementation of best practices in schools. A quality arts education is a result of educators reflecting deeply about the purposes of arts education, including the development of aesthetics to foster interpersonal growth as human beings (Seidel et al., 2009). In this section on arts education, learning theory is a substantial foundation of arts and education and has implications for arts education. Secondly, the benefits of arts integration to schooling intersect with the importance of understanding learning theory.

Learning Theory

Learning theory is the study of how students learn and offers a guide for educators to apply in supporting learning in classrooms and experiential learning environments. I begin with key principles of learning theory and its role in arts education, including a discussion of brain-based learning. Then, I discuss integrated curriculum and the complexities of that approach. I close with constructivism and the theory of multiple intelligences.

The key principles of learning theory offer an organized framework for thinking about the factors of learning theory that affect quality arts education. Bransford and Donovan (2005) name core principles of learning that are significant for understanding and applying to arts education students. First, teachers should engage students' prior understandings, including factual knowledge and conceptual frameworks in understanding for supporting metacognition. Secondly, teachers should recognize the value or intersubjectivity or the interaction among learners, which relies on privileging social experiences in relationship with others (peers,

teachers) and combining that interaction with prior knowledge. Within an arts education context, learning theory principles encourage students to draw connections from their prior knowledge to make new knowledge as part of their learning process.

Factual knowledge, cultural contexts, experiences, and conceptual frameworks impact students because their understanding of new knowledge or skills relies on the schema they have built as a result of their prior learning. Bransford and Donovan (2005) pointed to the critical importance of cultural context as a central influence on learning, and that is crucial in the context of this study as the learners are from diverse contexts. As a result of knowing about students' backgrounds and prior knowledge, educators can structure questions that scaffold student learning. Learning is social and, as Vygotsky (1978) asserts, should emphasize the sociocultural context and the interactions among peers. In that way, teachers can consider and support a learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD); learners scaffold their learning through dialogue with a peer (Driscoll, 1994).

Metacognition is the awareness of one's brain's thoughts and thought processes and is a foundational aspect of learning theory. Grauer and Nath (1998) noted that thinking about how we think moves us out of the world of reflex and allows us to look beyond the immediate situation. Metacognition helps students understand how they think and how they can apply knowledge so they can more fully engage in learning. Piaget, a significant figure in the field of cognitive psychology, suggested that learning environments, including how those environments are organized for engaging learners, impact learning. Piaget's (1988) theory of learning supports the importance of authenticity so that effective learning can occur through a sociocultural perspective.

Learning theory is embedded in arts education; the ability to self-reflect and promote self-understanding is necessary for young artists both in and outside the arts classroom (Kennedy Center Education, 2019). Metacognition as a self-propelled process is active within arts education spaces, enabling students and educators to think about the learning processes of doing and creating. Because the arts activate a different part of the brain, they are necessary for cognition.

Brain-based Learning

Cognitive neuroscientists have found vital connections between arts education and cognitive development, including thinking, problem-solving, conceptual understanding, and information processing. Learners who are motivated by arts-based learning develop attention skills and memory retrieval that apply to other academic disciplines and life skills (Posner et al., 2008). Arts education has strong effects on brain development. In a meta-analysis of research studies (Posner et al., 2008) the results indicate that:

1. An interest in a performance art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.
2. Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.
3. In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation, though not in other forms of numerical representation.

4. Correlations exist between music training and both reading acquisition and sequence learning. One of the central predictors of early literacy, phonological awareness, is correlated with both music training and the development of a specific brain pathway.
5. Training in acting appears to lead to memory improvement through the learning of general skills for manipulating semantic information.
6. Adult self-reported interest in aesthetics is related to a temperamental factor of openness, which in turn is influenced by dopamine-related genes.
7. Learning to dance by effective observation is closely related to learning by physical practice, both in the level of achievement and the neural substrates that support the organization of complex actions. (Gazzaniga, 2008)

In addition, the impact of arts education, particularly culturally responsive arts education, can influence the executive attentional network of connections between brain areas and improve cognitive functioning. The executive attention network is related to the self-regulation of cognition and emotion (Rothbart et al., 2007; Rothbart & Rueda, 2005; Rueda et al., 2004). The network involves specific brain areas, including the midline and lateral frontal areas (Fan et al., 2005). Concurrently, culturally responsive learning can influence the brain and learning. Powerful connections and neuron activity occurs during active processing when learning conditions are met through culturally responsive methods that align with brain-based learning.

As described by Hammond (2015), “understanding culture, recognizing cultural archetypes, and recognizing the sociopolitical context” (p. 36) are at the core of culturally responsive teaching which leads to support of independent learners. She describes how neural pathways are developed in children’s brains in response to forms of elaboration embedded in culturally responsive information processing techniques. Brain-based learning speaks to the

possibilities in arts education when students are taught through culturally responsive teaching approaches.

Integrated Curriculum Theory

Beginning with discipline-based arts education (DBAE), which became a leading approach in arts education throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Bruner's (1960) advocacy for discipline of knowledge within subject areas led the way for arts education to be recognized as a valuable entity to pursue in modern education. Coupled with his groundbreaking work on agency and how cognitive processes act as the catalyst for creativity, Bruner impacted the arts education landscape. By employing agency, described as thinking for oneself in a problem-solving and decision-making situation to instigate responsible and successful choices, Bruner (1960) ignited a movement for curricular integration, segueing from a purely disciplinary approach of content areas to merging the arts with content subjects.

Philosophically, agency has been regarded as the freedom of humans to create choices that make an impact in their lives (Safir & Dugan, 2021). As one engages in a creative process, the possibility of agency is active. As we create, we are constantly making decisions about purpose, meaning, and process to express and ultimately grow within ourselves (Hanley et al., 2013). The integrated curriculum approach encourages learning that is synthesized across subject areas and experience and in the process develops the student ability to transmit their learning to other contexts. An integrated approach to learning is brain compatible. The more connections made by the brain, the greater the opportunity for making high level inferences (Jensen, 1996).

Constructivism

While the brain and the human processes were always in a meaning-making mode of constructing, the education practice of rote learning dominated schools and did not attend to the

human processes making meaning by connecting their current experiences to new experiences through inquiry and interaction with others (Piaget, 1936). Dewey's (1934) definition of the qualities of experience—interaction, reciprocity, and continuity—contributed to our understanding of how students learn. Vygotsky emphasized that verbalizing and paraphrasing learning with others was central in the learning process. The ideas of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget fueled a progressive movement in education that supported a methodology that encourages the importance of social learning and social construction of knowledge by promoting student engagement on multiple levels (Sefton-Green et al., 2011). Learners construct knowledge by invoking prior knowledge, making connections, applying knowledge, and reflecting on learning. Such engagement results in learners who are critical thinkers and imaginative; as a result, they develop a growth mindset about their ability to think, learn, and participate, centered on a strong sense of personal identity, voice, and autonomy in their learning process (Sefton-Green et al., 2011). In other words, learner engagement and intrinsic motivation to learn and create depends on teachers setting up learning environments that encourage dialogue and co-construction of knowledge.

The theory of constructivism promotes a way for students to learn more effectively (Mesibov & Shea, 2009). Arts education is organically connected constructivism, and constructivist learning is described much like arts learning. According to Marlowe and Page (2005), constructivism emphasizes thinking, analyzing, understanding, and applying. Constructivism is the process of experiencing and, as a result of experiences, attaching meaning to the schema that learners have from prior experiences. Contrary to the didactic banking method of telling and explaining—inputting information and extracting it—learners who are in dialogue are more active learners. Philosophically, arts and constructivist learning coincide (Kennedy

Center Education, 2020) because participating in art making or art viewing requires learners to observe, make inferences, and experiment— all engaging and active learning that promotes curiosity and creative thinking (Ostroff, 2016). The arts experience put a value on a variety of ways of learning, which inform how we should reframe our concept of intelligence.

Multiple Intelligences

For over fifty years, the work of Harvard’s Project Zero researchers have enlightened the nature of a variety of human potentials, including nature of creativity, intelligence, thinking, and learning (Gardner, 1983; Goodman, 1968; Perkins, 1988). Founded in 1967, Project Zero’s initial goal was to explore and understand the nature of artistic development. Its name, Project Zero, originates from Goodman’s view at the time that “the state of general, communicable knowledge about arts education is zero. So we are Project Zero” (McHugh et al., 2016, p. 1). The research group’s early studies led to initial findings on the state of arts education and suggested directions for future research that would impact the arts education landscape (Wilson, 2017). The research promoted inquiry into intelligence, understanding, thinking, creativity, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural thinking, ethics—and exploring viable ways to support them across multiple and diverse contexts (Project Zero, 2016). As a result, their research laid the groundwork from which this proposed study on creative practices towards equity in the classroom grew.

Intelligence was originally thought to be fixed, general, and solely measured by standardized linguistic and logical tests. Early Project Zero research uncovered that intelligence is a learned ability to find and solve problems and to create products of value in a culture (Gardner, 1983). Each individual has a vibrant set of human intelligences that are developed and expressed within and across cultural contexts. An intelligence is defined as a process for

constructing knowledge through biological and psychological possibilities and capacities (Gardner, 1983). The eight intelligences noted by Gardner included linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, bodily/kinesthetic, spatial, naturalist, intrapersonal, and interpersonal, and he later added existential (Gardner, 1983).

While no explicit artistic intelligence exists, intelligences function artistically as communicated through symbol systems, kinesthetic, and spatial. Thus, arts education holds the potential to engage and develop many of the intelligences present in each student. Not one of these intelligences is more important than the other; rather, these intelligences support cross disciplinary teaching, including arts integration, as one of several ways to support an arts education. For example, spatial intelligence is expressed aesthetically by a sculptor or by a surgeon (Gardner, 1983). The theory of multiple intelligences contributed to the conceptual frameworks for classroom practices of differentiated instruction, authentic assessment, and project-based learning, all important components of arts education (Wilson, 2017).

Learning theory builds a foundation for arts education. From brain-based learning to constructivism to multiple intelligences, theory is a conduit for arts education. Next, I discuss the benefits of arts education, specifically as it pertains to personal growth, academic achievement, and equity.

Benefits of Arts Education

Arts education is non-linear and supports learning across disciplines and integrates not only the arts but the learning in the brain. Because the arts cross boundaries to be available for all learning and ways of learning, there is a power in the arts to transform education by nurturing individual possibilities through the development of personal growth, inspiring academic achievement, and creating equitable conditions in the classroom—all benefits of arts education. I

first describe how arts education is an essential contributor in personal growth, with focus on socio-emotional learning. Then, I outline how arts education contributes to academic achievement. Lastly, I illustrate how arts education benefits equity in school settings.

Personal Growth

Arts education promotes imagination and creativity, with potential toward personal growth (Sawyer, 2014). Robinson (2001) reflects on being creative as “not only about thinking: it is about feeling” (p. 167). Personal growth refers to various forms of encounters, often arts-based, that orient a person toward exploring and increasing self-knowledge (Robinson, 2001). Benchmarks of personal growth are individuality and authenticity benefitted by arts experiences that encourage personal creativity.

In social emotional learning, imagination holds the ability to liberate students from their current circumstances and the possibility to transform the present (Robinson, 2001): “When people find their medium, they discover their real creative strengths and come into their own. Helping people to connect with their personal creative capacities is the surest way to release the best they have to offer” (Robinson, 2001, p. 139). Students can imagine, allowing one to access the infinite possibilities of creativity. When we imagine, we are bringing forth into our mind things that are not yet real. Through our imagination, we have the power to step back in time and revisit and reflect on past experiences. We can engage in perspective-taking by imagining how others may feel through our imagination. In our imagination we can foresee many possible futures for ourselves.

Students engaged in the arts do better in school in multiple ways that support them as learners. Students acquire mental habits of mind or dispositions in arts classes. Referred to as studio habits, these ways of thinking and doing emerge from sustained practice in the arts

including persistence, reflection, personal expression and observing, and can build connections between school and outside environments, making them valued learning tools for individual and collective development (Hetland, 2013).

Using the arts as a frame of reference for learning, students can make meaningful connections to one another, to themselves, to their lived world, and to other content areas (Burton et al., 2000; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). As they become autonomous in their learning process, students are often more willing to take responsibility for and give direction to their learning experiences (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005). When students experiment with different arts-based forms and processes, they learn to take risks through exploration and to develop flexible thinking skills, envisioning from different vantage points and responding to new possibilities in the creative process (Burton et al., 2000; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005; Eisner, 2002; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007). Students who perform at lower levels of achievement may benefit from having arts-based learning activities that provide alternate ways to acquire and demonstrate knowledge (Hardiman et al., 2014).

Academic Achievement

The academic benefits that accrue from the classroom arts integration support the tenets of effective learning, and those academic benefits translate into increased academic achievement (Sawyer, 2014). Previous studies of arts integration—the pedagogical practice of teaching through the arts—suggest its impact on enriching academic achievement. However, to date, only a few studies have provided evidence (Hardiman, et al., 2014). While there is some hesitation among researchers about drawing a causal line between the arts and academic achievement (Sawyer, 2014), several studies confirm a correlation. A University of California of Los Angeles (UCLA) longitudinal study of 25,000 students conducted in the early 1990s found positive

correlation between arts education and general academic success. Caterall (2009) conducted the study using the same students ten years later and found that the students, now in their mid-twenties, were thriving in their lives due to their early experiences in arts learning. From high paying jobs, college completion, to ongoing volunteerism, the students identified as disadvantaged due to socio economic status nevertheless exceeded measures conducted within education research. Additional research studies found that the impact of arts on learning can result in students who outperform their peers on a variety of measures. For example, ongoing learning in music contributes to success in math and reading and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds experience the most considerable benefits (Fiske, 1999). Finally, arts integration programs have a positive statistically significant effect on student standardized state test scores when compared to control schools. Schools that provide equal focus on both arts and arts integration programs outperform schools that focus primarily on one or the other. The arts integration program decreased the achievement gap among previously rated high, average, and low achieving students compared to control schools (Scripp & Paradis, 2014).

Beyond the link to student academic achievement, the arts deserve to be included in the academic landscape for other reasons. Curriculum theory in arts education uncovers critical questions regarding student expectations of excellence in general education. Children should have multiple opportunities to experience varied arts learning approaches both in and out of school (Davis, 2005).

Equity

In examining the unique contributions that the arts bring to student learning, researchers demonstrated how to engage students who are typically not as successful in traditional teaching methods, including students from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds and/or students with

disabilities (Ashbury & Rich, 2008; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007; Winner & Hetland, 2001). Arts integration is an essential strategy that supports equitable access by offering multiple ways to learn (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999). Thus, the approach of arts integration offers a vehicle for stronger student success (Burton et al., 2000; Fiske, 1999; Hetland et al., 2007; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005).

Art is a pedagogy for social justice (Hanley et al., 2013). Through the arts, teachers who engage in creative practices in the classroom can support student participation in praxis, which is action and reflection upon the world to impact and change it for the better (Freire, 1997). When engaging in creative practice, students build knowledge through their roles as active participants who can connect their self-awareness to ongoing practice. Considering creative practices as an engaged pedagogy that underlies social justice education is progressive and critical. However, teachers who wish to facilitate creative practices in their classrooms must be committed to self-actualization that emphasizes their wellness, and by doing so, are able to teach in ways that empower students (hooks, 1994; Velasco, 2021).

Imagination, creativity, and agency are ways of knowing and acting in the world. The arts offer ways of knowing, being, and doing to all learners no matter their race, origin, gender, ableness, or sexual orientation by enabling them through the arts to re-imagine hope and freedom (Hanley et al., 2013). The creative process is rooted in learning through the arts to support artistic agency (Hanley & Noblit, 2009) by making meaning through various media and conceptualizing; and personal expression can be utilized to interrogate and transform thinking and actions. Establishing commitment to access to arts learning can be seen as an act of distributive social justice for learners in marginalized groups (Hanley et al., 2013). Through this

act of social justice, learners are recognized, have access to resources and supported in constructing visions for themselves in the world.

Requiring that education move from building bridges between home and school to encouraging the deconstruction of oppressive and deficit-driven educational frameworks is an idea I embrace through arts education. The expectation is rooted in providing support for students to envision their future possibilities instead of fitting inside a box that is White-centric and unaccepting of their rich cultural foundations. Centering curriculum and instruction on the concept of identity is necessary in shifting instructional practices in schools to meet the multiethnic and multilingual needs of students. Muhammed (2018), Paris (2012), and Gay (2018) advocate for a critical lens to deepen and extend teaching and learning approaches. Gay (2018) champions the idea that understand the dynamics of culturally responsive pedagogy, educators must invest in learning from the inside and out. This suggests the exploration of identity, noted by Muhammed (2018) as necessary in improving education for diverse students. Gay (2018) notes that culturally responsive teaching is “a moral imperative and a professional necessity” (p. 249). Culturally responsive pedagogy is essential to educators with students first in building the interpersonal connections essential in the learning process in support of equitable classrooms and then in using the arts as a vehicle for equitable access and increased rigor (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). If teachers can use the arts as an integral part of teaching and learning, students can reap the attendant benefits of the approach and be more successful.

From Arts Education to Arts Integration

Arts integration, one aspect of arts education, promotes an integrated teaching and learning approach that connects academic disciplines to content areas, resulting in deeper understanding in both the content area and the arts. For example, in drawing, students explore

self-expression as well as use mathematical/logical intelligence to symbolically represent ideas. Conversely, in a math class, visual representations of math problems support learner conceptualization of a math theory or problem. For example, in Leonardo DaVinci's notebook (Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011), he indicates an integrated understanding: he transfers ideas from one discipline to another, as noted in his geometrical drawings. The arts can be identified and demonstrated in a variety of ways across classroom disciplines, from *arts for art's sake*, which refers to the arts discipline taught by a credentialed arts specialist, to arts integration. Arts integration is a teaching strategy in which the arts are integrated with all content areas in the curriculum to deepen students' understanding of both (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2009, Werner & Freeman, 2001).

Arts integration was a response to didactic and rote learning. At the start of the industrial revolution in the United States, Cubberly (1934) asserted that schools should be like factories and compared teachers to factory workers and students to the raw materials needed to make products to meet the demands of the new industrial world. This factory model of education, which encouraged learners as passive participants, became widely accepted (Kennedy Center Education, 2020). Unfortunately, although we know much more about how students learn, schools continue to reflect the principles of industrial revolution by maintaining linearity, conformity, and standardization (Robinson, 2001).

Similar to the factory education model is the banking concept of education (Freire, 1997), through which the teacher deposits information into the student, and the student in turn is expected to receive, memorize, and repeat. This concept reflects a lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge. Students require methods of engagement that substitute the didactic and traditional Eurocentric curriculum and methods with interactive models that support

the whole child and the variety of ways of knowing and doing what they bring to learning. In contrast to the factory model and banking concept of education, arts integration celebrates education and knowledge as a process for inquiry (Kennedy Center Education, 2020).

In arts-integrated curriculum, the arts offer an approach to teaching and a vehicle for learning. Students meet dual learning objectives when they engage in the creative process to explore connections between an art form and another subject area; as a result, they gain greater understanding in both. For example, students can meet objectives in the theater arts and social studies through characterization, stage composition, action, and expression. The experience is mutually reinforcing—creating a dramatization provides an authentic context for students to learn more about the social studies content; as students delve deeper into the social studies content, their growing understanding of content impacts their dramatizations. For arts-integrated curriculum to result in deep student understanding in both the art form and the curricular area, it requires that teachers engage in professional development to learn about arts standards and how to connect the arts to the curriculum they teach (Kennedy Center Education, 2000). Secondly, it requires that teachers learn through experiences in the arts, so they understand the value of learning through the arts (Dewey, 1934; Mehta & Fine, 2019).

Creative Practices

Art can be used to make meaning of the chaos of our world (Dewey, 1934). We use creative practices to observe and represent our understanding of the world, to make meaning of our experiences, and to engage in dialogue with others. Creative practices support students in being agents of their learning, enabling them to use it as a tool to explain oneself, build connections, and develop shared meaning. The arts exercise a learner's critical capacity for decision-making and problem solving, which are important developments for preparing learners

with varying abilities to be active and independent citizens (Mason et al., 2008). Art, as a creative practice, is a channel for ongoing personal changes and evolution of our lived experiences through individual voices (Hanley et al., 2013). For students who have experienced trauma, the arts offer a trauma-responsive strategy (Wei et al., 2011). In this section, I discuss how creative practices, beginning with creativity followed by examining the creative practice of visual journals and creative inquiry, can provide thoughtful ways to integrate the arts in the school curriculum and encourage creativity of teachers and students.

Creativity

Creativity is applied imagination. Creativity extends imagination as it involves doing. Imagination is the capacity to think of possibilities beyond what exists (Egan, 1992). Through the creative process, something is created. The power of symbolic thought is a manifestation of the creative mind. By representing ideas through images, words, and music, students frame concepts and emotions about the world (Robinson, 2001). Creativity is possible for everyone and is circulated and participatory (Clapp, 2016). Fostering creativity is an essential school structure to promote equity in schools.

Creative practices—the intentionality of creating work for a purpose beyond the procurement of knowledge—is a core element of an arts education. To engage in a creative practice is to make learning more creative to fully express a learner’s potential (Wiggins, 2011). Wiggins describes that creative learning is embodied through creative efforts in which a person can apply learning with the intention of being effective in a present circumstance. Facilitating creative learning or creative practices involves challenges, constructive feedback, and choices for the learner (Wiggins, 2011). To enact creative practice results in transfer of learning between various contexts.

Creative practices support teaching and learning through arts integration. Engagement in creative practice from daily journaling to practicing the piano reflects personal commitment and pursuit of creation in some form. That process of daily creation not only leads to transfer of learning from one context to another but helps to cultivate personal voice and autonomy. Classrooms that focus on this process of learning transfer are serving learners to adapt learning to new contexts (Wiggins, 2011). An education focused on creative practices will benefit students for the constantly changing world and expect students to apply content learning in their own way. Next, I discuss how visual journals and creative inquiry, two common creative practices, can be used effectively. Then, I discuss the implications for educators and its role in arts integration in the classroom.

Types of Creative Practice

A creative practice is driven by the individual and offers a way to cope with the complexities of human meaning and experience (Hanley et al., 2013). To engage in a creative practice is to enact one's creative agency and voice. To do so is a way to explore meaning making and a way to empowerment (Hanley et al., 2013). Imagination is integral in creative practices, inviting us to push our limitations, and, as Greene (1988) espouses, imagination is the practice of "looking beyond the boundary where the backyard ends or the road narrows, diminishing out of sight" (p. 26).

Visual Journals

A visual journal is one creative practice that can be used by teachers in the benefit of their students and in support of arts integration. These journals are an important element of creative art inquiry. Visual journals are more than sketchbooks. They are similar to the field study books used by natural scientists and social scientists but also have the sketchbook/idea-

generation component associated with art (Marshall, 2019). The visual journal is a container of the learner's chronicles of learning, thinking, and idea generation over time. This process of documentation helps the learner to engage in meaning making and builds metacognition. Making meaning is a personal process that is inherent in the visual journal. The visual journal promotes individual driven creative inquiry—that inspires conceptual through lines among art activities and projects. Through this documentation process, I expected that teachers would see themselves as artist-researchers and notice their growth as artists and teachers (Marshall, 2019).

Visual journals act as a form of art inquiry in which participants and construct associative thinking to learn (Marshall, 2019). As a creative and imaginative documentation, in using visual journal, participants utilize Marshall's (2014) approach to making meaning; participants keep a creative research journal to record sources of inspiration and evolving ideas. In Hammond (2015), she notes that creating pictures, visuals, or other non-linguistic representations is one of the most powerful ways to process information. Since my early childhood I have documented my learning and made meaning (processing information) through drawing. Being an English language learner promoted my approach to learning through drawing, though the process was not recognized or encouraged. Hammond (2015) notes drawing is a culturally responsive method to information processing. As an educator, I have championed representational drawing as an essential component in the learning process that can accelerate learning.

Creative Writing

Creative writing is another creative practice that teachers can use to benefit themselves and students in supporting of arts integration. Creative writing is a practice of the literary arts, and includes poetry, memoirs, odes, and scripts. Creative writing as a creative practice is an opportunity in looking at literary arts through a cultural and historical lens (Muhammed, 2018).

From a daily writing practice, possibility emerges to perceive and understand poets as artists, as thinkers and as voices of the time (Loveless, 2002). Within a creative writing practice, habits of mind develop including developing craft, expression, and reflection (Hetland et al., 2007) which surface when engaged in the experience of writing. Establishing a dedicated space to document thoughts encourages reflection and ongoing dialogue from within and by doing so educators can manifest possibilities in their work in the classroom.

Usefulness to Practitioners

As defined earlier, creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value. Inherent in this definition are process, originality, and value. As educators, we must recognize that within the creative process there is also a relationship. Relationship between all components within the process—the teacher-to-teacher relationship, the student to teacher relationship, the teacher or student relationship to the material that is being manipulated through artistic techniques, and the relationship between the teacher or student and the ideas each is exploring. The creative process is an intricate woven pattern. Within this pattern is an essential process: generative learning (Blythe, 1997; Robinson, 2001).

Within all academic disciplines is a common thread—the creative process. In engaging in a creative process, learners push personal boundaries and investigate new possibilities. To engage in this process, while learners apply skills they possess, they stretch and unfold other possibilities. The creative process involves doing and what emerges is an inner and outer dialogue between an individual's ideas and the medium through which the learner explores and expresses the ideas (Robinson, 2001; Zinn, 2003). Through creative processes, learners generate ideas. Creating space within schools to cultivate individual creative processes and individual possibility is an essential school structure.

School Structures that Support Arts Integration

As we consider varied and dynamic school environments, I describe the core school structures necessary to uplift and integrate creative practices within schools. Creative practices refer to the intentional development and engagement in an act of creative expression that generates ideas or a product—ranging from a song to a painting to a delicious meal. Creative practices instigate students and teachers to communicate and plan in ways that are complex, and that stretch our understanding beyond ourselves. Engagement in creative practice can lead educators to “teaching to transgress,” to “educate as the practice of freedom” and to equitable pathways in the classroom (hooks, 1994).

Structures

Shifting school structures so that they better support the pedagogy of creative practices is necessary. Teachers need to embrace self-actualization so that they can develop pedagogical approaches that engage their students. Each school needs to examine academic and instructional school structures that oppress education as a practice of freedom. Engaged pedagogy can elevate student expression as a practice of freedom, as well as provide students with varied ways of knowing that can contribute to their own opportunity to thrive (hooks, 1994). In order to integrate the arts, the school leader and teachers need to attend to the instructional and social-emotional structures as well as the managerial.

Instructional

Arts integration can have an impact on essential components of schools, including teachers and the instructional program. Many arts integration models are currently being applied in schools, but almost all of the structures require the collaborative efforts of classroom teachers and arts specialists (which may include artists in residence, visiting artists, school-based arts

teachers, arts coaches, or some combination of these). Such collaborative relationships contribute to increased teacher satisfaction, interest, and success, and lead to the development of a sense of community of practice in the school (Burton et al., 2000; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005; Werner & Freeman, 2001). However, depending on an arts teacher as the teacher to implement arts integration is not structurally possible as one art teacher cannot accommodate the needs of all teachers. Thus, teachers need to take risks to understand how and why arts integration is critical. Otherwise, they cannot become innovative in their teaching, curious to experiment, persistent in integrating the arts despite challenges, and willing to approach their classes in a more child-centered rather than adult-centered manner (Burton et al., 2000; Werner & Freeman, 2001). As we learned in this study, the teachers needed a set of experiences that supported their risk-taking so that they could take on the responsibility of integrating arts in the instructional program.

Creativity is a necessary expression of one's humanity and is the process of developing original ideas that encompass value (Robinson, 2001). To enact creativity in the classroom is a way of teaching that expresses the belief that every student can learn, to educate as the practice of freedom. Examining teaching through creative practice is rich in generative social emotional development possibilities and contributes to enacting freedom within our students (hooks, 1994). Through creativity and creative practice *conscientization*—critical awareness and engagement—can be cultivated (Freire, 1997).

Managerial

Transforming a school's learning environment to include creative practices requires participation by the whole school community (Betts, 1995). However, the school leader and the leadership team need to ensure school structures that support arts integration (Borden et al., 2006; Burton et al., 2000). Through observations and conversations, principals of arts-rich

schools encourage teachers to take risks, to learn new skills, and to make changes in their instruction to support arts integration (Burton et al., 2000). Because arts integration teaching methods must be explicit to teachers, leaders need to support teachers through time and funding for appropriate professional development (Betts, 1995; Borden et al., 2006; Werner & Freeman, 2001). Without these supports, teachers often think of arts integration as something extra and time-consuming that they must do (Werner & Freeman, 2001). With appropriate professional development, coaching support, and collaboration with school-based arts specialists and team members, teachers discover that arts-integrated teaching can and does meet existing curriculum standards while activating deep knowledge for students (Werner & Freeman, 2001).

Arts integration is prompting new thinking about how the arts belong in the education experience for teachers and student. Teachers and principals in schools with strong arts programs believed that the presence of the arts led their teachers to be more innovative, to have increased awareness of different aspects of students' abilities, and to find school a more enjoyable place to work (Burton et al., 2000). Teacher-artists emphasize the element of play in artistic creation. Creativity thrives in a playful environment because during play there are no repercussions of doing something wrong, and it encourages innovation (Graham & Zwirn, 2015). The usefulness is clear, but the leader needs to be clear about the focus on arts integration and commit resources to implementation.

Arts Integration: A Path to Equity and Social Justice

Creative practices in the arts are often identified as essential strategies for achieving educational equity (Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999). Engagement in creative practice can lead educators to teach to transgress, to educate as the practice of freedom and ultimately to equitable pathways in the classroom (hooks, 1994). Creativity is empowering and encourages teachers and

students to take risks, explore the world, and make meaning (Hanley et al., 2013). As human beings, our capacity for creativity is at our core and contains the relentless commitment of alternative ways of seeing, thinking, and doing (Robinson, 2001).

A school-based structure that can support equitable creative practices in the classroom is culturally relevant arts education (CRAE). This model is rooted in the relationships between learning, creating, academic disciplines, social power, controversies, theories, and personal experiences (Hanley et al., 2013). Through this structure, students may be transformed, through engagement in social justice based creative work that centers on the relationship of the arts and social justice. Figure 3 illustrates the components of this model.

Social justice and the arts emerge from imagination and creativity. Through the creative process, we make decisions, take risks, and evolve ideas that can result in a school that supports individual and collective creative practices. As a result, the arts support equitable conditions for learning and personal growth (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). Imagination and creativity are empowering.

Teachers need to develop pedagogical practices that disrupt the classroom structures which do not allow for creative practices to flourish. Educators who cultivate excitement in the classroom are teaching to transgress; they invite students to push established boundaries or limitations (hooks, 1994). To allow for such excitement to ignite, educators need to learn to approach their teaching with flexibility, recognize and elevate their students' identities, personal voices, and multiple intelligences. That requires a teacher who secure about non-linear lessons and learning and who can enter the classroom as a co-learner, recognizing that students bring prior knowledge, possibility, and untapped assets. If educators can shift the usual teacher-student power-based paradigm, they can create an exciting and creative classroom where students can

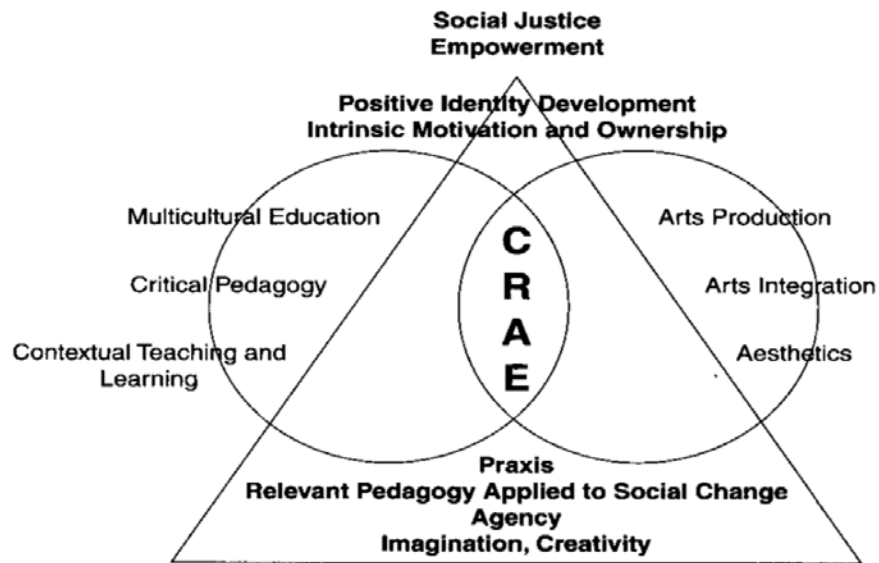


FIGURE 0.1 Culturally Relevant Arts Education.
Adapted from Hanley (2011).

Figure 3. A social justice empowerment model that supports arts integration.

thrive. As we learned in this study, teachers need art experiences to develop the skills and perspectives they need to be effective in integrating the arts.

Art is the pedagogy for social justice (Hanley et al., 2009). Through the arts, teachers who engage in creative practices in the classroom can support student participation in praxis, action, and reflection upon the world to impact and change it for the better (Freire, 1997). When engaging in creative practice, students may build knowledge through their role as active participants who can connect their own self-awareness to ongoing practice. Considering creative practice as an engaged pedagogy that underlies social justice-based education is progressive and critical and teachers who wish to facilitate creative practice in their classrooms must be committed to their own self-actualization that emphasizes their wellness, and by doing so, are able to teach in a way that empowers students (hooks, 1994).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a review of the theoretical, normative, and empirical research for the participatory action research study: arts integration, art impact on students, best practices in arts learning for equity, transforming learning environments to cultivate arts learning, and teacher professional development. The literature offers a foundation for considering how to approach the project and study with teachers. As well, the literature provides a research-based source of codes for analyzing data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

In the participatory action research (PAR) study, I examined the extent to which three teachers at an arts-focused elementary school used creative practices to fully integrate the arts into classroom content. As a result of engaging in creative practices as teachers, they expanded their capacities to design and implement arts-integrated curricula that promoted equitable access and rigor.

The context of the study is Creative Arts Charter School (CACS) in San Francisco, which has been serving the San Francisco community since 1994. Located in the Western Addition neighborhood of San Francisco, CACS serves approximately 460 students from across San Francisco, with nearly 14% living in Western Addition. With its school mission rooted in arts integration and equity, Creative Arts is a community of educators committed to understanding and dismantling oppressive structures that can lead to creative, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning.

In the participatory action research (PAR) project and study, I investigated creative practices as a research-based method for improving arts integration (Eisner & Barone, 2011; Marshall, 2014; Kennedy Center Education, 2020). I used a form of participatory action research (Herr & Anderson, 2014) informed by activist research methodology to investigate the focus of practice and respond to the research questions (Hale, 2008; hunter et al., 2013). To achieve the intended result, I supported teachers to expand and deepen their capacities to change curricular and pedagogical practices. I proposed this theory of action (ToA): *IF* teachers engage in arts-based, creative practices, *THEN* they can design and implement more equitable, instructional practices for students. I worked with classroom teachers to engage in creative practices and then to implement these practices in arts-integrated curricula and pedagogy. Thus, the aim for the FoP

was: support teachers to engage in creative practices and develop art-integrated instructional practices that promote equity.

In detailing the research design, I discuss the methodological approach to the study, outline the cycles of inquiry in the participatory action research process, and describe the intended process for choosing and working with participants. In reiterating the research questions, I detail the data collection protocols and plans for analysis of the data. I conclude with considerations for the study, including limitations and validity of the proposed research methodology.

Qualitative Research Process: Participatory Action Research

As the center of the PAR methodology, I relied on the tenets of action research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Herr & Anderson, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Runnel et al., 2013), improvement science (Bryk et al., 2015), activist research (Hale, 2008; Hale, 2017; hunter et al., 2013), community learning exchanges (Guajardo et al., 2016) and Freire's (1997) praxis. Action research in educational settings is critical so that we engage others in iterative cycles of inquiry. Activist research is a type of action research specifically directed at issues of practice that have a social justice goal. The qualitative research process I chose helped me understand the complexity and meaning of actions within the context (Quierós et al., 2017). The methodology involved an analytic process based on authentic and systematically gathered data. Maxwell (2013) supports the use of qualitative research that involves the researcher as a participant; intersecting attitudes and beliefs within the social dynamics of a group results in findings that illustrate a multidimensional perspective of a problem being analyzed. I, as the lead researcher, engaged in a reciprocal learning process with the three teachers in the study. In addition, as lead researcher, I was immersed in the context of the study and collected and analyzed artifacts, interviews, and

observations (Gerdes & Conn, 2001).

The artmaking process is emerging as an acceptable experimental form of qualitative research in education (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2017; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 2008). As teachers use the artmaking processes—creative practices—the experience itself supports the process of co-generating knowledge through an artistic lens. Marshall and D’Adamo (2011) indicates that creative, non-verbal ways of understanding a subject lend authority to the learning process.

In this case, we wanted to provide more equitable access and rigor for students of color in our school’s classrooms. To ensure that the research had an activist research goal and lens, I relied on the community learning exchange (CLE) axioms and CLE artifacts as a primary data collection tool and methodology. The CLE axioms are predicated on working with the persons closest to the change context and creating spaces for dialogue so that the constituents can work collaboratively to address their issues. Thus, I used Freire’s frame of praxis to guide our process as we deeply reflected to decide on actions.

To implement the qualitative research process, I collected and analyzed data from iterative cycles of inquiry to respond to the PAR research questions and used elements of the improvement science approach to engage in iterative cycles of inquiry, which complements the action and activist research process. This research design best supported the project because it provided sustained engagement of the researcher in the context through cycles of inquiry with teachers who enacted the espoused values of an arts integration. The research included the ongoing and iterative collection and analysis of data that promoted a dynamic relationship in context among the participants, the tools I chose, and the connection to the PAR research questions (Gerdes & Conn, 2001). After I discuss the interplay of action research, improvement

science, activist research, community learning exchanges, and praxis, I detail the research questions and briefly describe the cycles of inquiry.

Action Research

Participatory action research involves a systematic inquiry to collect data in collaboration with active participants engaging in reflective processes to better understand a focused problem within their context (Herr & Anderson, 2014). Using the PAR methodology, as the lead researcher, I worked in partnership with participants in my school community on a focus of shared interest. We engaged in collaborative inquiry; I analyzed iterative data and applied our learning to inform next steps. I chose participatory action research because the community can reflect on their practices systematically to address a problem of practice in their context (Herr & Anderson, 2014). Through a community of practice I called co-practitioner researchers (CPR), we shared meaning making and established a belief system that influenced practice (Militello et al., 2009).

Improvement Science

Participatory action research links to the improvement science in these ways: (a) The focus of practice is similar to problem of practice; (b) iterative cycles of inquiry (termed plan, do, study, act or PDSA) include experimentation and analysis of evidence to make decisions about subsequent actions; and (c) there is a networked improvement community approach. As Bryk et al. (2015) state:

Improvement research consists of a highly integrated set of methods for developing the necessary technical knowledge to transform good ideas into practices that work, building human capabilities necessary for this learning to spread, and directly addressing a major challenge in every improvement effort—building will for change. (p. 17)

The improvement science approach focuses on specific tasks people do as an iterative process in cycles of inquiry and is firmly rooted in the use of tools and processes. In this case, we used visual journals as a creative practices tool; as a result, teachers built their capacity to understand the artistic process and then engaged in designing and implementing curricula.

To deepen and extend the implications of improvement science processes, I utilized the plan do study act (PDSA) improvement cycle process as described by Bryk et al. (2015). Through using the networked improvement community approach that operates like a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), the CPR team members were an integral part of the three cycles of inquiry. As I documented and analyzed the evidence, I shared the evidence with the CPR team. In the Pre-cycle, we engaged in creative practices, including visual journals. Each teacher chose a creative practice and documented their experiences in visual journals. In PAR Cycles One and Two, participants continued the use of visual journals and developed and implemented instruction based on arts integration approaches. I conducted researcher-based observations and post-observation conversations.

Activist Research

In this study, the PAR is rooted in actions that inspire social change and support reframing power structures (Hale, 2008; Hale, 2017; hunter et al., 2013); therefore, I used the framing of activist action research. As the lead researcher, I am a practitioner-researcher, and I collaborated with a group of three teachers who formed the CPR team. Based on establishing and sustaining trusting relationships, we collectively experimented with how best to develop teachers' creative practices that transferred to the classroom (Bennet, 2007). In other words, we iteratively diagnosed and then designed based on evidence (Spillane, 2013).

To fully implement PAR with an activist lens and resist injustice in education, Freire

(1997) encourages, as does the PAR process, individuals to act as co-investigators, and through focus on a common interest, they elevate their critical awareness and “take possession of that reality” (p. 79). Through creative practices, we relied on similar tenets for action and activist research: (a) engaging participants in critical dialogue as a key feature of creative practice; (b) experimenting with ideas through direct engagement; (c) actively engaging in cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. As Freire (1997) notes, “dialogue cannot exist without hope” (p. 64), but hope comes through systematic dialogue about possibilities.

By engaging systematically in these PAR methods, participants as co-practitioner researchers (CPR) collaborated toward collective liberation, which is to:

recognize that all forms of oppression are intimately connected and that we must work together towards freedom. A belief that every person is worthy of dignity and respect, and that within systems of oppression everyone suffers. Collective liberation is not just a value, but an action. (Okun, 1999, p. 1)

Because PAR was a key methodological approach, which is an invitation for individual and collective inquiry resulting in action to focus on a problem of practice, I bolstered the research effort by incorporating elements from the community learning exchange axioms.

Community Learning Exchange

The community learning exchange (CLE) approach offers a process for engaging teachers and a methodological approach for collecting artifacts that I analyzed for each PDSA cycle.

CLEs promote purposeful conversations among teachers that are central to the PAR project and study (Guajardo et al., 2016). The CLE axioms that guided the PAR work are:

1. Learning and leadership are dynamic social processes.
2. Conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes.

3. The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.
4. Crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational processes.
5. Hope and change are built on assets and dreams of locals and their communities.

I facilitated meetings using the community learning exchange (CLEs) protocols; during these meetings, I collected and then analyzed artifacts that provide rich and meaningful knowledge to support the research questions. As the teachers and I regularly met, we used CLE processes to concentrate on developing the teachers' creative practices and to discuss how they informed their knowledge and dispositions about arts integration. Then I analyzed how the teachers transferred their skills to classroom curriculum and pedagogy. The CLE artifacts represent organic dialogue that is crucial for change.

Role of Praxis

Action/activist research connects research to practice, and practice informs further research; the reciprocal process is necessary to retain authenticity and trust in the process. Actions of practice require dialogue to reflect and more fully develop teachers' abilities to link theory to practice and their creative practices to arts integration in classrooms. Freire (1997) emphasized that praxis—action upon the world and reflection about the actions to foster change—was at the core of one's critical awareness. Freire (1997) spoke to the necessity of trust as a foundation for the reflection that results in action. To trust the reflective dialogue and exchange that surfaces through the iterative cycles of inquiry will result in multiple possibilities and understanding. To move toward liberation in education, participants must claim knowledge as a mutual area for our endeavors (hooks, 1994).

In the development of this study, I designed art-based activities that promoted praxis. At

CPR meetings, I invited members to reflect on their creative practices, successes, and challenges in the art-based inquiry process. My role was to facilitate a creative space for participants to reflect on how their creative practices can influence classroom practices. Reflection is established as a broad thinking disposition, or habit of mind, that visual arts teachers teach in their classes. Hetland et al. (2007) describes reflection within art practice as the process to question, explain, and evaluate. As we engaged in reflective practices, we learned to think and discuss our work; that systematic reflection activated change (Hetland et al., 2007).

Finally, the role of praxis is critical to me as the lead researcher, creative practitioner, and school leader. I kept a visual journal and wrote regular reflective memos to capture my thoughts and connections in the PAR particularly as related to my leadership actions. My reflections were a part of each PDSA cycle. Using my reflections and the visual journals of CPR members, I modified the PAR inquiry, art activities, and data collection.

Research Questions

The overarching research question is: *How do educators develop creative practices to support pathways for equity?* Arts education is an essential strategy for achieving equitable instructional outcomes, specifically the approach of arts integration; and the root of arts integration is the development of a creative practice. I proposed that creative practices drive arts integration, which can, in turn, support equitable classroom pedagogy. I designed PAR activities that align to the research questions that supported these sub-questions:

1. To what extent do teachers who engage in creative practices develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions about arts integration?
2. To what extent do teachers implement curriculum and instruction that reflects arts integration in classrooms?

3. How do I change as a leader by effectively supporting teachers to develop creative practices and implement arts integration?

Through the PAR process, the participants actively engaged and reflected on their creative practices and used those practices to fully integrate the arts in their classrooms. Then, we considered how these pedagogical shifts promoted educational equity in the classroom.

Participatory Action/Activist Research Cycles

Potentially, the exploration of creative practices on the part of three teachers supported arts integration as an equitable pathway in the classrooms. I believed that if teachers engage in arts-based creative practices, they could be better prepared to design and implement curriculum and instruction that supports arts integration and equitable access and rigor for students. In Figure 4, I outline the activities, timelines, and personnel for the three participatory action research cycles of inquiry. I invited participants (n= 3) to be a part of the study. They formed a co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group, and I expected that group would remain the same throughout the entire 18 month PAR project and study. In each cycle, we used the collaborative processes described by Militello et al. (2009), which highlight inquiry as a process to look inward and to then act, as we question practices, the context, and the impact on classroom learning. Through three cycles of inquiry and collecting data, I used the data with the participants to make iterative changes.

Participants, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

In describing the process of selection and participants in the co-practitioner researcher (CPR) members, I then shift to detail the data collection protocols for this study and describe the data analysis processes I use for this study.

In this PAR, I invited a collaborative group of inquiry-minded practitioners to investigate

PAR Pre-Cycle: Fall 2021

- Convened monthly CPR group and use CLE protocols.
- Read and discussed anchor texts on arts practices and equity.
- Chose and engaged in a creative practice.
- Began use of visual journals.

PAR Cycle One: Spring 2022

In addition to activities in PAR Pre-Cycle,

- Share visual journals and other artifacts related to creative practices implementation.
- Conducted member checks on evidence
- Interviewed CPR members
- Develop and implement units of instruction based on arts integration approaches
- Observe classrooms and conduct post-observation conversations.

PAR Cycle Two: Fall 2022

In addition to activities in PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle One these are additions:

- Interviewed CPR member
 - Facilitated professional development for school staff
 - Observed classrooms and conducted post-observation conversations.
-

Figure 4. PAR Cycles of inquiry.

the role of creative practices as a pathway toward equity, as is the intention of our school's mission and essential question. I examined the role of creative practices as a tool that supports more intentional arts integration and equitable classroom experiences for students (Spillane, 2013). From the deeper learning research practices, I determined the value of the teachers first engaging in the experiences; then we designed parallel experiences for students (Machado, 2021; Mehta & Fine, 2015).

Sampling

In this study, three classroom teachers were the unit of analysis, and I used purposeful sampling to choose the participants (Patton, 2015). I selected the individuals to represent a variation across their teaching backgrounds. I wanted to have a mix of persons with diverse experiences who were willing to experiment with incorporating creative practices in their personal exploration of the arts as well as integrate the arts fully in their teaching practices. The participants were qualified and committed to further developing their arts integrated teaching as an equity-based practice, which is aligned with the Creative Arts mission and essential question.

Co-Practitioner Researcher Group (CPR)

A co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group offered a way to triangulate the experiences and data because they provided ongoing responses to the data and participated in member checks (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018; Gerdes & Conn, 2001). As hunter et al. (2013) indicate, by setting up the research environment and relationships to sustain trusting relationships and build collaborative action, the activist approach to action research “breaks down the traditional barrier between the researched and the researcher” (p. 26). The CPR team facilitated by a lead researcher responds to “place-based problems through processes of collective learning and community capacity building” (p.16).

The CPR members agreed to be a part of the CPR group because they wanted to increase their capacities as teachers integrating the arts. After approval of the study, they signed consent forms and, at any time during the study, they could have opted out of the project and study.

Data Collection Protocols

Qualitative methods center on visual and text data through which the researcher records data and engages in a layered process of analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the PAR study, I used multiple methods to collect qualitative data using specific protocols for data collection. These included community learning exchanges artifacts (see Appendix D), interviews (see Appendix E), individual visual journals (see Appendix F), and classroom observations (see Appendix G). In addition, I collected and analyzed CPR meeting notes and wrote reflective memos (see Table 2 for questions and data collection tools).

Community Learning Exchange Artifacts

As a part of the PAR implementation and study, I used community learning exchange (CLE) protocols in our regular meetings. I invited participants to bring stories, experiences, questions, and passions to the meetings (Guajardo et al., 2016). We used the CLE axioms to engage in conversations and dialogue as critical for relationships and pedagogy, based conversations on assets and hopes, viewed leadership and learning as social processes, and modeled and authorized border-crossing to cultivate the data collection process and inform the learning (Guajardo et al., 2016). CLE artifacts may include art, notes, photos, or recordings.

Interviews (Appendix F)

Interviews provided the opportunity for a complex picture of creative practices and equity by inviting CPR members to offer their multiple perspectives and experiences (Creswell &

Table 2

Research Questions, Data Collection, and Triangulation Protocols

Research Questions	Data	Triangulated with
To what extent do teachers who engage in creative practices develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions about arts integration?	Teacher Visual Journals CLE Artifacts CPR Meeting Notes Interviews	Visual Journals (Self) Reflective Memos
To what extent do teachers implement curriculum and instruction that reflects arts integration in classrooms?	Classroom Observations Post-Observation Conversations CLE Artifacts CPR Meeting Notes Interviews	Visual Journals (Self and CPR) Reflective Memos Member checks
How do I change as a leader by effectively supporting teachers to develop creative practices and implement arts integration	Reflective Memos Visual Journal	Member checks

Creswell, 2018). In the PAR study, I conducted individual interviews during check-ins with CPR team members during each cycle.

Visual Journals (Appendix G)

Art creation and experiencing art provided opportunities for complex thinking and, therefore, for honing conceptual skills (Eisner, 2002). During the PAR study, each CPR member used a blank sketchbook as a visual journal to document their observations, experiences, and perspectives. This process of visual documentation served as one creative practice for them to engage with collectively throughout the PAR study. During each PAR cycle, I met with each CPR member individually to review their journals and use interview questions to reflect upon their processes.

The process of metacognition, understood as the ability to monitor one's thinking and learning (Kolencik & Hillwig, 2011; Silver, 2013) was designed to encourage the CPR members to step back from a creative task to name and frame what happens. Making space within the process of visual documentation to step back is transferable to new situations and benefits learning and thinking skill development in all academic disciplines (Silver, 2013). Significantly, being metacognitive supports learners in developing positive dispositions toward learning and gives them autonomy and agency, both of which generate motivation and engagement (Kolencik & Hillwig, 2011). I analyzed each visual journal, including my own, to determine codes and categories in the data (Saldaña, 2016) and, as we proceeded through the PAR project, to determine themes.

I kept a visual journal for the length of the project and coded the journal in each successive cycle of inquiry for categories and eventually themes. I used my visual journal evidence as triangulation of the teachers' journals and to substantiate change and growth in my leadership.

Classroom Observations and Conversations (Appendix H)

Observations provide evidenced of the teacher transfer to classroom practice. I observed the classrooms of the three CPR members to analyze teacher practices. I used observational evidence to generate ways of using creative practices to link educational directives with equity. In the post-observation conversations, I used evidence from the observation to facilitate conversations with the teachers.

Reflective Memos

Reflective memos are opportunities for written reflection about the research process (Saldaña, 2016; Argyris & Schön, 1974). The memos provided another tool of metacognition, which documented my reflections about my thoughts, feelings, and connections after meeting with the CPR team, related theories, emergent themes, observing visual journals, visual narratives, interviews, other documents, and art pieces (Saldaña, 2016). These memos, intersected with other qualitative data, supported the evidence for the PAR study.

The data collection protocols—CLE artifacts, interviews, visual journals, classroom observations, post observation conversations, reflective memos—offered unique perspectives into creative practices and the impact on arts integration methodology in the classroom.

Data Analysis

I conducted data analysis simultaneously with data collection, sourcing the data analysis to inform ongoing decisions in the PAR processes. The data sources from each PAR cycle responded to the research questions and intersected with the data sources. I conducted CPR member checks to respond to evidence I used at the closure of each PAR cycle to ensure the validity standard described in the data analysis and limitations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gerdes & Conn, 2001).

Because I had multiple qualitative sources organized into a set of evidence for each research question, I analyzed these data for codes, categories, themes, and concepts (Saldaña, 2016). I then triangulated the varying types of data collected through use of member checks and reflective memos.

Study Considerations: Limitations, Validity, Confidentiality, and Ethics

In discussing the study considerations for the qualitative research project, I address limitations and internal and external validity of the evidence. The key standard of validity for activist research is the usefulness of the evidence to the constituents to improve their practices (Hale, 2008).

Limitations

As the primary researcher for the PAR project, I came to this study with experiences in arts education that influenced what I wanted to study. As indicated, the choice of the CPR team was purposeful, and I conferred with the CPR team throughout the PAR cycles. As a result, I heard multiple perspectives on the processes of implementing the focus of practice in iterative cycles of inquiry.

All qualitative studies have certain limitations because of the size of the study. The team for the study included three teachers. All participants were from the same school. However, while this is a small sample, the recursive data sources and analysis provided thick descriptions from multiple data sources to confirm the analysis. Secondly, while the exact study cannot be replicated, the process for the study could be adapted to other school settings.

Secondly, my supervisory role was a limitation I considered. I have an influential role as the Director of Arts Programming and Leadership Team member during the study. I took care to

ensure that all participants gave informed consent without any coercion or sense of obligation. I had informed the participants that they could terminate at any time.

Validity

Validity is addressed with trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative validity means the researcher is responsible for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. In addition, because I have spent extensive time in the field of arts education and within the school, I have developed an in-depth understanding that contributes to credibility to the narrative account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Internal Validity

Member checks and triangulation of data together ensure the validity of data collection and analysis. In addition, spending extensive time in the field of arts education and within the school contributes to in-depth understanding that contributes to credibility to the narrative account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The three teachers taught at the school, which is a limitation in the study. We conducted the study over eighteen months. This time frame provided ample opportunity to gather qualitative data for three inquiry cycles with participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that supports the findings.

Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research that Lincoln and Guba (1985) term naturalistic inquiry, the criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. By attending to these elements of trustworthiness, as the researcher, I responded to standard criteria and trusted/relied on the evidence and analysis from the study. Further, I considered deThaw activist researcher criteria for validity as useful to participants (Hale, 2008). This means

that the evidence from the study should be transferable to the context of the people involved (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). I established the following to ensure trustworthiness:

- **Credibility:** I used multiple data sources. I collected and coded these sources over a period of eighteen months, which instilled confidence in the truth of the findings;
- **Transferability:** The findings of the study are applicable and transferable to other persons in my immediate context and applicable to school settings interested in arts-integration.
- **Dependability:** I used ongoing member checks to triangulate the data sources. In addition, my visual journal contributed a source of data that was dependable and regular.
- **Confirmability:** By working closely with the CPR member who kept documentation in visual journals and with whom I conducted member checks, the participants shaped and confirmed findings.

External Validity

The PAR project and study was within the scope of the work of Creative Arts School. The study may be applicable to the scope of work within SFUSD or other schools outside the district; there is transferability or external validity for the process to other schools, but not specific outcomes. As a researcher, I focused on the process to understand how creative practices unfolded and impacted equitable practices. Thus, the process underlying the study could be replicated in other schools or districts, but outcomes are not dependable across differing contexts. As the researcher, I sought believability in the process based on coherence, insight, and instrumental utility (Eisner, 1991) through an active process of verification in lieu of traditional validity and reliability measures.

Confidentiality and Ethics

The participants in the study were site-based practitioners committed to the implementation of arts integration. I selected the participants based on connection with classroom-based practices and existing collegueship. I met with each potential participant individually and asked them if they would be interested in participating in the research. Participants signed consent forms approved by East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary.

My formal request to conduct the study was approved by my direct supervisor, the Executive Director of Creative Arts School (see Appendix C). I completed Institutional Review Board Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (see Appendix B) certification in December 2020 to comply with the ethical requirements governing human research. Even with these safeguards in place prior to the inception of the project, termination of the study could occur at any time, for any reason.

I maintained confidentiality through these measures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018):

1. Important and personal papers and data files were stored in a locked file cabinet.
2. All electronic forms for data collection were kept in a password protected file.
3. Data and copies of reports were shared with the CPR group for purposes of transparency, improvement, and reflection.

As a result of these processes, I actively upheld standards of validity, confidentiality, and ethics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided the research design and methodology for the PAR study to answer the overarching research question guiding the project: How can creative practices support

pathways for equitable classroom learning? The CPR team participated in a participatory action research project and study by engaging in three inquiry cycles, using CLE processes and protocols in their meetings in all cycles of inquiry using CLE axioms and pedagogical approaches to reflect on the development and sustainability of their creative practices. Throughout each cycle, I collected and analyzed data to assert patterns and, with the CPR team, determined next steps. In detailing the processes for data collection and analysis, I considered study limitations, validity, and ethics. In Chapter 4, I present the first level of organizing the PAR and the first set of data in which I developed a coding system that resulted in a set of categories.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PRE-CYCLE

The focus of the participatory action research (PAR) project and study was: How do educators use creative practices to support pathways for equitable classroom learning? I used visual journaling as a core creative practice by the co-practitioner group (CPR) group to surface the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for equitable arts-integrated teaching practices. In using creative practices as a process and a methodology of collecting evidence, I concurrently examined the process and used arts practices to approach and process the teacher experiences. I used my visual journal to document what I was experiencing and the interconnections between me and the work in which I engaged with teachers. In the PAR process, I listened attentively and reflected on my practices within the CPR collective. Each experience during this Pre-cycle influenced the choices I made for future interactions with CPR and iterative evidence collection and analysis, which Dewey (1934) described as continuity of experience, and I provided new learnings that support pathways for equity in the classroom.

In this chapter, I describe the context in which the study took place and the processes through which the CPR members and I established the group and conducted a Community Learning Exchange (CLE); how we collected and analyzed data and used the data to inform next steps; and how I applied the data analysis to determine the categories related to both process and content that emerged. Then, I analyze how these categories are intertwined with the research questions and emerging framework. Finally, I explain how the findings from this cycle informed the plan for the next cycle of inquiry.

The Context: Creative Arts Charter School

The context of the study is Creative Arts Charter School (CACS) in San Francisco. CACS has been a public charter school sanctioned by the San Francisco Unified School District

since 1994 and is located in the Western Addition neighborhood of the San Francisco. CACS serves approximately 460 students from across San Francisco, with nearly 14% living in Western Addition.

Demographics of the School

As of Fall 2022, CACS has become a diversified school community with a notable increase in students and staff of color. With a current enrollment of 441 students, 51% are students of color and 48% are White students. At the start of the PAR study, students of color accounted for only 30% of the 441 students. With a staff of 46, 41% are persons of color and 59% are White. Staff demographics have shifted since the start of the PAR study, with increased staff of color and an added leadership position, Director of African American Achievement Initiative, who centers Black and Latinx students and families. This leadership position has been pivotal in supporting staff in creating equitable classrooms and works collaboratively and strategically with the Director of Instructional Programming and the Arts, my current role at the school. Black and Latinx students at the school face challenges that most White and ethnically Asian students do not, including academic gaps in their literacy and math skills.

The organization of the school differs from that of traditional charters. The school is unionized, with school-based teachers serving as union leaders responsible for leading contract negotiations. The leadership structure of this charter stands as another difference. The Executive Director leads the overall health and care of the organization, approaching leadership responsibilities at times through a collaborative model of decision making. I began this research study in my eleventh year at the school, in my dual role as the Director of Instructional Programming and the Arts and the Kindergarten through Fifth grade administrator. The Director of African American Performance Initiative plays an important role on our leadership team and

leads our school-wide anti-racist approach to teaching and learning, and directly supports students and families who identify as Black and Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

Our school mission grounded in arts integration and equity, and the CACS community of educators is committed to understanding, disrupting, and dismantling oppressive structures and creating collaborative, and inquiry-based learning.

Current Context

During the school year of 2021-22 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, our enrollment shifted. We enrolled one hundred new students due to changing family circumstances and students transitioning to other schools in the San Francisco area. Fall 2021 was especially demanding because of the pandemic and the transition back to school after eighteen months of remote learning. Implementing this PAR project, while the school culture was in the process of re-establishing, was challenging. However, the arts have been a guiding force to mitigate the plethora of changes and demands, providing a method to reflect, reflect on experiences, and plan forward, all while maintaining the students' needs at the heart of the work. The school's staff has been activating their culturally responsive pedagogical practices in the classroom through collaboration with an Oakland-based organization, Studio Pathways, which I describe next as an important aspect to the context.

Studio Pathways offers an inquiry-based approach to culturally responsive teaching and learning. Facilitated by educators Mariah Rankine-Landers and Jessa Brie Moreno, their work focuses on the root of social inequities and how inequities are expressed through education, work, and organizing systems. During this school year, the professional development sessions led by Studio Pathways addressed the critical need for reflection and healing within educators. Using a variety of arts integrated transformative learning experiences, their approach intended to

deepen and expand our staff's understanding of historical and contemporary systems, relationships, and norms that perpetuate patterns of inequity so that they may be dismantled within our classroom teaching and learning practices (Rankine-Landers & Moreno, 2021). These online, arts-based sessions were designed for individual staff members to do self-work with the goal of transferring their learning and experience to their teaching and corroborates the PAR study.

The CPR Group

I invited three teachers at the Creative Arts Charter School to be a part of the CPR group: a theater specialist, a second grade teacher, and a fourth grade teacher. The three teachers agreed to be a part of the CPR group because they wanted to increase their capacities as teachers integrating the arts. They signed consent forms and were aware that at any time in the course of the study they could decide to opt out of the project and study. The members were:

- Olivia, the theater specialist, began teaching at CACS as a classroom teacher over ten years ago and taught middle school theater during the course of this project and study. Olivia is a collaborative educator who integrates a contemporary, social justice approach in her work with middle schoolers. Olivia serves as a union leader, the labor management committee, serving our unionized teaching staff. Olivia is an active voice in our school community advocating for the arts in teaching and learning as an essential component of educational equity.
- Crystal was entering her fifth year at CACS at the school. During the school year 2021-2022, she taught second grade. Because teachers loop at the school, during the school year 2022-2023, she taught third grade. Crystal recently cleared her credential and Olivia was her BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment) coach. She is

a compassionate educator, committed to social justice in her teaching and curriculum, as evidenced by her third-grade study of indigenous peoples of the Bay Area. She is a member of the Bay Area Black Teacher project and is interested in building up her critical pedagogy practices in the classroom. Crystal is a reflective teacher who regularly seeks to improve her practice in support of her students. One of her goals is to further develop her arts integrated teaching and learning practices.

- Adam was a fifth grade teacher during school year 2021-2022 and in his second year teaching at CACS. Adam is passionate about social justice issues and arts-integrated teaching. He is committed to practicing antiracism in his classroom and sharing his Mexican heritage with his students. He is a reflective practitioner, guiding his students to question and dispute history as it has been told. Adam enjoys making art, including drawing, drumming, and developing creative strategies for his students.

Overall, each CPR member is a committed and inquiry-based practitioner, eager to make shifts in their own teaching practices in support of their students and the organization's mission.

PAR Pre-Cycle Process

The PAR Pre-cycle took place over the length of one academic semester (Fall 2021) and included an initial Community Learning Exchange (CLE) with the CPR team, followed by individual meetings with each of the three CPR members. At the start of the semester, I confirmed the participation of the CPR team prior to the initial CLE. The initial CLE was an opportunity to engage with one another, share personal narratives, and inspire inquiry about creative practices, the focus of practice for my study. After the CLE, the CPR team began actively documenting their teaching and creative practices in their visual journals. Finally, I conducted individual member check-ins with each CPR team member. Next, I describe the PAR

activities, and data collection and analysis in the PAR Pre-cycle (see Table 3). These details illustrate what I did to ground the study for the emergent categories I generated from the CLE, member check-ins, memos, and visual journals.

Community Learning Exchange

The CPR group met in September 2021. I facilitated a community learning exchange to ignite and promote dialogue about how creative practices could support equitable classroom learning. The community learning exchange (CLE) approach offered a process for engaging the CPR team and a methodological approach for collecting artifacts that I could analyze for the PAR- Pre-cycle. This purposeful conversation among the CPR team members is central to the PAR project and study. At the CLE, in we began with a mindfulness moment, followed by a circle in which we each shared an artifact that reflected why we teach or how we teach. We discussed the focus of the study and the members' roles as CPR members and the data I would be collecting and analyzing.

Each member received a blank book that would serve as their visual journal. Each CPR team member committed to using the visual journal as a core practice for the duration of the study. As a group, we discussed what creative practices are and shared ideas for the creative practices that we would be committing to during the study. I used these questions as prompts:

1. What are your creative practices?
2. What are examples of arts integration lessons and practices in your classroom?
3. What is the connection between arts integration and equity?

The dialogue about creative practices ignited possibilities for each CPR member. Each reflected on what they observed as their creative practices and how to further deepen and extend their commitment to their creative practices.

Table 3

Activities and Evidence: PAR Pre-Cycle

Activities	Key Participants	Timeline	Evidence
Individual Members	CPR Team	September 2021	Notes
Check ins	CPR members	November 2021 December 2021	Notes
Visual Journals	CPR members	September – December 2021	Journals
Reflective Memos	Researcher	September – December 2021	Notes

CPR Individual Check-Ins

I facilitated two individual check-ins with each CPR member during the PAR Pre-cycle in the months of October and November 2021. Each check-in was an opportunity to reflect on their creative practices and visual journals and collect artifacts. Together, we reflected on how to best use our visual journals and set up personal rituals for documenting their experiences interconnected with arts integration in the classroom. Each member decided how best to use creative practices to build their individual capacity to use the arts as an artistic practice. As adult learners and teachers, each member was deciding how to transfer the practices to the classroom. Secondly, I coached each teacher on how to engage in daily creative practice.

Visual Journals

During the PAR Pre-cycle, CPR members engaged in a collective creative practice—visual journaling—to deepen their experience in the arts. The visual journal is a place and a tool for arts-centered inquiry and learning. In this PAR study, members used their visual journals to focus self-observations, learning, thinking, and ideas that related to their individual creative practices. In addition, they reflected on their arts integration teaching approaches and the connections to equity in their classroom. Each visual journal is a core data collection tool for this PAR study; therefore, as I began to code and analyze the journals regularly and iteratively, I discussed the coding and analysis in a member check.

I regularly analyzed each visual journal to determine codes and categories (Saldaña, 2016) and, as we proceeded throughout the PAR project, to determine themes. I collected visual journals twice during the Pre-cycle. I kept a visual journal myself for the length of the PAR project and coded the journal during the Pre-cycle. My visual journal evidence served as

triangulation evidence of the teachers' journals and as a tool to substantiate change and growth in my leadership.

Data Collection and Analysis: Coding and Developing a Codebook

I analyzed several forms of data to examine what happened throughout PAR Pre-cycle One. I used multiple methods to collect qualitative data using specific protocols for data collection: community learning exchange artifacts, individual visual journals., and notes from CPR check-ins. One of the highlights of our participatory action research was our work to make the practice of teachers as creative practitioners and collaborative researchers visible From the CLE, I collected multiple artifacts that I used as evidence, including the meeting transcript and personal narratives. In addition, I wrote reflective memos throughout the fall semester. Some of the memos were in response to graduate school assignments while others documented my experience intersecting the study. Often, I documented meaning making in my visual journal and intersected those data with theoretical frameworks and my leadership practices.

As I practiced the coding process, I noticed that some codes were too general. However, the categories that I analyzed reflect the frequency of responses from multiple forms of data. This initial data collection and analysis informed the decisions throughout the cycle representing a process of consistently using evidence to make decisions about next steps and increasing my capacity as a researcher to attune myself to the data and the members' responses. Three categories emerged in the Pre-cycle: questioning teaching practices, personal symbolism, and self-power vs. collective power.

Emerging Categories

Visual artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla are quoted in Sollins and Sollins (2007), stating, "What is really important in our practice is criticality. We constantly want to

question and have our work trigger a possibility of self-questioning about the world” (p. 118). As school leaders, we recognize that artists and creative practices serve as models in the classroom and inform the knowledge and skill set of teachers. Questioning one's teaching practice, the development of personal symbolism, and the tension between self-power and collective power as practitioners in the classroom emerges through creative work, which transfers to the classroom. However, key to this process is the connection between using the evidence from the teachers’ work and conversations to the actual facilitation of professional learning with the teachers. The emerging categories of questioning teaching practices, personal symbolism, and self-power vs. collective power signified the development of creative work as essential components in a teacher’s toolbox to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support equitable classroom learning (see Table 4). Because the CPR team surfaced critical aspects of the creative process, they can work from a different set of possibilities for supporting creative pathways for equitable classroom learning.

Three practices, reflection with the CPR team through the creative practice of visual journaling, our CPR meetings, and individual check-ins, resulted in rich dialogue that expressed their innermost and vulnerable wonderings and personal ways of making meaning through symbolic representations. The link between the process of teacher learning and growth and their ability to be effective classroom teachers is undeniable and critical. Therefore, employing an iterative, evidence-based, and reflective exploration of work and thinking offered a way forward for better understanding how to support teachers to enact their espoused values of arts integration and equity. As I expand on these three categories, I analyze the ways I can better support teachers to fully inhabit their roles as teachers in the arts.

Table 4

Categories for PAR Pre-Cycle

Category	Code	CLE	CPR Individual Member Check Ins	Visual Journal	Total
Questioning teaching practices n=34 or 44%	Questioning-inquiry		3	3	6
	Wonder		2	2	4
	Documenting		3	3	6
	Reflecting back and forward/reflection/self- reflection	4	2	5	11
	Consistency of practice/structured	1	3	3	7
Personal symbolism n=28 or 36%	Being creative- creativity	1	3	2	6
	Creative practice	1	2	5	8
	Storytelling as creative practice	2	3		5
	Movement as story/kinesthetic	2	2		4
	Metaphor-use of symbols	1	1	3	5
Self-Power n=16 or 20%	Collective power			4	4
	Self-power		3	3	6
	Identity	3			3
	Autonomy/agency		2	1	3

Questioning Teaching Practices

As a first step in changing classroom pedagogy, CPR members questioned their teaching practices as a result of this inquiry (44% of the evidence). Their visual journals provided individual windows into their self-knowledge, practices, and observations. An example of a reflective question included: “How do I show up with love for students when I don’t feel love but trauma?” In responding to the self-designed question, the CPR member wrote, “I like how I can participate without using voice,” demonstrating their questioning of traditional teaching practices that are teacher directed with teachers talking at students instead of allowing student-centered and creative practices. The same CPR member wrote, “My purpose for teaching is to be my authentic self, create and make space for children to create,” further indicating that developing a space that fosters students’ creative skills is a goal and purpose teachers aim to master (Crystal, visual journal, December 2021). In each of these reflections, the teacher questioned and unpacked the effectiveness of his or her teaching practice. Because CPR members were engaged in creative practices, the act of creating prompted a cycle of questioning, reflecting, and acting, which can be viewed as a set of thinking dispositions. Hetland et al. (2007) espoused that the “real benefit” of visual art education is the opportunity to teach students creative habits and dispositions, rather than teaching specific art skills that support other subject areas or impact student test scores in math or reading. As CPR members reflected back and forth through the creative practice of visual journaling, they articulated questions that held possibility in altering their teaching practices through a more creative approach.

Back and Forth

The CPR members actualized commitments to their growth as creative practitioners by engaging in a reflective process that involved looking back and using that knowledge to propel

them forward. For example, CPR member Crystal asked the question, “How am I different than a year ago?” Within her visual journal, Crystal created a chart that compared her practices and dispositions from December 2020 to December 2021. In this self-initiated reflection through her visual journal, documented in December 2020 when remote teaching and learning was occurring, Crystal was feeling “creative, excited to teach and facing challenges.” Crystal noted that she was more “flexible” and “made more time for self.” Looking forward to December 2021, the feelings were in sharp contrast and included “impulsive,” “reactionary,” “uncertain,” and “still want to find new rhythm.” Connecting to their chart was the question in bold, uppercase type, “WHAT HAVE I DONE DIFFERENTLY IN MY PRACTICE?”. Crystal documented that she had been “not solely rely[ing] on tools or pre-made curriculum or routines,” which offered insight into her use of creative pedagogical practices that speak to “slowing down and listening and adjusting to student needs.” Next, I explore the adjustments in practice to determine consistency of practice and structured routines.

Consistency of Practice/Structured Routines

The need for a consistency of practice/structured routines within members’ instructional approaches surfaced through ongoing questioning of their teaching practices. The need for student-centered consistent expectations and structured routines surfaced in CPR team conversations and visual journals. Crystal expressed the desire to develop consistency of practice in regard to “language,” “relationships,” “feelings of success,” “boundaries,” and “experience.” During an individual check-in, CPR member Adam expressed that “I think I need structure guiding me where I want to go...” Adam used post-its added into his visual journal to express his need to be consistent in his practices and notes: “Need to make time to reflect.” (see Figure 5, Adam, visual journal, November 21, 2021). His intention was to express the need for

more structure to support intentional planning. The category of personal symbolism invited further deepening of understanding of this category.

Personal Symbolism

Personal symbolism, the process of making meaning and resulting in drawn symbolization, emerged during cycle one. Sociological imagination—the ability to see how individual experiences are shaped by social context—underlies the process of personal symbolism and reflection on the authentic self (Marshall, 2014). Personal symbolism (36% of the data for this cycle of inquiry) helps to explain how the CPR team members organized their thinking as they made meaning of their artmaking and school-based experiences. Data collection from the CPR team’s visual journals demonstrate the uniqueness of the individual’s method for making meaning. In the visual journal excerpt, Adam draws a simple image that refers to how he views the weight of control over creativity. Adam references control and its connection with power. Creativity is noted in the balance. Adam reflects on his image by sharing:

When I was creating this image, I was thinking about the power I think I have in adapting my curriculum... But also, like, kind of this wanting to, I can't remember exactly what. Like even the creative things that I wanted my students to engage in, I felt that many times they fit into a box that maybe I thought art should look like, similar to maybe the banking model . . . And so, I was just trying to figure out how, and then knowing that bringing arts into the classroom isn't one of my strong suits, how do I do it in a way that brings students' full voice to the forefront?" (Adam, CPR meeting, November 4, 2021).
(see Figure 6).

The visual *connection* between the creation of an image that represents Adam thinking and his experience, can be used as a tool both to deepen his understanding and as a motivator for

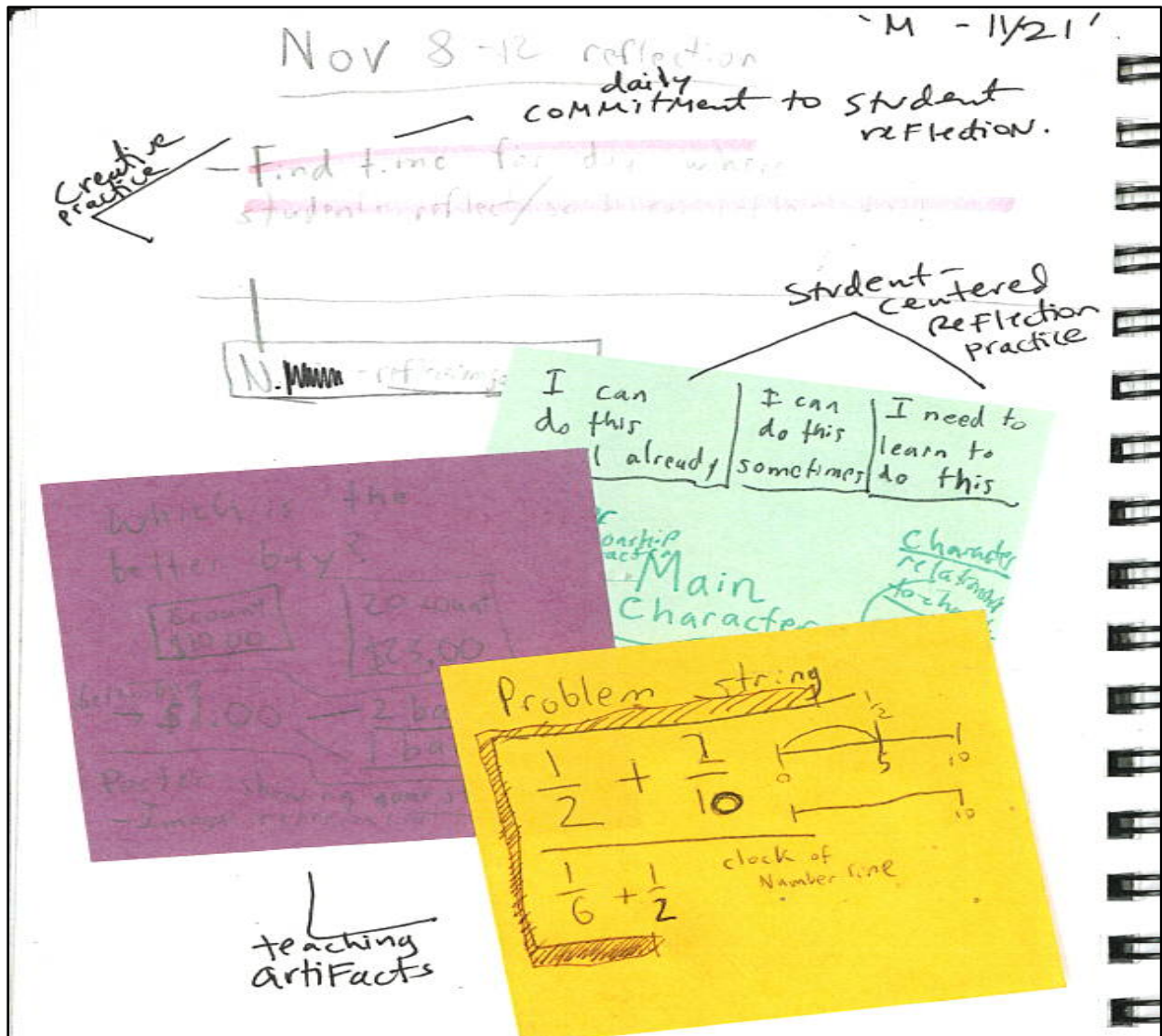


Figure 5. Adam, visual journal, November 21, 2021.

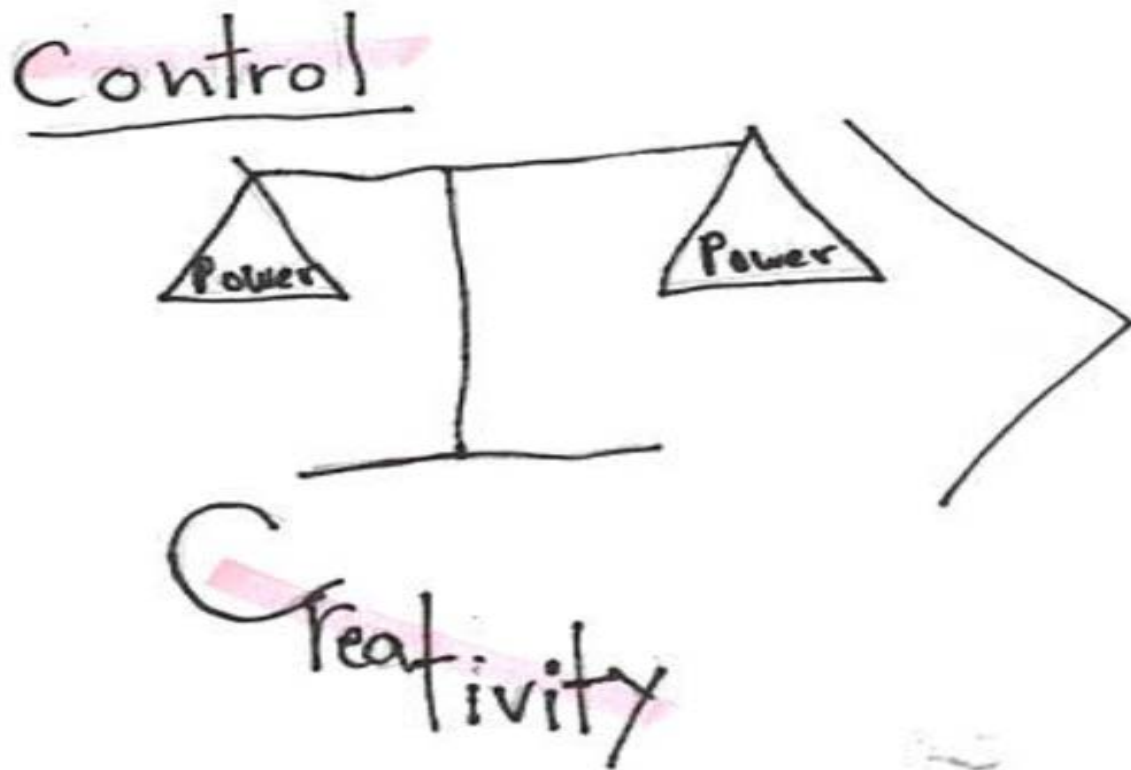


Figure 6. Example of personal symbolism from Adam's visual journal.

integrating the arts into his classroom teaching. I expand on this figure in the next category, self-power.

Personal symbolism reflects the CPR members' attempt to visualize their authentic selves. CPR member Crystal, at the start of Pre-cycle 1, sought to understand how to promote students' "own *well-being*," a possible indicator of authenticity. Crystal reflects extensively in her journal on how to better serve her students while channeling "freedom of teaching and learning" (Crystal, visual journal, November 2021). Crystal places emphasis on concepts that are important to her by underlining specific words, use of capital letters, and the use of stars. These personalized ways or personal symbols in her visual journal bring attention to the significance of her self-expression and inner- thinking. In her journal, Crystal brings questions to the surface that illustrate her teaching approach. For example, she documented her inner dialogue on one page with, "What is your specific purpose for teaching?" She then used a sketch of an eye to represent seeing and added, "grow—enjoy their happiness—overcome challenges. Be my authentic self/create & make space for children to create" (Crystal, visual journal, November 2021). Use of the visual journal is an opportunity to promote personal symbolism as a path towards identifying and actualizing an authentic self within one's teaching.

Use of self-portraits reflects personal symbolism, evidenced in each visual journal. The teachers created self-portraits as part of a teacher-focused professional development video series produced by Studio Pathways that the CPR team participated in early in October. After observing the work of contemporary artist and portraitist Amy Sherald, CPR members created watercolor-based self-portraits. This process of creating was an intentional creative practice to inspire close observation of each member and prompted Crystal to reflect in her visual journal,

“How do I show up with love for students when I don’t feel love but trauma?” (Crystal, visual journal, November 2021). The creative practice of self-portraiture was an act that encouraged personal symbolism through visual representation of self. Each self-portrait captures visual concepts presumed from experience and represented from that to shapes and color (Strauss, 2013). Each CPR member’s self-portrait is evidence of their use of personal symbolism and authenticity; this development of self-knowledge through creative practice could transfer into classroom practice (see Figure 7).

Crystal tells the story of her portrait, reflecting her self-knowledge:

I hadn't done any portraits in a long time or dealt with or used watercolor colors in a long time. So I was a little daunting with the attempt, especially since I think I'm very detail oriented. And so sometimes I have to trust watercolor to kind of, let the picture emerge. It was really quite therapeutic to have the colors mix and merge. And, of course, not every color on this page is an exact representation of what I was looking at. But one of my favorite colors is teal. And so that's why my glasses, teal, also just kind of pop off my face. And I think at the time, I was either considering or had already dyed a couple of strands of my locks pink. So that's why my hair is pink or . . . So again, I just love the way the colors contrast. And I think that kind of exemplifies how I try to show up in the world, just be myself. But you know, there's always surprises. There's surprises that go along. I'm not very flashy. I don't talk a lot about myself. So there's a lot of things that are also very subdued. I think about this portrait, that it's just a combination of me being myself and shining brightly, having a little pop, a lot of happiness or experience, the things that people don't expect when they first meet me, things that they learn about me. Quite interesting. (Crystal, individual member check-in, May 2022).



Figure 7. Self-portraits of Adam, Olivia and Crystal.

The emergent category of personal symbolism provided insight into the authenticity and thinking of each CPR member. Each forged a pathway of understanding for themselves through visual representation that made their thinking visible, and symbols that reflected their thinking, integral to their own self-development as creative practitioners.

Self-Power vs. Collective Power

Self-power is internal in the sense that the individual feels more powerful and knows how to reinforce their sense of efficacy as teachers. Members gained energy from the collective group and externalized their concepts of power to include how they could create more student power or agency in classrooms. The coded data from the conversations and visual journals for use of self-power represented 20% of the data from the Pre-cycle. When Olivia spoke to me about her journal, she reflected, “My art can work like an amulet or like a personal power source.” (Olivia, one-on-one check in, October 2021). Similarly, Adam referred to his collage-making in his journal, “When I was creating my collage, I was thinking about the power I have in adapting curriculum.” Adam questioned power relationships in his journal entry by noting, “Who has the power & who uses it in this setting? How does it show up?” (Adam, one-on-one check in, October 2021). Adam reflected on his students of color, who are marginalized in his classroom and in the wider societal context. He furthered his written reflection by adding, “How do we help?” CPR member Crystal questioned herself in her visual journal by noting, “Do you have the will to be a great teacher for your students? Are you willing to learn all you have to know to connect with every student in your classroom?” (Crystal, visual journal, October 2021).

The CPR members experienced their artmaking or engagement in creative practices as a source of reflecting on their self-power. For example, Crystal noted at the end of Pre-cycle and our work together, in a self-reflection of her visual journal, “What have I done differently in my

practice?” and responded with: “(1) Not solely relying on tools or pre-made curriculum or routines, (2) Slow down & listen & adjust to student needs, (3) Rely & reach out to other colleagues for help and insight.” This indicated that Crystal was creating curriculum rather than using something pre-scripted. Self-power is an indicator that demonstrated how creative practices could be used to promote teachers’ capacities to integrate the arts into their curriculum.

The tension between self-power and collective power emerged in the evidence, indicating that CPR members were individually reflecting upon how they navigated power dynamics within their teaching practices. For example, Olivia documented an image in her visual journal in which she explores the modes of teaching and how teachers can choose to bring about collective power of their students: “[In describing their image] ... this is about the different modes of [teaching]. I mean, sometime modes of teaching and learning... contrasts with modes of being creative, and all the different ways that those are the same” (Olivia, individual check in, December 18, 2021). However, the tension of how to integrate power into teaching practices was evident. Adam questioned his self-power as teacher to support his students’ power. During Adam’s individual member check in on November 18, 2021, he described how he could harness the collective power of his students by expressing, “How do I do it [integrate the arts] in a way that brings students full voice to the forefront?” By describing a student who often asks questions in front of the class, Adam recognized how the power in the classroom and the tension could inspire a shift in his teaching. He realized that his concern was about maintaining his authority as the teacher and, instead, he could use the arts and the student questions as springboards for student power.

During the Pre-cycle, the sources of reflection that I used provided sources of evidence about teachers and their practices in arts integration. Starting with the personal was critical as teachers must experience themselves what we want them to implement for students. As a result

of the visual journaling and the conversations, we tackled the complexities of changing teaching practices and understanding the power dynamics of teaching and learning. I gained valuable insights into the thinking and practices of three teachers who had different skill sets and experience.

Reflections and Next Steps

The PAR Pre-cycle established the CPR team as a small community of creative educators committed to engaging in self-reflection to elevate their capacities to integrate the arts into their teaching practices. I achieved the intended outcomes for this PAR Pre-cycle primarily because of the introduction of the visual journal. The CPR members were curious and reflective about their understandings of creative practices and the possibilities inherent in the creative process that could influence their instructional approaches in the classroom. Thus, I explored what this means as I move forward by connecting the learning to the research questions, considering leadership, and envisioning steps for PAR Cycle One.

Research Questions

The emerging categories of questioning teaching practices, personal symbolism, and self-power connected with two research questions: To what extent do teachers develop knowledge, skills, dispositions through engaging in creative practices? and To what extent does arts integration increase equitable access and rigor for students of color in the classroom?

Reflection is an essential component of creative practice. The CPR members used their visual journal as containers to document their reflections and as tools to question their teaching practices. For example, CPR member Crystal questioned her teaching practice by noting, “How do I show up with love for students when I don’t feel love but trauma,” “I like how I can participate without using voice,” and “My purpose for teaching is to be my authentic self, create

and make space for children to create.” Each of these reflections is questioning and surfacing this CPR member’s response to the effectiveness of their teaching and intersects with the research question: To what extent does arts integration increase equitable access and rigor for students of color in the classroom? In another example with the category of personal symbolism, CPR member Adam used a drawing of a scale in his visual journal to represent his contemplation of his power over creativity in the classroom. This implies that self-power within teachers could impact equitable access for students of color in the classroom if teachers feel that power to use their creative resources to expand the curriculum for students. The emerging category of self-power may influence the effectiveness of leadership in support of teachers' implementation of arts integration in the next cycle. When the arts are integrated into teaching practices it has the potential to elevate student learning capacity and self-power (Claxton, 2007).

During the Pre-cycle, we began to enact the theory of action: *If* teachers engage in arts based, creative practices, *Then* they can design and implement more equitable instructional practices. The creative process is rooted in learning through the arts to support artistic agency (Hanley & Noblit, 2009) by making meaning through various media, conceptualizing, and realizing that personal expression can be utilized to interrogate and transform thinking and actions. Establishing commitment to access to arts learning can be seen as an act of distributive social justice for learners in marginalized groups (Hanley et al., 2003).

I initiated the use of visual journals for the CPR team's daily repertoire of creative practices at the start of the Pre-cycle. The visual journal emerged as an essential data collection resource and offered insight into each CPR member’s mindset and pedagogy underlying their teaching practices. Ultimately, this PAR considered how the arts practices can enrich teacher capacity to learn through creative process in benefit of their students.

Freire (1997) encouraged individuals, when acting as co-investigators through focus on a common interest, to elevate their critical awareness and “take possession of that reality” (p. 79). That reality, through this PAR study in this Pre-cycle, has presented assets and challenges I anticipated during the research design process. Teacher confidence in their creative abilities, for example, presents a micro challenge noted during the analysis of the FoP. This surfaced through the Pre-cycle with Adam, who expressed doubt in his abilities to create and felt a struggle with preconceived ideas about what it means to be a creative practitioner. Adam noted, referring to himself that, “I need structure guiding me where I want to go,” and found that the creative practice of visual journal in its “free form” was challenging as he expressed that “bringing arts into the classroom isn’t one of my strong suits” (Adam, individual member check in, November 8, 2021).

A micro asset that I observed throughout the Pre-cycle was teachers’ cultural awareness of their students of color, including their involvement and participation in the classroom. During individual check-ins and through their visual journals, CPR members reflected openly and honestly about how to be better teachers for their students, specifically their students of color. For example, Adam said when referring to the arts, “How do I do it in a way that brings students’ full voice to the forefront?” (Adam, individual member check in, November 8, 2021). Crystal expressed that, “It takes experiences . . . to figure things out, or just build connections. Something I realized, and thinking more and more about, is how do students see me?” (Crystal, individual member check in, November 8, 2021).

As I moved forward into the next cycle, new questions emerged that were interconnected to the emerging categories of questioning one’s teaching practice, personal symbolism, and self-power. First, does providing explicit thinking prompts and structure to support a CPR member

deepen their commitment to creative practices and expand their knowledge, skills, and disposition in support of arts integration? Secondly, how do I reflect on what is required to elevate the capacity of teacher learning in creative practices? Looking forward to PAR Cycle One, I considered implementing prompts as a scaffold in the creative practice of visual journaling.

Reflections for Leadership

Within my dual leadership role as the Director of Arts and Lower School Administrator, I considered how the capacity to learn is encouraged by a nurturing climate (Claxton, 2007). Additionally, as the primary researcher and co-practitioner in this research study, I recognized that I held privilege and positional power related to my administrative role within the school and research study (see Figure 8). As a leader, what can I offer to elevate teacher capacity to explore creative practices and their equitable impact on our diverse student needs? As a result of this inquiry, I became more open to teacher input and more aware of making myself vulnerable as an artist, teacher, and practitioner-researcher, knowledge that would allow me to better model the change process I expected for the teachers.

Throughout the Pre-cycle, I found that two of the CPR members, both of whom have been using creative practices, including storytelling, spoken word, dance, and cooking, approached their planning with ideas to ignite student learning and amplify student voice. They individually pursued their creative processes and expressed how those processes brought them joy and power. Created by the National Equity Project, Liberatory Design as a central concept evokes mindsets that catalyze creative courage, conversation, reflection, community building, storytelling, and action” (p. 2). I considered these mindsets as important as I moved forward into

PAR Cycle One. INSERT a definition of mindset based on NEP ... should comport with mindset definition from Chapter 1.

As we shifted into PAR Cycle One, I continued the practices of journaling, one-on-one interviews, lesson observations, and member check-ins as opportunities to embrace the possibility of the arts in teacher learning and the implications for their growth. The Liberatory Design Mindsets helped me clarify equity issues or problems by engaging individuals, such as my CPR team, in a design process to interrupt complex systems of oppression found in professional development frameworks. The CPR team used the NEP mindsets which encouraged shifts in power dynamics and inspired critical pedagogical shifts that could result in solutions designed by those who will rightfully benefit. I integrated these mindsets, such as build relational trust and practice self-awareness, into my approach with the CPR team as a way to encourage each of them to embrace their self-power and activate their creative practices in benefit of themselves, their teaching practices, and their students.

The first cycle of inquiry inspired reflection on how my context strives to strengthen its approach for racial equity change (Safir & Dugan, 2021) and how our school's "inquiry driven equity improvement efforts should reasonably involve a continuous process of mapping its collection of racial equity resources and assessing its organizational capacity to enact racial equity improvement" (Safir & Dugan, 2021, p. 207). I found mapping, as a creative strategy helpful in analyzing the PAR context and inviting deeper reflection on the creative process. Inherent in the creative process are radical ways of elevating teacher capacity to learn and unlearn in support of our Black and Latinx students. "Looking in the mirror reveals what we see, how we relate, and how our perspectives impact our practice," is an essential reminder as we bring ourselves into our collective work of designing for equitable solutions (National Equity

Project, 2021, p. 3). In addition, building relational trust by investing “in relationships with intention, especially across difference” was essential in navigating the complexities within my organization and FoP (National Equity Project, 2021, p. 4). As I moved forward, I considered how I, as a school leader, could change to support teachers more effectively in their development of their creative practices and implementation of arts integration.

CHAPTER 5: PAR CYCLE ONE

Arts integration has been a fundamental component of my teaching and leadership practice for my entire career and was the reason I undertook this inquiry. In the Pre-cycle, I surfaced categories that teachers found important as they responded to fully engaging in arts integration: self-power, personal symbolism, and questioning one's teaching practice. In PAR Cycle One, with the arts at the heart of my learning and research, I investigated how the co-practitioner-researcher (CPR) group used creative practices as a pathway toward developing equitable instructional practices in this cycle of inquiry. Through my position as a school leader and as a researcher, I experienced sightings, which provided "a rare glimpse of values operating below the surface of espoused beliefs" (McDonald, 1996, p. 23) of the CPR members' approaches to engaging in arts integration. As a result, I identified two emerging themes: creative mindset and articulation of creative voice, which I discuss in this chapter.

After the Pre-Cycle, the CPR team members demonstrated some hesitancy and self-doubt in their crafts in the Pre-cycle data collection activities, and I was curious about how I could strengthen the arts as a center of joy and justice. In order to design and implement arts integration practices that could lead to more equitable and joyful instructional practices for their students, I supported the team in developing a pedagogy of creative voice. Daily practices of thoughtful inquiry encourage us to know ourselves better (Aguilar & Cohen, 2022). Engaging in creative daily practices with teachers could be instrumental in supporting them in cultivating their knowledge, skills, and dispositions into their teaching practices. Safir and Dugan (2021) describe how pedagogy of voice for educators can engage a similar shift for their students. Developing a pedagogy of creative voice with teachers could be a collaborative improvement

process that would result in deep understanding of themselves as creative practitioners who can then facilitate equitable practices through an arts-integrated lens.

I collected data from co-practitioner researcher (CPR) meetings, lesson observations, post-observation meetings with teachers, one-on-one interviews, and visual journals. Once I coded and analyzed the data and categorized the data into sets of evidence, I analyzed the data to determine the emerging themes. This process contributed to the understanding of creative practices and implications for teacher practice of arts integration. In this chapter, I outline the PAR Cycle One process by providing a more detailed description of the actions I facilitated as the practitioner-researcher with the participants. I share an analysis of the categories of codes that emerged from the data and of the emerging themes in PAR Cycle One. Finally, I investigate the implications from the PAR Cycle One by concentrating on creative mindset and the articulation of creative voice.

PAR Cycle One Process

In describing the process in this cycle of inquiry, I detail the activities in which I engaged with CPR members (n=3) using CPR meetings, one-on-one interviews, observations, post-observation conversations, and visual journals. Then, I discuss the evidence that emerged from the activities and the processes I used for the analysis.

PAR Activities

When a school mission espouses the arts in learning to be essential in equitable classrooms, educators must articulate the benefits of an arts education, specifically arts integration. “Dynamic learning environments in the arts that nurture all students’ capacities for deep meaning, synthesis and connection-making have the best chance of standing in the gap toward educational justice” (Vanada, 2016, p. 1). In the design of the study, I considered the

creative backgrounds and years of teaching at the school for each CPR member. At the core of the plan was to consider what educators needed in order to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for the implementation of the arts in learning and to foster creative processes in the classroom.

The three teachers who agreed to participate in the study engaged in several activities in PAR Cycle One: ongoing documentation in their visual journals (a continuation from the Pre-Cycle), CPR meetings, two observations, two post observation conversations, and one-on-one interviews (see Table 5). Using the liberatory design mindsets (National Equity Project, 2021) as a guide, I designed each activity to include dialogue and encouragement; “looking in the mirror reveals what we see, how we relate, and how our perspectives impact our practice” (p. 3). This action was essential in designing for equitable solutions since integrated arts requires that we bring our full selves into our collective work. Therefore, we sustained relational trust by investing “in relationships with intention, especially across difference,” as I navigated the complexities within our organization (National Equity Project, 2021, p. 3).

CPR Meetings

CPR team members shared their experiences in arts integration and creative practices. We began the PAR Cycle One meeting on February 17 with mindfulness. Mindfulness, a type of meditation that relaxes the body and reduces stress, is an opportunity to promote a pedagogy of care, which calls for centering relationships and the concepts to be explored (Noddings, 1996). I took time to initiate the meeting with care for the participants by using breathing and movement, which concentrated the participants on themselves to bring the self fully to the meeting. For the first meeting, I asked participants to read a section from *Street Data* (Safir & Dugan, 2021) about

Table 5

Summary of Activities in PAR Cycle One

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
CPR Meetings					X			X				
One-on-one										X	X	X
Interviews												
Formal observations					X	X						
Post observation meeting					X	X						
Visual journals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

student belonging and student voice. Our discussion surfaced ideas connected to inviting student voices and examples of how each participant was actively centering a sense of agency.

In the next meeting, on April 21, participants used question prompts to consider how professional development could be further enhanced to support teachers in elevating their creative practices and classroom arts integration practice. Each CPR participant reflected using their visual journals, a collective creative practice we used throughout the PAR process. By this time, I had conducted two observations and post-observation conversations and one-on-one interviews with CPR participants. A significant idea surfaced from one participant who reflected on the creative practice of visual journals:

The whole purpose of the ritual of creative practice, like the journal or whatever you're choosing to do, is to give yourself . . . permission or space to, you know, unlock . . . any kind of barriers, because I think that, it promotes. Like arts integration is that teachers need to be engaged in their own creative work of whatever it is, so that they are unlocking their imagination and giving themselves permission to create with kids and to not hold themselves back to standards, and that kind of thing. (Olivia, CPR meeting, February 17, 2022)

I was motivated by this reflection to further the research findings. By this time, I had conducted one-on-one interviews and two observations and post-observation conversations with CPR participants.

One-On-One Interviews

In the one-on-one interviews with two of the three participants, I used these prompts: (1) How did your participation in this study enhance your understanding of and appreciation for arts integration? (2) Describe what actions and conditions you have created in your classroom

environment to support arts integration. (3) What methods or strategies could our school implement to help support your individual and our collective abilities to support arts integration? These data supported teachers' arts integration and influenced how we planned professional development opportunities and instructional coaching designs.

Observations

The CPR team members were familiar with formal observation tools and structures. Each teacher, per the union contract, is required to be observed each year using the Danielson framework for Teaching and Learning. I used selective verbatim (Acheson & Gall, 2011) in tandem with the school's formal observation framework. In the forty-five minute observation, I documented teacher and student actions and my wonderings about them (see Table 6 for a sample).

Based on the evidence-based observations, teachers had specific examples of their teaching practices. During a pre-conference, the teacher and I discussed the intention of the observation so that I could collect specific evidence to conduct a conversation. For example, Crystal requested feedback on directions to students and effective modeling strategies. Olivia was curious about student engagement, including how students were embodying their animal character for an upcoming play. I took notes on student engagement at different times in the lesson and used the notes to provide feedback to Olivia.

Post-Observation Conversations

I held post observation conversations within five days of each observation. Reflection within this window of time allows for the experience to be current and, as Safir and Dugan (2021) describe, "shine a light on the experience of learning" (p. 159). I encouraged the teachers to voice internal reflections and wonderings about the lesson's goals. In a post-observation

Table 6

Notes for Olivia's Classroom Observation, February 5, 2022

Time	Teacher Actions	Student Actions	Wonderings
9:35 am	Intro/Overview “Enjoy your break, but always a good time to use it for inspiration.	Circle listening (14 sts) Do we need to work on spring break Students engaged with questions and active listening	Responsiveness to student questions.
9:39 am	Find a neutral position—this is what it will look like when we say our lines: Softness in knees...stillness in our body, head moving Superhero – powerful positions; find stillness in this place.	All sts engage in movement	Nice scaffolding exercises to prepare for performance Envisioning

conference centered on student experience, Olivia shared, “The lesson went as I expected... and it was nice to see the students being fully active and finding home in their bodies.”

Visual Journals

I introduced visual journals as a core creative practice in the Pre-cycle, and these were a significant data collection method in PAR Cycle One. CPR team members committed to this creative practice of documentation to encourage daily reflections, spark planning, and cultivate ideas for arts integration in the classroom (see Figure 9). One CPR member expressed her process of letting go to trust students:

On creative practices in general, there is that time when you are gathering, *plotzing*, and worrying especially for me. If I’m entrusted with someone else’s work (like students) right before a final push and then suddenly it's all clear and you have to let go and trust because there is no more research or rehearsal or it's just time to make the work. It’s such a good and freeing feeling . . . and essential.” (Olivia, visual journal, January 8, 2022).

Visual journals were collected three times during PAR Cycle One and analyzed for emerging categories and themes. These journals provided a window into each teacher’s thinking and creative practices.

Reflective Memos

I wrote memos throughout this cycle to reflect on my creative practices and dialogues with the CPR team. The memos were often entries in my visual journal to provide a tactile space to draw out ideas and connections (see Figure 10). I have used the visual journal to triangulate different data sources, verify the evidence collected, and build connections between theory and practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

performing & those first few minutes.

In film its when all the color symbolism chats & lighting/makeup tests & world building stops & you shoot frames.

& Today its when I stopped worrying & researching VANISH (a new process for me) & just let it spray.

Ahhhh I love it.

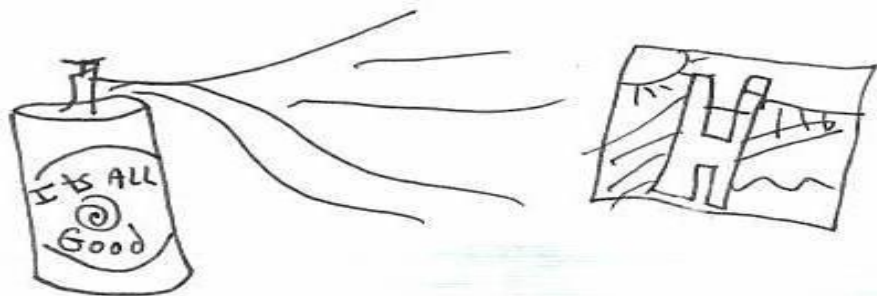


Figure 9. Olivia, visual journal, January 8, 2022.

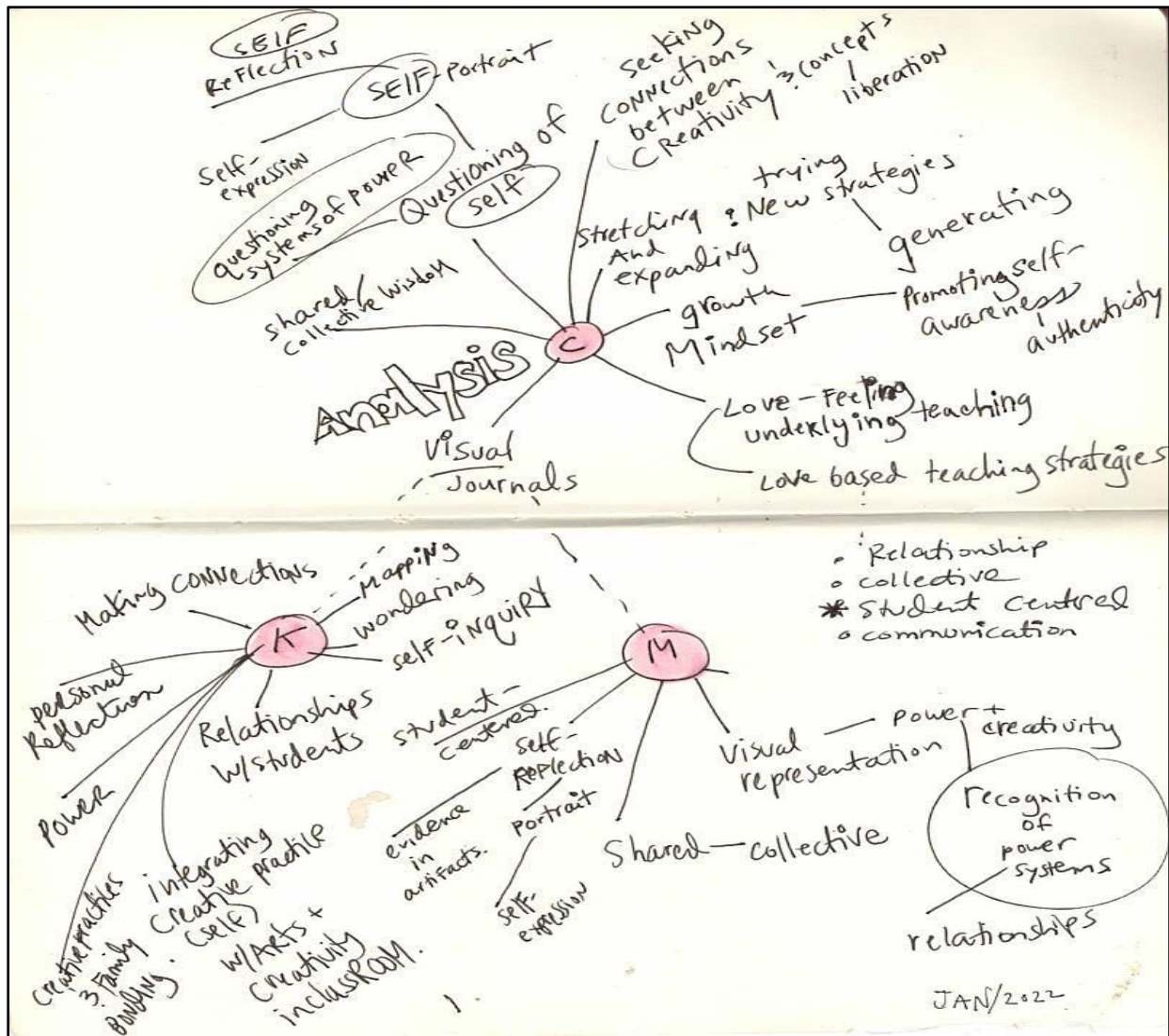


Figure 10. Ledo-Lane, visual memo, January 20, 2022.

The activities in PAR Cycle One offered preliminary data on the role of creative practices in developing teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions that influenced their engagement with arts integration in the classroom. Additionally, the CPR participants provided insights and recommendations into the design of professional development opportunities to deepen teacher understanding of arts integration and its impact on student engagement and equitable outcomes.

Evidence and Coding

Hence, CPR meetings, one-on-one interviews, the observational evidence, post-observation conversation meeting notes, visual journals, and reflective memos together shaped a codable data set and surfaced categories of emerging themes. In discussing the evidence, I present the categories that emerged from the activities in PAR Cycle One (Saldaña, 2016). I used open coding to analyze the data. Using the Pre-cycle categories of questioning one's teaching practice, personal symbolism, and self-power, I analyzed and surfaced two emerging themes: articulation of creative voice and development of creative mindset. In my journal, I analyzed the relationship of these themes (see Table 7).

Emergent Themes

Visual journals provided a deep insight into teacher thinking and perception of themselves and barriers that prevented them from embracing arts integration to its fullest capacity. In this cycle, I identified two key themes that were essential in engaging teachers in developing creative knowledge, skills, and core dispositions that could transfer into their teaching practices in benefit of their students. First, the teachers were developing the ability to articulate their creative voice, and the data from visual journals were important for understanding aspects of each teacher's creative mindset. In addition, the data from CPR meetings, one-on-one interviews, and classroom observations revealed how teachers articulated their creative voices.

Table 7

PAR Cycle One: Themes, Evidences, Definitions, and Frequency

Theme	Evidence	Definition	Frequency/%
Articulating a Creative Voice (49%)	Self-Power	Teachers refer to cultivating their own confidence in order to disrupt inequitable practices or routines.	15/5%
	Research Based Frameworks	Teachers refer to research based pedagogical approaches in the arts.	18/7%
	Personal symbolism	Teachers reflect on authentic self/experiences and derive symbols.	26/10%
	Creative Stance	Teachers articulate their personal and creative based stance.	72/27%
Developing thinking and skills to support a Creative Mindset (51%)	Joy	Teachers speak of feeling exhilarated and positive in their practices.	20/7.5%
	Reflection	Teachers think about their teaching practices and how to make them more effective for students. How to bring more joy to students?	42/15.5%
	Creativity	Teachers refers to developing thinking and tangible skills to support arts integration in the classroom.	45/17%
	Social Emotional Learning	Teachers use words and phrases to name practices related to socio-emotional learning.	28/11%

Through my analysis, I observed how teachers grappled with the possibilities of creative concepts and their meaning making as they balanced the ongoing needs of their students, especially during this tumultuous year of in-person learning as the pandemic continues forward. In order to design and implement equitable instructional practices such as arts integration, I observed how educators needed to identify and dismantle personal barriers in order to engage in creative practices and transfer those practices to instructional approaches.

In PAR Cycle One, the CPR members continued to express interest and commitment to their growth as creative practitioners. They used visual journals to have an ongoing inner dialogue that surfaced what was necessary to engage in creative practices. The CPR meetings, one-on-one interviews, and observations encouraged collaborative reflection and openness to nurturing a creative perspective and teaching practice. Two themes emerged: Each teacher articulated a creative voice (49% of the data) and developed a creative mindset (51% of the data).

Articulating a Creative Voice

Articulating a creative voice means how teachers speak to their creative stances and beliefs about creativity within their teaching practice and student learning. To integrate the arts consistently and intentionally, teachers need to articulate what creativity means and how they enact creativity in their practices. Through this process of articulation, teachers are then able to transfer their knowledge, skills, and creative dispositions to their teaching practices. Creative knowledge and pedagogical skills benefit arts integrated instruction. In addition, if teachers have articulated their creative voices, they can potentially remove any barriers for integrating the arts. Teachers maintained their visual journals during PAR Cycle One and documented their reflections and responses to teaching practices and experiences in the classroom, during

professional development, and in collaborative meetings. In each journal, the teachers surfaced aspects of their creative voices that included self-power, using research-based frameworks, personal symbolism, and creative stance. One teacher noted that he was, “bending toward justice and decolonization of the imagination. . .” (Adam, visual journal, March 3, 2022), which was coded for self-power, one aspect of the articulation of creative voice. Another teacher reflected on her teaching practice by reflecting on personal symbolism and the use of metaphor to make meaning of ideas. Olivia, for example, used the celebration of Imbolc, a pagan holiday in Gaelic tradition, to create tonics and sweets that symbolize connection and hope. She used the label in her visual journal to express, “sweetness in tough times,” (Olivia, visual journal, February 2, 2022). In the aggregate, teachers revealed what was needed in the articulation of creative voice (see Table 8).

Self-Power

Self-power means how teachers cultivate their confidence to disrupt inequitable practices or routines. This recurring concept, a foundational aspect to the theme of articulation of creative voice, demonstrated frequency throughout visual journals and meetings with CPR members (5% of the responses). Zinn (2003) asserted that artists offer varying visions of what a more just future might look like and what is possible. Similarly, educators, with the integration of the arts, as described by Spehler and Slatterly (1999), can “develop voice, sustain passion, and evoke response” (p. 3). During CPR meetings, the members expressed needing to harness their self-power as creative practitioners and unbind themselves from self-inflicted barriers to make creative practices a consistent and significant aspect of their teaching.

CPR members used the visual journals with the intent to be open-ended in their interpretation and personal expression. As artists deNobriga and Schwarzman as quoted in Donahue et al. (2010):

If we want freedom, we must promote free expression. If we want equity, we must have equal access and support in expressing ourselves. If we want respect and love and beauty among us and all our many communities, we must actively and systematically promote through our art and through our teaching of others. (p. 40)

During the PAR Cycle One CPR meeting on February 17, 2022, Adam spoke to his self-imposed personal constraints on his teaching practices and the need to grow his self-power or confidence in support of creative practices:

Even though I have felt like our school gives us, like, more freedom to kind of explore different areas of my practice, I still feel personally stuck in this. There's still something internal that I have to stick to like the standards and curriculum and feel we have to do to move on because there are the grades and everything. And then I think I always tell myself that I can give my students a choice. But, really reflecting on it, I feel like a lot of times, it's like an unstructured choice that I've decided on within my radius for myself as the teacher. And the options that I've chosen don't really give voice to the students.

Crystal expanded on the concept of self-power by referring to barriers during the February 17, 2022, CPR meeting:

Yeah, I know the whole purpose of the ritual of creative practice, like the journal or whatever you're choosing to do, is giving yourself permission or space to, you know, unlock, like any kind of barriers, because I think that, what I'm, what I think is that, to promote arts integration is that teachers need to be engaged in their own creative work of

whatever it is, so that they are unlocking their imagination and giving themselves permission to create with kids and to not hold themselves back to standards, and that kind of thing. So hopefully, like in my walking, I am just in itself giving myself that space to imagine and daydream.

By cultivating self-power, as evidenced through visual journals, the CPR team had permission to imagine creative possibilities in their teaching approaches and to articulate their creative voices towards integrating the arts.

Research-Based Frameworks

The participants frequently (7% of the responses) referenced research-based frameworks, which referenced pedagogical approaches, in their CPR journals, during observations, interviews, and meetings. For example, CPR member Olivia documented her use of *contemporary arts framework of creative strategies* in her visual journal. Mapping or concept mapping is a distillation strategy that organizes ideas and imagery graphically. Creative strategies, such as mapping, can be used by educators to develop, transform, and communicate understandings (Marshall, 2014a). In Figure 11, Olivia used the creative strategy of mapping to generate and document ideas for arts integration with a first grade class collaboration (Olivia, visual journal, January 15, 2022). She associated her generative ideas from the central concept of *goals* and used this strategy to consider the creative process for the first grade wetlands project making a “web of associations” (Perkins, 1988). Adam used mapping as a reflective tool to distill ideas about the prompt, “What dominant narratives do I carry into my teaching practice?” (Adam, visual journal, February 8, 2022). In Figure 12, Adam makes associations with this question as he reflects on his classroom teaching.

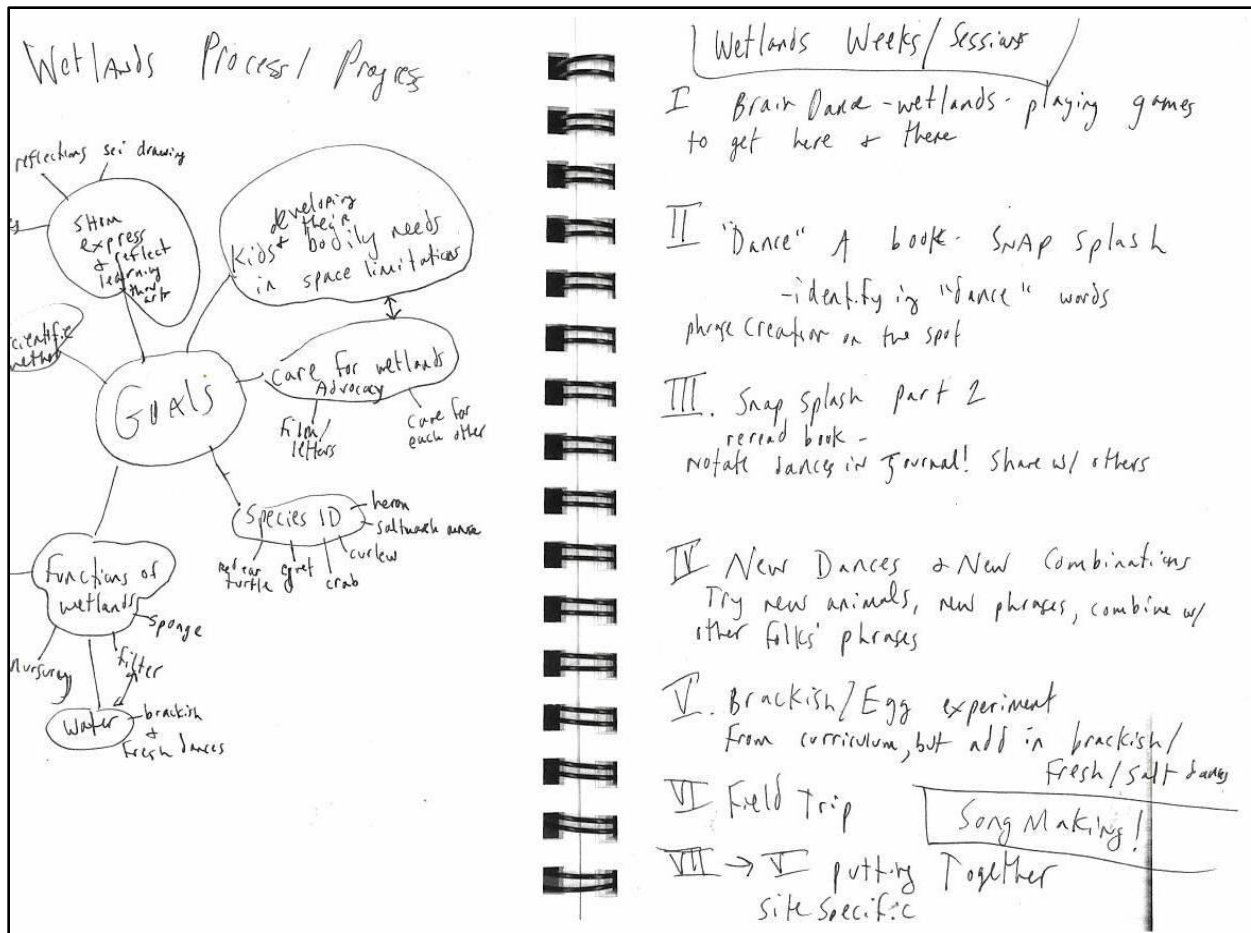


Figure 11. Olivia, visual journal, January 15, 2022.

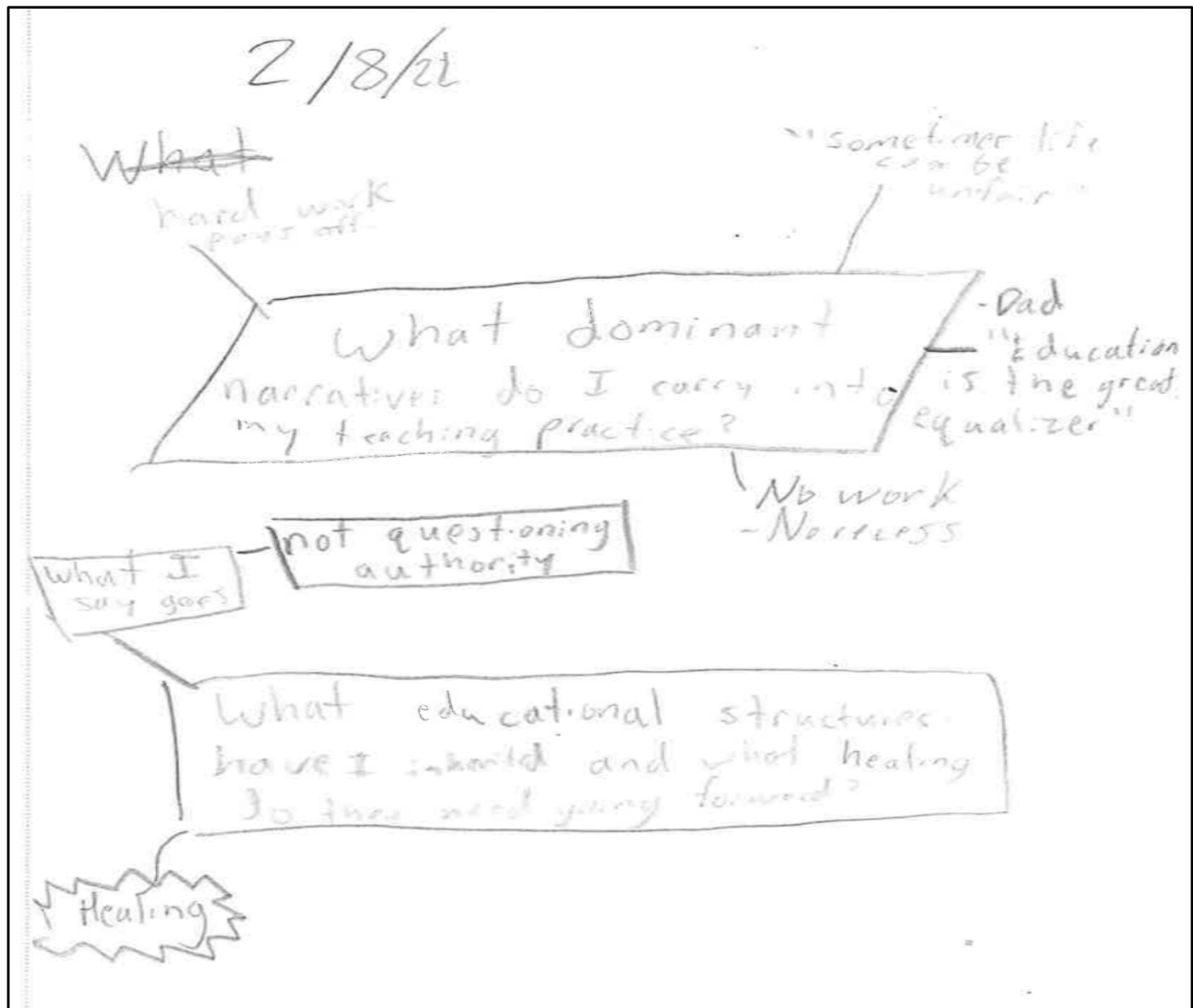


Figure 12. Adam, visual journal, February 8, 2022.

Personal Symbolism

Personal symbols are images or metaphors that are used as tools to reflect on one's authentic self and experiences (10% of the data). CPR team members utilized personal symbols or metaphors to describe their identities, reflect on their practices, or make meaning of experiences. For example, Olivia used the concept of heirloom and personal artifact of a bushel basket to make connections with her grandmother and weave a quote passed down, "Don't hide your light under a bushel basket" (Olivia, visual journal, February 9, 2022). Olivia further extended this idea to identify an object, *le cadeau*, or gift in French, that signifies her confidence and "vitality" within herself. Olivia notes the meaning of this personal heirloom by expressing, "*I am here . . . I shine.*" (Olivia, visual journal, February 2, 2022)

Creative Stance

A creative stance is a resolved way of thinking or feeling about creativity and is expressed in an individual's behavior. When teachers articulated their personal and creative-based stance in the classroom, they voiced their values (27% of the responses). Nurturing a teacher's creative stance can strengthen and increase confidence in the possibilities of arts integration in the classroom. Safir and Dugan (2021) described that in order to support the growth of student voice in the classroom, teachers themselves must commit and feel a sense of agency. They want teachers to "be bold and experimental—to try pedagogical approaches that feel new, edgy, and perhaps uncomfortable. We have to be willing to flip our pedagogy and instructional leadership to center student and teacher voices" (Safir & Dugan, 2021, p. 107). Olivia noted in her visual journal that dancing "first thing in the morning reminding me of who I am first . . ." (Olivia, visual journal, March 10, 2022). Olivia activated her creative voice to

articulate who she was, her creative stance, and how dance was the primary creative practice that rooted her at the start of her day.

Articulating one's creative voice is a shift from a *culture of compliance* in the classroom. Safir and Dugan (2021) asserted that, "Compliance driven pedagogy leads to student disengagement" (p. 108). This tension between the model of compliance within schools and the cultivation of teacher voice is reflected upon by Adam:

Yeah, I think seeing yourself and expressing yourself, I think even myself as a person of color, I was always kind of like doing what I was told and doing what needed to be done. And (at my last school) there wasn't arts very much that could be integrated with the identity work . . . like what we're doing in the class now—connecting to yourself and expressing yourself. In science, students might have a negative view of themselves. Just because maybe they struggle with this or that. Similar to writing, I think arts is an avenue for students to express themselves and dive into exploring their own identity. (Adam, interview, April 4, 2022)

Adam's ongoing reflection of his creative stance emerges again in his visual journal, where he expresses, "continue practicing a warm demander, while not losing my sense of self, identity as a caring educator." (Adam, visual journal, April 25, 2022)

In summary, CPR team members who articulated their creative voices as a manifestation of deep self-reflection translated their creative voices to classroom practices. As the CPR team members explored and reflected, they could visualize ways to shift toward equitable teaching and learning in their classrooms. This shift required a realization of their self-power and self-growth, which further supported them to explore the power of symbolism in their identities and lives.

CPR members felt more confident in expressing their passions for empowering their students, particularly students in their classrooms that have historically been marginalized and unheard.

Developing Thinking and Skills to Support a Creative Mindset

When teachers develop a creative mindset, they embrace dispositions and invoke creative stances that are necessary for approaching obstacles and dilemmas in teaching and focus creative practice. With a creative mindset, a teacher can develop into a creative practitioner (Lucero, 2011). Creative mindset is a foundation from which a teacher can draw as they consider developing arts integrated experiences for their students. Through the data collection process in PAR Cycle One, I found these core signifiers of a creative mindset: joy, reflection, creativity, and social emotional learning.

Fostering Joy

Joy is a consistent aspect of a teacher's creative mindset and refers to a feeling of exhilaration. I coded the frequency of joy (7.5% of the responses) when a teacher spoke or documented in their visual journal of feeling exhilarated and positive in their practices. Crystal asked herself in her visual journal, "What brings you joy today?" (Crystal, visual journal, January 12, 2022). Her questioning indicated an ongoing check-in with herself, expressing that it is a disposition that she values and evidences in her practices. Similarly, Adam expressed during his one-on-one interview:

I think arts is an avenue for students to express themselves and dive into exploring their own identity. And I think coming from a school that didn't have arts like we have at creative arts I see difference in just joy...providing space for joy. (Adam, one-on-one interview, April 4, 2022)

In addition, Adam began to make connections and recognized the opportunities for joyfulness in his work with students. Following a field trip to a film festival in which students met the director of a children’s film, Adam noted in his visual journal, “Lots of joy!!” (Adam, visual journal, January 2022). Olivia also documented in her visual journal about the joy of baking, one of her ongoing creative practices: “Probably the not rushing. Doing bits of work and enjoying that time in the moment.” (Olivia, visual journal, March 5, 2022).

Reflection

Being reflective within a creative mindset is evidenced by teachers thinking back about their teaching practices and considering how to make lessons or experiences better for students (15.5% of the data). Each CPR member demonstrated evidence of reflective moves throughout Cycle One as they thought deeply about their experiences as they related to their instructional approaches and beliefs. Olivia reflected on the need to heal and on disrupting mainstream ways to access literacy in response to a staff professional development. Olivia questioned whether dominant literacy practices are helpful ways to learn how to read for all students and noted in her visual journal , "Is reading the *best* way of getting information. . ." and “healing from individual vs collective learning...” (Olivia, visual journal, February 8, 2022). Additionally, through the use of reflective thinking, Adam used a reflection prompt of “roses and thorns” to reflect on his day. He noted that a rose from his day was, “Kept my cool, made sure to model what I want to see in overwhelming situations” (Adam, visual journal, April 25, 2022). Adam’s evidence of being reflective was noted during an interview regarding his thoughts on his current approach to arts integration:

I feel like I have been trying to grow in my arts integration practice. And still want to but I, it still feels like a slow roll into what I envision arts integration can look like in my

class. I'd say it's not possible in our kind of talking about it on the last one, like, Yeah, can you help is that I feel like I use support all the time. We have lots of arts specialists that come in support, and like, are a good model for me. And I'm taking in stuff that I'm kind of using, bits and pieces that I want to just all day, have bits and pieces I don't want it to just be, oh, culminating and project, I want it to be like small pieces throughout the day, that I could just lean on just skills. I think there are small things to write like, arts, bass note taking, visual note taking, I really implemented because I know my class loves to draw. Movement breaks, like I mentioned at the beginning of when we started this, just trying to integrate music, or just my own drumming (Adam, interview, April 6, 2022).

Crystal offered questions to activate her thinking and bullet points to generate her reflective disposition (Crystal, visual journal, January 2022). She can reference the bullets to envision of new ideas and practices to enact in her classroom. First, she reflected back about her practices and feelings:

- More sensitive to my needs as a person & teacher
- Taking more risks & believing in my teaching abilities
- Investing in schoolwide programs/groups & nurturing bonds across grades.

Crystal then used her visual journal to envision and enact new creative approaches by questioning herself with “*WHAT DO I WANT TO DO DIFF[ERENT] in 2022?*” (see Figure 13):

- Continue to think outside the box.
- Address the needs of the kids, not my own pride or just to follow curriculum guides.
- Continue to get to know kids & make lessons relevant to life or skills they can use and see right away!

- More sensitive to my needs as a person & teacher
- Taking more risks & believing in my teaching abilities
- Investing in schoolwide programs / groups & nurturing bonds across grades

WHAT DO I WANT TO DO DIFF IN 2022?


- Continue to think outside the 
- Address the needs of the kids not my own pride or just to follow curriculum guides
- Continue to get to know kids & make lesson relevant to life or skills they can use or see right away!

Figure 13. Crystal, visual journal, January 15, 2022.

Through written reflections in her visual journal, Crystal prompted internal analysis that resulted in creative planning and enactment. Engaging in reflection is a significant aspect of a creative mindset necessary for arts integration and change in teaching practice. Crystal encouraged herself to “look at intention & react with action... practice with consistency.” She then asked herself, “How do we tap into wisdom of embodiment. MUSIC? MOVEMENT? EXERCISE?” (Crystal, visual journal, January 2022). Reflection upon designing “love-based lessons” also surfaced frequently in her visual journal, as she asked herself, “How do we artfully disrupt bias belonging?” (Crystal, visual journal, January 2022). The use of questioning was evident in Olivia’s journal entries as well, as she reflected critically on her lessons and planning by weaving in questions to prompt her analysis of the Shel Silverstein story, *The Giving Tree*.

Creativity

Within a creative mindset is a frequent and significant disposition: creativity itself (17% of the data). When a teacher referred to developing thinking and tangible skills to support arts integration in the classroom, I categorized that expression as creativity. Evidence of creative mindset was indicated by Olivia as she made connections between the art of baking and the process of acquiring knowledge (Olivia, visual journal, February 8, 2022). I observed in our meetings and in Olivia’s visual journal entries, that she engaged in a variety of creative practices ranging from dancing to baking to making herbal concoctions. In one entry, Olivia drew representations of how she is engaging in creative practices, such as making herbal concoctions, “bitters” (see Figure 14):

Trying to stay creative + connected to the earth + connected to light . . . is what winter is all about + each year it humbles +delights me fully. I made labels + gave out bitters to women who helped me or inspired me, some known and some less known. This act of

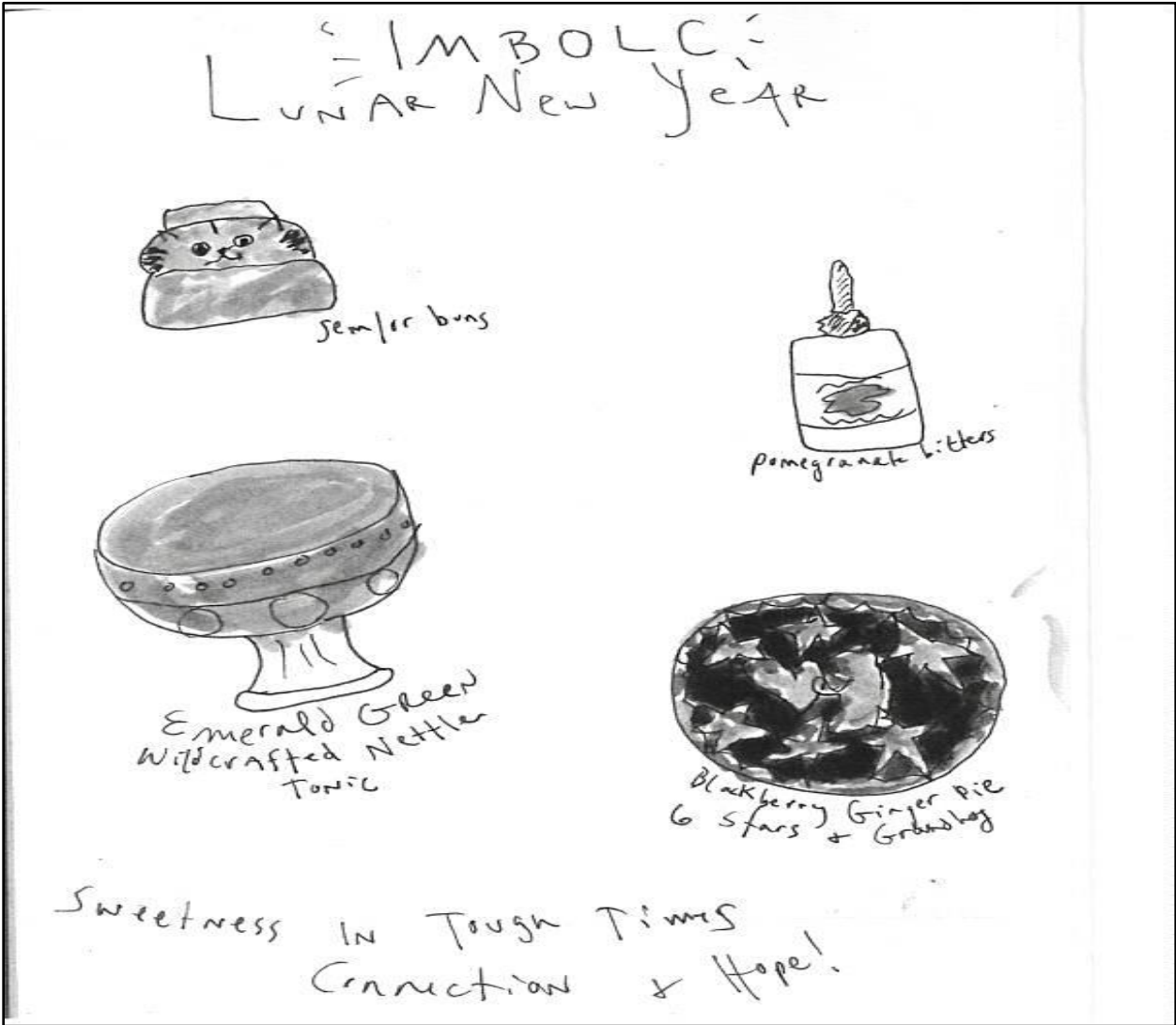


Figure 14. Olivia, visual journal, February 1, 2022.

magic/act of faith, helped me look forward we/hope + be grateful for human connections, even in the dark days of January (Olivia, visual journal, February 1, 2022).

Olivia continued to offer creative ideas to support work with her students throughout her journal entries (Olivia, visual journal, March 1, 2022) and used the creative strategy of mapping to make her ideas visible (Olivia, visual journal, March 14, 2022).

Social-Emotional Learning

Teachers used words and phrases to name practices related to effective learning. This indicated a social-emotional disposition within a creative mindset (11% of the data). Seeking socio-emotional wellbeing for oneself as a teacher and for students was a frequent sighting during the PAR Cycle One data collection. I surfaced compassion as a social-emotional expression when Olivia noted in her visual journal (see Figure 15), that she is trying to find self-compassion (Olivia, visual journal, February 2022) as she considered attention to the social emotional needs of her students. She questioned, “How can arts alone even not tied to a ‘project’ elicit the SEL [social emotional learning] conditions needed for all to learn?” Olivia furthered her examination by expressing, “For now in these cases, SEL is the project. Will be good when we get to hard stuff later on. I can’t/couldn’t just blast in and talk VTS [visual thinking strategies] about hard issues with it as an intro...” In considering social-emotional learning (see Figure 16), Crystal generated ideas about boundary-setting and how to creatively teach students about it during a school wide community meeting (Crystal, visual journal, January 15, 2022).

Developing the thinking and skills to support a creative mindset offered a perspective in understanding how to improve teachers' use of creative practices in their own learning and teaching. As Doll et al. (2005) made connection between mathematics and the natural world by

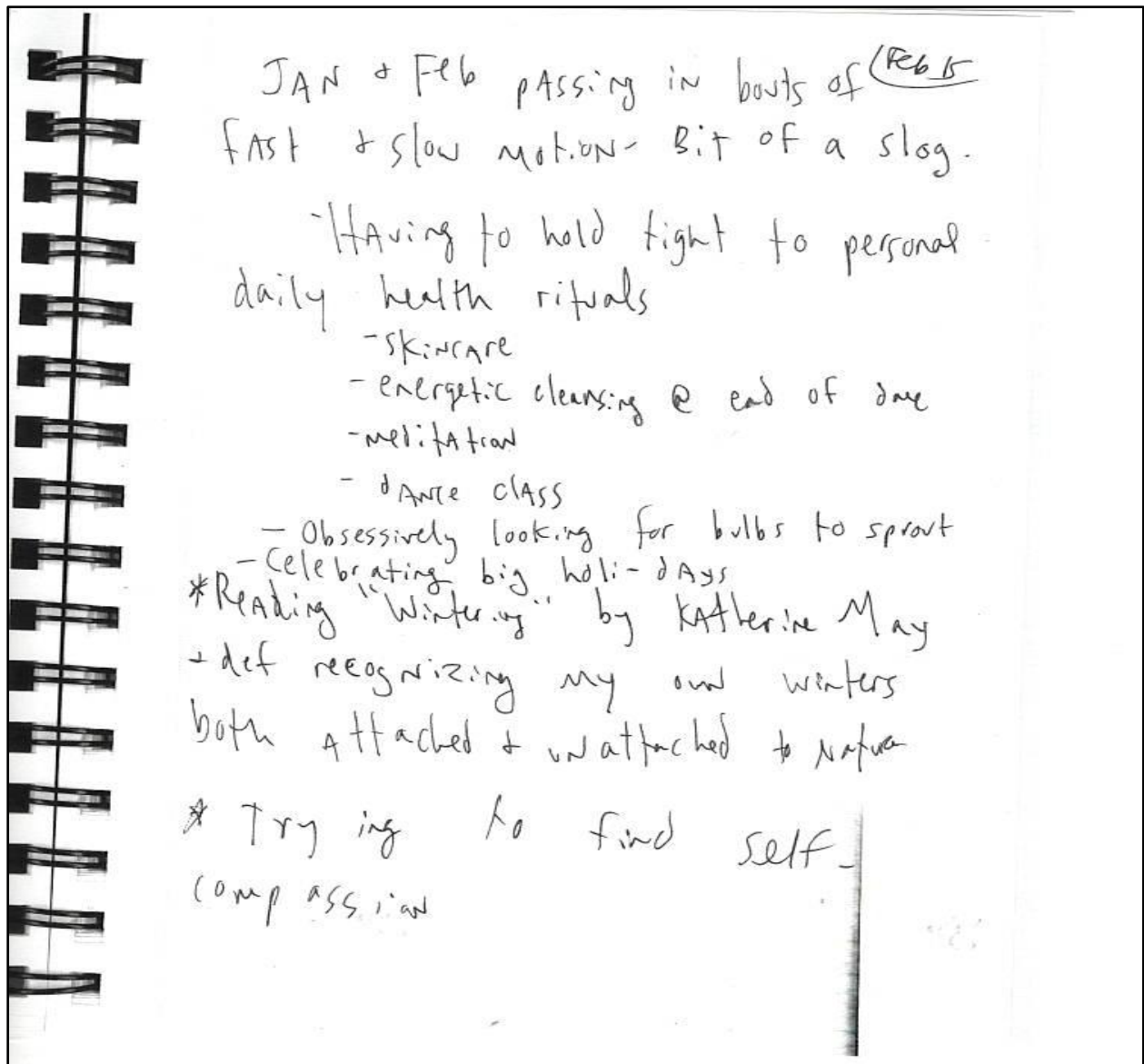


Figure 15. Olivia, visual journal, February 2022.

What is a boundary?

A boundary is like _____

One book told us to be direct and clear.

Here are some boundaries we discussed and please silent connect if you agree.

- Shoving
- please ask me for a hug before giving me one
- please do not yell at me. It make me mad or nervous.

Not sure of the rules sometimes?

We also wanted to help the school community by creating rules of several games, such as kickball, tetherball, football tag and imaginary play. Posters will be displayed on the yard near you!

Did you know...

Figure 16. Crystal, visual journal, January 15, 2022.

noting how such a relationship, “became a dance of creativity and emerging patterns,” (p. 1). I too began to see the emergence of a tangible dynamic between a teacher’s creative practice and the integration of the arts in instruction. According to Wittgenstein (1953), in order to alter our perspective, we may need to put on a new pair of glasses. In that way, we need to support teachers differently with the implementation of the arts. Teachers engaged in creative making can begin to believe in their own creative perspective and root themselves in their creative stance so that they can readily, and with confidence, implement the arts into their teaching practices.

Leadership Reflection and Action Steps for PAR Cycle Two

My leadership and research practice shifted as a result of PAR Cycle One. As an arts-based leader, I learned that individual articulation of creative voice is valuable and essential in a teacher’s journey to incorporate arts integration as a vital part of their instructional practices. Educators can recognize the importance of creative practices in the classroom and provide intentional experiences for staff to engage in playful experimentation to ultimately benefit students. However, for me as the facilitator, that required slowing down and shifting priorities, making changes in professional development and coaching cycles, and collaborating with teachers intentionally. I have come to understand, as described by Marshall (2014b), “How deliberate, purposeful creative practice is germane to leadership itself” (p. 365). Recognizing the readiness factor of individual teachers is critical; just as we want teachers to assess and respond to individual students’ zones of proximal development, we, as leaders, must be prepared to practice that with adults (Drago-Severson, 2012; Driscoll, 1994).

As a researcher practitioner, I have learned to intersect what I have acquired from my leadership findings. Fullan (2001) provided three key elements of effective leadership that interconnect with creative practices in my role as a researcher-practitioner and leadership:

disposition, in which leaders must see them-selves as active learners; learning through practice, whereby leaders must learn by doing, not by following others or by applying theory prior to practice; and awareness of one's learning and actions, as leaders must know themselves and be metacognitive in their learning and actions. Marshall (2014) described how these elements of effective leadership influence thinking dispositions and knowledge developed in art-centered enquiry (p. 365). In parallel to the theme of developing a creative mindset, I considered my shift in leadership and researcher mindset; I needed to be willing, flexible, and resilient in my creative thinking in order to be an effective leader and researcher (Marshall, 2014).

The PAR Pre-Cycle related to PAR Cycle One by emphasizing that creative practices present vibrant opportunities to engage educators in playful and reflective experimentation that is a catalyst for divergent thinking and arts integrated approaches. Motivating teachers to commit with intention and give themselves permission to explore and create is grounded in experiential learning that is purposeful and meaningful and led them into the next data collection cycle. As I entered into the final data collection cycle, I was interested in confirming the emerging themes. I took the opportunity to further articulate and define a teacher's creative voice in PAR Cycle Two with suggested arts integrated strategies. For example, my CPR team and I co-created a school-wide staff professional development focusing on the articulation of creative voice while simultaneously supporting the development of a creative mindset among all the staff. Participants designed and implemented arts integrated units individually and collectively for their classrooms. They then applied suggested arts integrated strategies, coupled with co-teaching to model arts strategies and observation, to establish their creative voice and that of their students, as well as cultivate a creative mindset. For example, the creative strategy of mapping, practiced by Olivia throughout her visual journal, was used to create a self-portrait that

maps teacher identity, articulating creative voice. Teachers used the same strategy of mapping to facilitate this arts integrated project with their students. By nurturing their creative mindsets by promoting intentional creative practices with themselves and their students, teachers enacted observable shifts in their arts-integrated practices.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided the analysis of codes and categories for the PAR study to answer the overarching research question guiding the project: How can creative practices support pathways for equitable classroom learning? The ongoing collection of visual journals continued to be an opportunity for the CPR team to engage in a consistent creative practice (see Figure 17). However, given the themes of articulation of creative voice and creative mindset, I had these changes in mind for the final cycle of inquiry:

- Co-analyze data and evidence.
- Complete one-on-one interviews.
- Develop and implement units of instruction based on arts integration approaches.
- Observe classrooms and conduct post-observation conversations.
- Facilitate professional development for full staff.

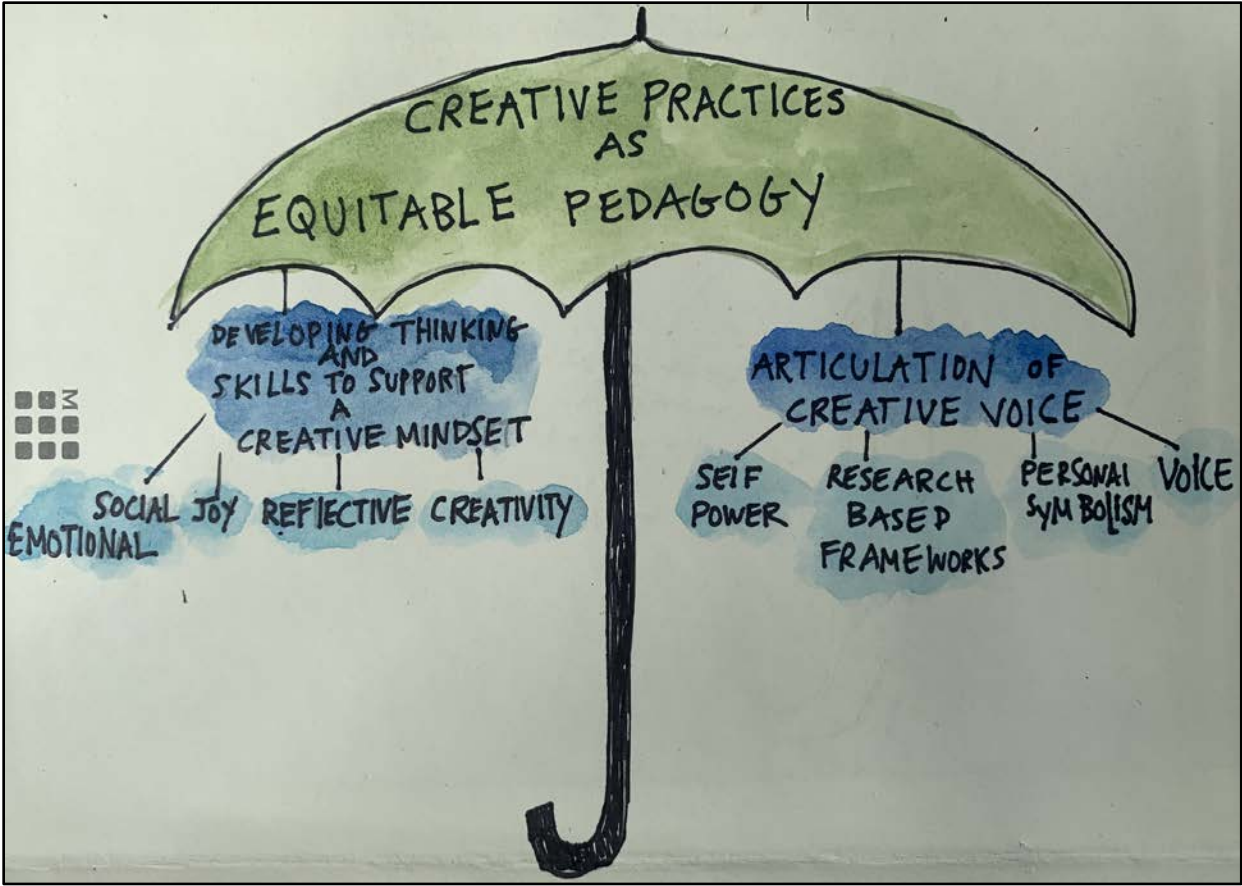


Figure 17. Ledo-Lane, visual memo, June 25, 2022.

CHAPTER 6: PAR CYCLE TWO AND FINDINGS

Transformative leadership is a creative process and mimics the artmaking process by engaging in a cycle of ongoing reflection, development of craft, envisioning, and persisting. As researcher and leader at Creative Arts Charter School in San Francisco, I actively involved a team of three co-practitioner researchers (CPR) in the PAR project and study. Through an iterative process of creation and transformation at an organizational and interpersonal level (Montuori & Donnelly, 2017), I built on emergent themes from the PAR Cycle One inquiry and continued to observe how teachers articulated their creative voices and integrated the arts in their classroom practices. Developing a creative mindset, coupled with creative voice, encouraged teachers—whether they had limited or extensive prior arts experience—to engage with students in a creative process that not only ignited learning in the classroom, but brought the teachers a sense of joy and deepened their commitment to their teaching craft. Our collaborative improvement process resulted in a deeper understanding of themselves as creative practitioners who could facilitate equitable practices through an arts-integrated lens. As a researcher and leader, this result for teachers was a joy to observe and support throughout this project and study.

During this cycle of inquiry as I had throughout the study, I collected, analyzed, and triangulated data from a variety of qualitative sources. Once I coded and analyzed the data and categorized the data into sets of evidence, I observed the emerging themes and determined findings. This process deepened the understanding of creative practices and its implications on teacher practice of arts integration. Engaging in collaborative work with the CPR members and through the Community Learning Exchanges solidified two significant findings necessary for teachers in implementing arts integration: the reimagination of teacher as learner through teacher experiential learning and the articulation of creative voice through teacher creative practice.

In this chapter, I outline the PAR Cycle Two process by providing a detailed description of the actions I facilitated as the practitioner-researcher with the participants. Then I share an analysis of the data in PAR Cycle Two and finally, the findings.

PAR Cycle Two Process

In PAR Cycle Two, I engaged with the CPR members (n=3) using Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs), individual co-practitioner researcher (CPR) check-in meetings, lesson observations, post-observation meetings with teachers, one-to-one interviews, and visual journals. Second, I discuss the evidence that emerged from the activities and the processes I used for the analysis. Next, the emerging themes resulted from PAR Cycle Two data confirmed the categories from the previous cycle: articulating creative voice and nurturing a creative mindset.

PAR Activities/Data Collection

I used the evidence from the data in PAR Cycle One to design the activities in PAR Cycle Two (see Table 8). As the lead researcher, I initiated PAR Cycle Two with a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) in order to center the role of creative practices in developing teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions that might influence their engagement with arts integration in the classroom. Specifically, the CPR participants in PAR Cycle One provided recommendations about the design of professional development opportunities to deepen teacher understanding of arts integration and its impact on student engagement and equitable outcomes. Thus, the CPR team's recommendations influenced the PAR activities for PAR Cycle Two.

Ongoing reflection coupled with action can influence the saturation of experience and support learners to engage in purposeful learning and support their free expression (Dewey, 1934). "Each experience should provide an opportunity for each teacher to make meaning and take away a thread of some sort that is woven through their next experience and into their

Table 8

Summary of Activities in PAR Cycle Two

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Community Learning Exchanges	X			X								
Individual member check ins					X			X	X	X	X	X
One-to-one interviews					X	X						X
Formal observations								X				
Post observation meeting								X				
Visual journals			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

teaching and learning process” (Ledo-Lane, memo, October 24, 2021). Planning for purposeful professional development learning that would invite creative possibilities within teacher practice was the throughline between the activities in PAR Cycle Two.

Community Learning Exchanges

With creative possibility as a goal, the CPR team suggested that we include the entire school in a community learning exchange. Thus, the first CLE occurred on August 10, 2022, and involved the entire school staff at Creative Arts Charter School. I grounded the objectives and activities of the CLE in the emerging theme from PAR Cycle One: the articulation of creative voice. In partnership with a local arts organization, Artillery, the teachers found the CLE “electrifying and inspiring for their creative practice and voice” (CLE participant M, individual meeting, October 27, 2022). The artistic team, who lead a BIPOC ceramics studio in San Francisco, co-facilitated a nature-based experience that centered joy, reflection, and teachers’ creative voice. In thoughtful collaboration, Artillery facilitated our staff processes at Fort Funston Beach in San Francisco, inviting us to honor the indigenous Ohlone people and thank them for the use of the land. Through collective rituals, we foraged for clay and sculpted vessels of gratitude. This nature and art intersection impacted not only leadership practice, but each CLE member, and elevated themes that had emerged in the PAR Cycle One data: self-power, voice, and joy (Ledo-Lane, memo, June 2022).

The second Community Learning Exchange took place on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, with art specialists co-facilitating the experience, which included one co-practitioner member, Olivia. In this CLE entitled, Contemporary Art Practice for the Classroom, we engaged teachers in nurturing their creative mindsets and demonstrated how contemporary art practice is one

creative approach that can support flexible thinking, creativity, and further grow teachers' creative voices. We began the CLE by doing a collective observation of a Titus Kaphur painting.

The staff mapped possible themes and questions that they could use in the classroom. Participants rotated through groups and engaged in dance, music, theater, and visual arts methods that they could transfer to their classrooms. Facilitators used the generative throughline of self and others to engage teachers in identity reflection using the school's anti-racist approach. By emphasizing the throughline of self and others, we modeled how to develop arts integrated curriculum through a contemporary arts lens. The CPR team members reflected on the implications of their learning for their creative practices.

Individual Co-practitioner Researcher (CPR) Check-In Meetings

I facilitated individual check-ins with each CPR member during the PAR Cycle Two in the months of September, October, and November 2022. During these check-ins, CPR members reflected on the implementation of arts integration and the implications of arts-based professional development on their teaching practices. Additionally, I coached two classroom teachers on how to develop arts integration lessons to support their learners. In coaching Adam, I focused on building up his self-confidence and cultivating his self-power in the classroom through the integration of the arts. We spent meetings discussing the implications from the CLEs and other professional development. During the member check-ins with Olivia, I coached her to explore themes that she observed in her teaching practice and in her collaboration with classroom teachers, including Adam.

Lesson Observations

During PAR Cycle Two, I observed one CPR member, Adam. I observed Adam as he focused on the implementation of the creative practice of visual note taking into his classroom.

The lesson observation followed an instructional coaching session, where I modeled the creative practice of visual notetaking in another classroom while Adam observed. Adam practiced visual notetaking himself as a creative practice for this study. The 45-minute lesson occurred on Thursday, September 29, with his class of 24 fourth graders. I collected and analyzed the observation and post observation conversation.

One-to-One Interviews

I conducted individual interviews with teachers from the community learning exchanges and the CPR team during PAR Cycle Two. I gathered reflections from interviews with CLE participants regarding experiences in the CLEs and implications for their teaching practices and how the experiential professional development influenced teacher creative voice.

Visual Journals

During PAR Cycle Two, CPR members continued to use visual journaling to document their teaching and learning. The visual journal was a tool for each CPR member's arts-centered inquiry and learning and was often the site of creative documentation. Since the Pre-cycle of the PAR study, members used their visual journals to focus self-observations, learning, thinking, and ideas that related to their individual creative practices as they made connections between their learning and that of their students.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data set included multiple sources of evidence from CLE artifacts, interviews, CPR meetings, post-observation conversation meeting notes, visual journals, and reflective memos. In discussing the evidence, I present the categories that emerged from the activities in PAR Cycle Two (Saldaña, 2016). I used open coding to analyze the CLE (n=2) observational data, CPR participants' visual journals, interviews, and individual member check-ins. Using the same

collection and data process of qualitative content analysis across previous cycles, I then identified connections between categories and codes to determine themes.

PAR Cycle Two Themes

Through the data analysis process, I identified and developed themes connected to the PAR research questions. First, articulating a creative voice, a theme that emerged from PAR Cycle One, surfaced in PAR Cycle Two with the supporting categories of self-power and being art forward. The second theme, nurturing a creative mindset, connected to the categories of joy and experiential learning. The categories of self-power, being art forward, joy and experiential learning signified the development of creative work as essential components in a teacher's toolbox to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support equitable classroom learning. As I expanded on these four categories, I analyzed the ways I could better support teachers to fully inhabit their roles as teachers in the arts (see Table 9).

In PAR Cycle Two, the CPR members continued to express interest and demonstrate their commitment to their growth as creative practitioners. Community Learning Exchanges held at the onset of PAR Cycle Two inspired engagement in furthering teacher creative practices and deepening the articulation of creative voice. Visual journals continued to promote inner dialogue that surfaced what was necessary to engage in creative practices. The CPR meetings, one-to-one interviews, and observations encouraged collaborative reflection and openness to nurturing a creative perspective and teaching practice.

Articulating of Creative Voice

In Chapter 5, I described that articulating a creative voice represented how teachers demonstrate creative stances and beliefs about creativity within their teaching practices. To integrate the arts consistently and intentionally, teachers need to articulate what creativity

Table 9

PAR Cycle Two: Themes, Evidences, Definitions, and Frequency

Theme	Evidence	Definition	Number of Instances in Data/Frequency
Articulating a Creative Voice 27% for PAR Cycle Two	Self-Power	Teachers refer to cultivating their own confidence in order to disrupt inequitable practices or routines.	15/16%
	Being Art Forward	Art forward refers to teacher speaking about and experiencing the arts on a daily basis. Art is centered in professional development, learning and conversations.	10/11%
Nurturing a Creative Mindset 72% for PAR Cycle Two	Joy	Teachers speak of feeling exhilarated and positive in their practices.	20/22%
	Experiential Learning	Teachers refers to developing thinking and tangible skills to support arts integration in the classroom. Instances occurred during professional development and instructional coaching.	45/50%

means and how they enact creativity in their practices. Evidence from PAR Cycle Two suggested that articulating creative voice is necessary to promote arts integration and creative practices in the classroom. Through the process of articulation, teachers transferred their knowledge, skills, and creative dispositions to their teaching practices. Creative knowledge and pedagogical skills benefit arts integrated instruction. In addition, if teachers have articulated their creative voices, they can potentially remove barriers they may have for integrating the arts. Teachers maintained their visual journals during PAR Cycle Two and documented their reflections and responses to teaching practices and experiences in the classroom, during professional development, and in collaborative meetings. In each journal, the teachers surfaced aspects of their creative voices that included self-power and being art forward.

Adam's visual journal (see Figure 18) illustrated the impact of his experiential learner's creative voice. I noted this visual journal entry after the CLE held on September 6, 2022. Adam reflected that, through this professional development experience, he gathered ideas for his classroom and that he felt "strong emotions" as he realized how collaboration and learning from his peers amplified his creative voice (Adam, one-to-one interview, November 7, 2022). By using color and expressive lines, Adam visually illustrated how the collaborative learning experience amplified his creative voice. (Adam, visual journal, September 6, 2022). By articulating a creative voice, teachers developed self-power.

Self-Power

Self-power refers to how teachers cultivated their confidence to disrupt inequitable practices or routines. As I conducted my analysis, self-power represented 16% of the data. Self-power of teachers referred to cultivating their confidence in order to disrupt inequitable practices or routines. This recurring concept, a foundational aspect to articulating a creative



Figure 18. Adam, visual journal, October 6, 2022.

voice, appeared throughout multiple sources of evidence—visual journals, observations, and individual meetings with CPR members. CPR member Olivia, in observation of Adam’s teaching, shared her insights during an individual member check-in:

Adam is just stepping into his power in different ways. Because before [PAR Cycle One], he had some ideas about things he learned in Mexico, some art stuff, but I feel now like he's just more confident. And he knows that when he's doing the art stuff that he's doing the right thing to do. (Olivia, individual member check in, September 29, 2022)

Self-power was reinforced through CPR team experiences that reflected *being art forward*.

Being Art Forward

Being art forward includes teachers speaking about the arts, experiencing the arts on a daily basis, and integrating arts into their instructional practices. In other words, being forward means arts were present, recognized, celebrated, and used proactively. By being art forward, the participants were centering art in our professional development learning and conversations. In contrast to the Pre-cycle hesitancies, the data indicate that the CPR members implemented new approaches to support arts integrated instructional practices. As a creative practitioner, I facilitated PAR Cycle Two with authentic experiences that were *art forward* (18% in interactions with CPR team members and participants). CPR member Olivia said:

We are having conversations that are primarily about art. It seems like we're much more art forward this year. Continuing to remind people that this is what we do [here at our school], and these are the reasons why we do it. It's important, and I love that people [teachers] have bonded authentically. Everything is flowing so well this year. (Olivia, individual member check-in, September 29, 2022)

In summary, CPR team members who articulated their creative voices by recognizing their self-power and engaging in art forward experiences translated their creative voices to classroom practices. As the CPR team members explored and reflected, they could envision ways to shift toward equitable teaching and learning in their classrooms and furthered by the nurturing of creative mindset.

Nurturing Creative Mindsets

When teachers nurture their creative mindsets, they embrace dispositions and invoke creative stances that are necessary in approaching obstacles and dilemmas in teaching and honing their creative practices. With a creative mindset, teachers are engaged in thinking attributed to creativity and thinking like an artist; they use thinking dispositions such noticing, constructing, finding analogies, and associating (Marshall et al., 2021). Creative mindset, recurring as a high frequency category at 72 % in PAR Cycle Two, is a foundation from which a teacher can build their capacity to understand, reflect, and create visual meaning as they consider implementing arts integrated experiences for their students. Furthermore, teachers who nurture their creative mindsets are enacting transformational learning, the learning that encourages us to challenge our contexts and surrender to the complexity of teaching and learning (Ritchart et al., 2011). Teacher creative mindsets nurtured through creative practices transferred to classroom practice. Crystal, who at the time of PAR Cycle Two was seven months pregnant, reflected upon how she used her journal as a tool for reflection in her teaching practices. In our one-to-one interview about how her creative mindset showed up in her teaching, she shared:

Well, just looking back over my journal, I noticed that I was combining all the information that I was getting in regard to my birthing classes and to the meetings [professional development] that we had at school. This semester was a combination of where I was and of how to prepare and mentally be present for all of the things. [My

visual journal] shows being very practical and trying to fulfill the goals I had set about routines, and I think I was pretty successful. (Crystal, interview, November 18, 2022)

Teacher observations that I conducted in PAR Cycle Two further supported the theme of nurturing creative mindset. I observed Adam on September 29, 2022, when he taught a lesson with his fourth graders centered on visual notetaking, a creative practice he had committed to over the course of the PAR. In the lesson, Adam reflected on his cultivation of agency by centering his students' identity and belonging. He taught them a creative process that supported their personal meaning-making of content learned and promoted learner self-understanding through a visual modality. In Olivia's visual journal entry (Olivia, visual journal, October 18, 2022), she documented the connections between theater work and other forms of creative experiences on a map—her writing, design, and even baking (see Figure 19). By nurturing their own creative mindsets, they transferred what they had experienced to classrooms. Through the data collection process in PAR Cycle Two, I found these core signifiers of a creative mindset: joy (22% of the PAR Cycle Two data) and experiential learning (50% of the data).

Joy in Creation

Joy was a recurring category that described feelings of elation as teachers engaged in creative work themselves and with their students. They documented moments of joy in their visual journals and analyzed in which ways joy was sparked by creative moments in their learning and teaching. CPR member Olivia observed “sparkling” teachers in their practice during our member check-in and reflected on how the school year marked a shift in many of them in connection with the impact of experiential professional development and a return to an intentionality in arts in learning (Olivia, CPR member check-in, September 29, 2022). When I observed Adam's class, he reflected with students about belonging and sparking joy as he taught

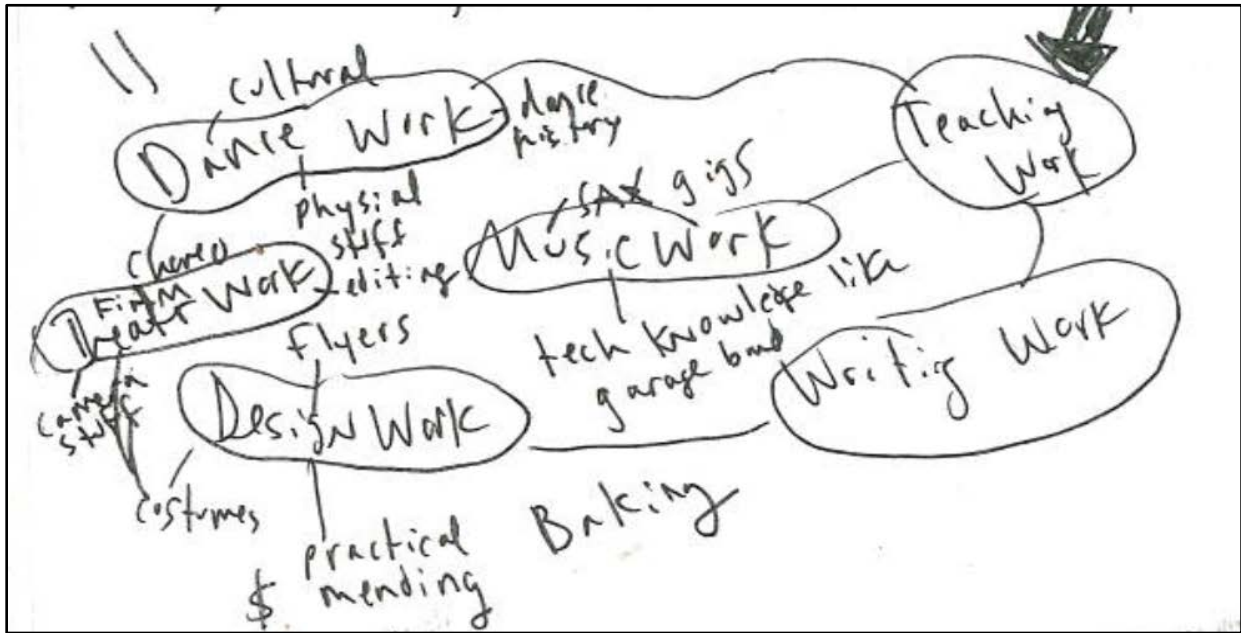


Figure 19. Olivia, visual journal, October 18, 2022.

students about visual notetaking. His phrases, such as, “I really appreciate how I see the wheels turning in your head as we make these connections with visual notetaking,” and “You’re signaling and making connections in your drawings . . . I love that!” communicated to students that how they think and that how they are learning is valued (Adam, classroom observation, September 29, 2022). Centering joy in teaching and learning is a creative practice in itself.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning refers to teachers developing thinking and tangible skills to support arts integration in the classroom through professional development and instructional coaching. I partnered with a local BIPOC led ceramics studio, Artillery, and co-facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) that welcomed teachers back to school after Summer 2022. We designed the CLE with the intention to ignite teacher creative thinking and inspire reimagination of teaching approach for the upcoming 2022-23 school year. Evidence from the CLEs suggested that when teachers engaged in experiential professional development experiences, they were confident and inspired to craft similar learning experiences for their students. Teacher M, a CLE participant, beginning her sixth year of teaching, shared her experience in a reflection of the August 10, 2022, CLE (the first staff professional development gathering of the school year) on how experiential learning for teachers can impact teaching:

This professional development was really powerful for me because it inspired me and my teaching partner to integrate that experience for our students for social studies this year and teaching fifth grade. Doing any professional development that I can immediately replicate with my class is really what I appreciate the most about professional development. And in this experience, we went to the beach, harvested clay and made clay objects. And it was just a great way to connect with colleagues after the summer, be in

nature together, and not have the pressures of prep in our classrooms in front of us, and it just made me think that students need that experience outside of the classroom. (CLE participant M, personal correspondence, October 27, 2022)

At this artful gathering of school staff held along a beach in San Francisco, the staff received an experiential opportunity to literally ground themselves in their personal creative practice of harvesting clay while immersed in nature and in collegial connection with their professional peers. In Figure 20, school staff is walking together along the beach to harvest clay; the image reflects the collective spirit of the day. As I planned for professional development opportunities and instructional coaching design, I considered the design principle of symmetry described by Mehta and Fine (2019) and expanded upon by Safir and Dugan (2021). By engaging symmetry, I anchored experiences in the same principles that we educators use to guide our students. The PAR Cycle One interview data suggested that schooling must support educators in similar outcomes we envision for students. The CPR team expressed the need to return to collaborative art making experiences we had years prior to the pandemic, which they felt would activate and invigorate teacher creative practices (CPR meeting, May 2022). Leadership team member J offered an additional reflection in response to the experiential professional development:

By having that experience of [making] art with the clay, of that connection, you know, back to the earth that really allowed us to have that authentic community that we were really seeking, and really allowed us to have that and live out those anti-racist practices. How am I being reflective? What am I doing to make that impact, and that can only be done by having these authentic experiences with our staff, and creating that impact in the beginning, so that they have that foundation and are able to bring that same knowledge



Figure 20. CLE, August 10, 2022; as participants harvested clay on a beach in San Francisco.

to our students and our families. And some of our staff have even gone back to that beach and got that clay or brought students there. And, you know, repeated that same practice . . . it all started with our professional development.

(CLE participant J, personal correspondence, October 18, 2022)

The evidence I collected from the next CLE, Contemporary Art Practice for the Classroom, (CLE, September 6, 2022) suggested that offering teachers experiential opportunities nurtured their creative mindsets as they engaged in contemporary arts strategies through the artistic disciplines of dance, music, theater, and visual arts. The CLE began with establishing the intention that in order to create a more equitable, kind, and connected world, we as teachers can engage students in art that is collaborative, time-based, and shifting because relationships are collaborative, time-based, and shifting. Teachers experienced contemporary arts education, integrated with the throughline of *self and others*, as a teaching approach to support students in the concept that when we develop relationships with others, we are also expanding our own self-identity. Teachers nurtured their creative mindsets with participation in experiential professional development, post observation and self-reflection, and analysis of visual journals. The CPR team's participation was instrumental in activating creative practices in service of students.

In summary, the data from the Pre-Cycle and two cycles of inquiry indicated that experiential professional development is a necessity to promote arts integration and creative practices in the classroom. If teachers do not have experiences in the pedagogical practices that we want them to use in classrooms, they typically do not implement them. We often accuse teachers of not responding or being difficult, but we forget that teacher learning has to be the same as the content important for students—experiential and dialogic. Teachers, like students, need to do and talk and then they can express their thinking and learning. Through our PAR

study, which consisted of a Pre-cycle and two cycles of inquiry, we addressed our research questions and contributed to articulating creative voice and nurturing creative mindsets. The data set offered examples of qualitative evidence I had gathered to confirm the findings for the PAR project and study. To determine the themes, I analyzed the data set in PAR Cycle Two in conjunction with Pre-cycle and PAR Cycle One data sets. I analyzed how teachers who engaged in experiential professional development transferred their knowledge, skills, and dispositions into the classroom. By enacting experiences they experienced as learners, I observed shifts in teacher practice; experiential professional development impacted teachers' re-imagination of self as learners and they were more confident in transferring knowledge, skills, and dispositions to their pedagogical practices. On a personal note, I was delighted with the growth of teachers' creative mindset and feeling of joy in their creative work with students.

Findings

The PAR study offers a process for transforming teaching practice so teachers can integrate the arts in their classrooms. Teachers who teach with the arts experience joy and the power of creative possibilities in service of students. Art experiences help teachers re-imagine learning; by nurturing teachers' creative mindsets, as leaders, we can spark joy in their teaching practices. Two findings from this PAR study have the creative potential to enrich the teaching landscape and provide insight into transforming teacher practice (see Figure 21):

1. Teachers who articulate their creative voices strengthen their teaching through self-power and being art forward in their thinking and practices.
2. Teachers who engage in experiential learning can re-imagine themselves as teachers who nurture their creative mindsets find joy in teaching and transfer the creative practices to classrooms.

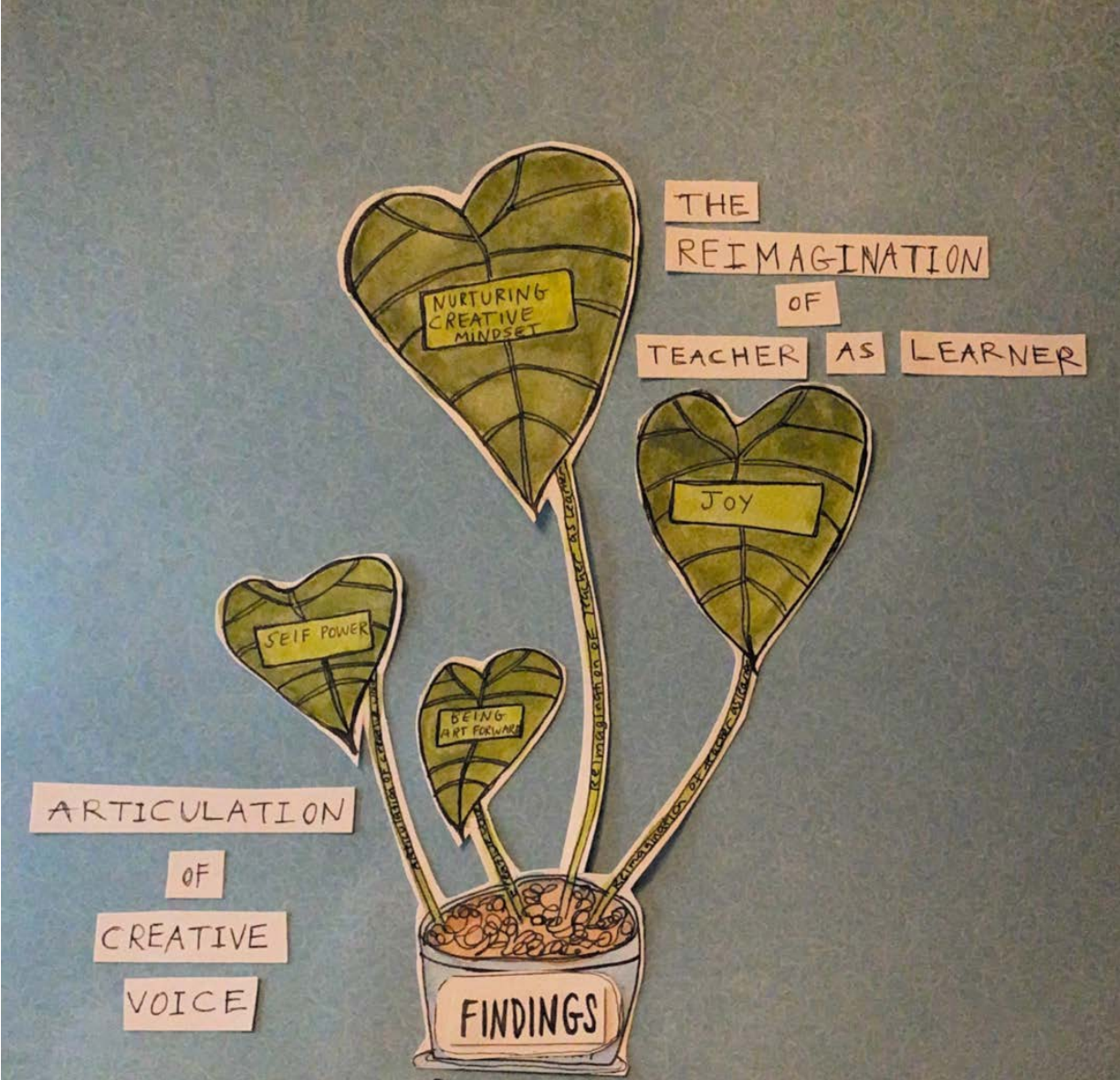


Figure 21. Findings from the PAR study indicate two findings.

In making the findings visible, I continue to use creative journaling practices that were the foundation of the PAR study. The evidence gathering process was grounded in the theory of action: *If* teachers engage in arts-based, creative practices, *Then* they can co-create and implement arts integrated instructional experiences for students. To determine the support for the findings, I examined the emergent themes, themes, and categories of data from PAR Cycles One and Two by aggregating the data for findings. In reference to finding one from the two cycles, the key data were self-power (15% of the total data for both cycles of inquiry) and being art forward (23%). For the second finding, the data include teacher experiences in the arts (20%), transferring the arts practices to the classroom (29%), and finding joy (13%) (see Figure 22).

Articulating Creative Voice

Teachers who articulated their creative voices strengthened teaching through internalized self-power and in being art forward in their thinking. Articulation of creative voice reflected how teachers spoke to their creative stances and beliefs about creativity within their teaching practice and student learning. For the integration of the arts to occur consistently and with intentionality, teachers needed to articulate what creativity means and how they enact creativity in their practices. I engaged with teachers in the process of creative experimentation of arts methods that amplified their creative voice, and thus influenced their teaching practices. When teachers articulated their creative voice and practiced arts integrated teaching methods, they strengthened their ability to transfer their knowledge, skills, and dispositions into the classroom with their students. Furthermore, the articulation of creative voice grounded teachers in creative work that impacted their students and their own design of arts integration.

By analyzing the results of our work together over the creative trajectory of fourteen months, I observed that articulating the creative voice resulted in teachers exhibiting a sense of

AGGREGATE DATA DISTRIBUTION FOR PAR CYCLES ONE AND TWO

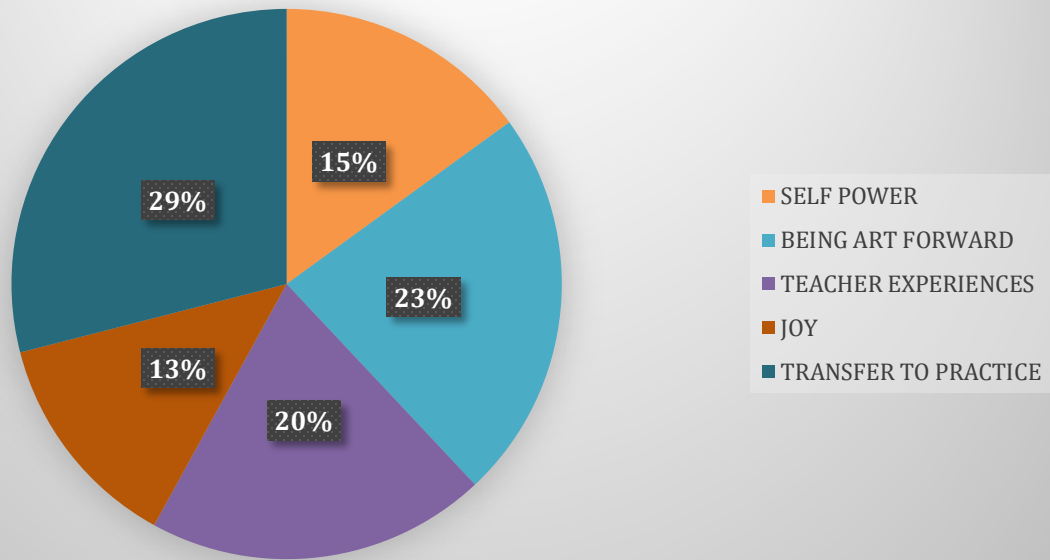


Figure 22. The aggregate data from PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two represent two findings.

self-power and being art forward in a school setting. The evidence that supported this finding in how their creative stances resulted in self-power, and in being art forward. As a result of their work in PAR Cycle One, they developed personal symbolism in their creative journals that led to reflection and a sense of ownership of the artistic process. Incrementally, based on the pre-cycle use of the creative journals, the creative practice that they documented in the journals inspired and propelled me forward as a creative practitioner in supporting teachers' art practices.

The data from this research study demonstrates that the CLE participants found that the ongoing creative practice of visual journaling resulted in the teachers' articulating a creative voice. Each CPR member used their visual journal as a tool to document their varying teaching approaches and how they make connections between their creative work and their teaching. As Lucero (2011) described, "What is possible in art-making, could be permissible in other practices—particularly practices that were not typically seen as aesthetic-like pedagogy" (p. 25). In interviews and individual member check ins, we discussed how the impact of their creative voices became more a part of their teacher identity and voice as we proceeded through the project and study.

Self-Power

Teachers believed that cultivation of self-power was necessary in developing creative practices within their instruction. By cultivating self-power, teachers could move through internal barriers they placed on themselves that hindered their creative practices and transference of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions into the classroom. Olivia, in a self-reflection in her visual journal (Olivia, visual journal, September 13, 2022), noted that her creative practices are now interrelated in her work with students. She further extended her thinking by noting she was, "feeling more integrated." Similarly, Adam noted in his visual journal that to "transgress is to

self-actualize” (Adam, visual journal, September 13, 2022). CPR members revealed that their own self-power encouraged them to pursue creative practices and re-imagine their work with students.

Being Art Forward

Being art forward is an expression that means that we think of art as a way to approach content in our school. Context, such as school environments, are a complex web of interpersonal connections, ideas, beliefs, and philosophies. We have used this term, being art forward, in this study, and it has also appeared in the data; therefore, I am using the term to mean that we are prioritizing art and arts integration in our school. The context of the school provided opportunity for experimentation and experience with art (Marshall et al., 2021; Robertson & McDaniel, 2013). I particularly wanted to ensure that the arts were active and present in teacher and student experiences because of the impact of the COVID pandemic on school experiences. I did this to support their creative voices and support instructional practices that centered student voice and agency. Creative practices are essential in cultivating positive dispositions for learning, including a sense of personal agency and independence, resiliency when facing challenges, and the motivation to learn (Marshall et al., 2021).

Teachers who nurtured their creative mindset integrated the arts into their teaching. However, they needed to be immersed in an *art forward* environment, in which we prioritized the arts as learning and engaged them in experiential learning and inspired creative experiences before they could enact the arts in their classrooms. This finding suggested that ensuring discussions and experiences are *art forward* not only connected teachers in professional collegiality but influenced and provided direction for their instructional practices. In parallel to the evidence regarding articulation of creative voice, personal beliefs shape teaching practices,

specifically the use of language used by teachers. Similarly, CPR members who expressed confidence in expressing their creative voices empower their students to do the same, particularly students in their classrooms who have systematically been marginalized and unheard.

Reimagining Teacher as Learner

Teachers who reimagine themselves as learners by engaging in experiential learning nurture their creative mindsets, transfer the creative practices to classrooms, and feel joy in the process. The three CPR members had a longer journey in exploring to nurture their creative mindset and, through their experience, we organized a creative experience for all the teachers in the CLE. As participants engaged in playful and creative practices as learners, they reimagined their classrooms. Lifting the barrier between teacher and learner led to understanding of their agency and the possibilities of cultivating similar arts-centric experiences for their students (Bremmer et al., 2018). As teachers engaged in experiential professional development, they were creatively influenced to then engage in similar experiences with their students; they were learning to be art forward. Evidence from our two CLEs suggested that teachers re-imagined themselves as learners and were more likely to craft experiential learning for their students and to build an enduring connection with materials, self, and their peers. As we know, tools can act as material and social mediators of learning (Wong et al., 2021). Additionally, experiential learning experiences facilitated by teacher practitioners in the school further validated that teachers who engaged as learners then transformed their teaching practices.

As Olivia facilitated the CLE with arts specialists at the school, we witnessed the impacts of experiential learning for teachers to reimagine their classroom practices. CPR member Adam reflected on a CLE by expressing:

I'm an experiential learner. So the fact that I was able to be in front of my colleagues. . . Just seeing them in their element, I got a lot of ideas for what I could use in my classroom . . .and through this PD, it kind of motivated me to want to learn more from the people who are so close in the building. (Adam, interview, November 7, 2022)

In my analysis of the results of the creative and experiential centered work with teachers, I found that nurturing creative mindset was a strong factor in shifting teachers toward the reimagination of themselves as learners.

Nurturing Creative Mindset

Teachers' learning experiences and creative practices contributed to developing their creative mindsets; as a result, they developed agency expressed by a flexible creative teaching approach and a different sense of belonging in the classroom with their students, who welcomed opportunities for creative learning. When teachers and CPR members habitually employed creative practices, they transferred the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they developed in collaborative relationships with colleagues to their work with students. CPR member Olivia, in daily creative practice of her visual journal, reflected on collaborations with colleagues, mapped ideas for lessons, and built connections between theory and practice in her work. Olivia reflected on her students, "I want them to understand the permeability of the disciplines and how theater can contain it all . . . and how being an artist means you do a lot. So I got [another teacher] to chat about it." (Olivia, visual journal, October 18, 2022) Additionally, due to his habitual practice, Adam blossomed in his teaching practice as he spoke of his embrace of creative teaching and how his mindset had shifted toward centering the arts. He established a flourishing arts integrated classroom curriculum through the use of printmaking to demonstrate learning of California native plants and animals. This application revealed his creative mindset. Teachers, such as Adam, with strengthened confidence in their creative practices, centered the arts in their

teaching each day, resulting in creative classrooms with walls and hallways that visibly celebrated creative work.

Engaging in daily creative processes encouraged teacher agency and increased their confidence through their growth of creative knowledge. Students cultivated a stronger sense of agency in the classroom because their teachers were more confident—what Safir and Dugan (2021) describe as emergence in a learning space, “. . .where students are intellectually and emotionally nourished” (p. 102). Formal observations of the CPR team demonstrated how the knowledge and skill that emerged from ongoing creative practice was transferred into the classroom with students.

Newfound Joy in Teaching and Learning

As teachers engaged in re-imagining themselves as learners and nurtured their creative mindsets, each CPR member expressed finding joy in creative thinking and teaching. Joy connotes a feeling of exuberance, delight, and pleasure; certainly the teachers with whom I was working by and large were more exuberant and excited about their teaching than at the outset of the project and study. They took deep satisfaction from the ways they transferred what they were feeling and learning to their classroom practices, which translated to a sense of pride in themselves as educators.

Teachers have a significant role and responsibility in ensuring that learning is joyful, not only for themselves but for their students. The arts as a tool for sparking joy was a result of the process of teachers re-imagining themselves as learners. Joy in the classroom impacts the sense of belonging and agency students have. As teachers engaged students, they supported them in the development of meaningful experiences rooted in creative practices. The teachers engaged students in learning for understanding and provided different opportunities of belonging in the

classroom by acknowledging their individual and collective self-expression (Safir & Dugan, 2021).

In conclusion, teachers who engaged in re-imagining themselves as learners and nurtured their creative mindsets, found themselves cultivating creativity within their students and sparking joy in their creative thinking and teaching. In offering experiential professional development for teachers, school leaders can support this transformation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the two findings for the PAR study provide qualitative evidence from multiple sources to answer the overarching research question guiding the project: How can creative practices support pathways for equitable classroom learning? By *teachers reimagining themselves as learners* and articulating their *creative voices*, they felt more engaged in their learning, more confident in the ways they teach and engage children and discovered a sense of joy in their teaching that they had not fully experienced previously. In the final cycle of data collection, the CPR team and I were able to transfer our learning and experiences to the entire school staff to engage in experiential learning collectively. They explored creative practices that nurtured their creative mindsets and they articulated their creative voices. The PAR process for the purposes of this study is complete, but the experiences and learning we had will continue so that we can be an art forward school that fully integrates the arts in all learning.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

“Find those little pockets of joy wherever you can . . .” shared my mentor and friend, Julia Marshall. I carried those words through the past year as I embarked on the final cycle of the participatory action research (PAR) inquiry. Joy has been central in my leadership journey—finding what is necessary, possible, and hopeful in cultivating creative practices as a teacher and leader. In the participatory action research (PAR) study, I supported teachers in developing their arts-based creative practices so they could develop and implement arts integrated instructional strategies that support student learning. As a result of encouraging and supporting teachers in arts integration as an essential method in the classroom instructional practices in an arts-focused elementary school, the three teachers in the co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group changed practices, and I learned much more about how to facilitate teacher learning. I grounded the PAR design in this theory of action: *If* teachers engage in arts-based, creative practices, *then* they can co-create and implement arts integrated instructional experiences for students.

The PAR study context was an art-centric school in which teachers are committed to arts-integrated thinking and teaching as a mode for equitable classrooms. To fully implement practices in classrooms that included an arts focus and improve instructional practices, teachers needed a safe and supportive space to experience creative pedagogy as adults and transfer those practices to classrooms (Drago-Severson, 2012). As teachers experienced the power of artmaking as an essential tool for themselves, they implemented practices for students. The teachers who participated in the PAR engaged in their personal growth as social justice practitioners who recognized how the arts are integral to equitable student outcomes. They wanted to use creative practices to better support their students and work collaboratively in doing so. Engaging in experiential professional learning inspired their reimagination of themselves as

learners, and as they articulated their creative voices, they found renewed joy in the creative process that they transferred through art integrated processes to their classrooms.

Through our 18 month journey, I used the teachers' visual journals and the teachers' conversations in the CPR group as qualitative evidence. I facilitated experiential professional learning with the CPR teachers and school staff. The link between how teachers reimagined their abilities to be effective classroom teachers and enacted their beliefs is critical. Developing a pedagogy of creative voice with teachers was a collaborative improvement process that resulted in deeper understanding of themselves as creative practitioners; in turn, they felt more confident in facilitating equitable classroom practices through an arts-integrated lens.

I begin the chapter with a visual image from a community learning exchange for the school staff (CLE, August 10, 2022) that captures the essence of PAR Cycle Two (see Figure 23). The school staff is walking together on a nature trail on their first day of school. As a creative educator and leader, I have experienced the convergence of nature and art as transformative by inviting self-reflection and invigorating creative practices. This image exemplifies a shift as we re-committed to experiential professional development and how teachers engaging in creative processes elevates creativity to a critical place in our curriculum and instruction. The story of how we engaged the entire staff started with the work of three teachers committing to the journey.

Key PAR activities with three teachers included the creative practice of visual journals, community learning exchanges, lesson observations, and individual member check-ins. The instructional leadership team led these activities with intention and supported members of the PAR's co-practitioner researchers (CPR) team into developing their creative practices, and



Figure 23. Community learning exchange: An example of experiential education for the staff of Creative Arts, August 10, 2022.

engaged in supportive, experiential learning that then influenced their creative capacities in teaching. We used visual journals, which provided a blank space for each CPR member to reflect on the teaching practice, map generative ideas for their classrooms, and make meaning of their individual and collective experiences. Community learning exchange practices are rooted in creative approaches that center participant agency and the listening to the voices and ideas of the local participants (Guajardo et al., 2016). Our art forward CLEs ignited teachers' creative voices and engaged participants in envisioning how to use their creativity in the classroom to elevate student learning. In conducting individual member check-ins coupled with classroom observation, I promoted teacher choice and voice about their teaching practices and gained insight into each teacher's creative growth.

In summarizing the two findings of this PAR, I reflect on the research questions and make connections to literature. As a result of the findings, I developed a framework for promoting teacher creative practices. Finally, I address implications for policy, practice, and research and conclude the chapter with a reflection on my leadership journey over the course of this 18-month PAR.

Discussion

In examining the PAR findings in relation to the literature, I analyzed sources from the initial literature review as well as new sources and then I responded to the PAR research questions. Lastly, I present a framework for promoting teacher creative practices to increase arts integrated opportunities towards equity in the classroom. The PAR findings were:

1. Teachers who articulate their creative voices strengthen their teaching through self-power and being art forward in their thinking and practices.

2. Teachers who engage in experiential learning re-imagine themselves as teachers who nurture their creative mindsets, find joy in teaching, and transfer the creative practices to classrooms.

Articulating a Creative Voice: Self-Power

CPR members who engaged in experiential professional learning and in creative collaboration with one another strengthened their creative stances and beliefs about creativity within their teaching practices. Each teacher recognized the need to determine what creativity meant to them; once each had articulated the self-power of their creative voices, they could then change their practices. Teacher experiences led to naming their creative stances as art forward, a term used by a team member to describe what had happened.

Vygotsky (1978) described how learning happens—when learners are engaged in creative acts as a process, the result is generative; the learner can produce either a conceptual or tangible object. Teachers as learners found that as they participate in and refined their creative practices, their dispositions or artistic stances as arts integrated teachers developed. By spending sufficient time to cultivate their creative voices through the use of visual journals and supporting their art practices, the teachers transferred their knowledge, skills, and informed dispositions to the classrooms. The process boosted their confidence as creative individuals.

In this process of adult learning, the teachers felt *held* as they co-constructed meaning through using material tools; their development is an example of adult constructivist development theory (Kegan, 1982), in which each person is “an active meaning maker with respect to cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (internal) experience and how those experiences intersect” (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 22). To accomplish these goals for adult learning—as they become self-authoring knowers who transform classroom spaces—they

needed a holding space to engage in creative practices. The holding space I facilitated throughout the PAR project and study included reflection by concentrating first on adult growth and development. I had to recognize these factors in working with adults: (a) how their growth was impacted by identity and the cultural milieu of the school; (b) how to assess adult readiness as they overcame discomfort, and (c) knowing that creative work is not linear, how to adapt our conversations and art-making to the adult learner pace (Drago-Severson, 2012). At some points, I was conscious of redefining what may appear as resistance or a slow pace to realizing that adults, like students, learn in different modalities and at different rates.

The arts integrated activities and approaches during the PAR supported creative dispositions required to bolster the teachers' creative stances. Sawyer (2014) summarized goals first examined by Torrance (1972) that support the value of cultivating a creative stance and practice with and for teachers:

- Foster creative attitudes
- Improve understanding of the creative process and of creative people
- Exercise creative behavior and thinking
- Teach specific creativity techniques

Using creative logic, teachers used visual journals to record ideas, feelings, and experiences; I observed and conferred with them about the journals and their burgeoning creative practices and analyzed the journals to see their growth trajectories. To facilitate CPR meetings and community learning exchanges, I used processes and tools that fostered creative thinking and ensured that our work was grounded in creative practices and supported collegial inquiry. As they developed and strengthened their creative stances, they developed what Drago-Severson terms self-authoring and self-transforming mindsets and actions. I offered opportunities for demonstrating

expertise and competencies and co-designing by providing ample freedom and resources, creating spaces for dialogue and engagement that continued to focus on a clear rationale for the inquiry, and emphasizing competence as art-makers and art teachers (Spillane, 2013).

In the PAR with its focus of practice, I rooted teacher practices in arts integration pedagogy to better support their students in our school. In doing so, we reflected and embodied the core values of our school's mission; that the arts in learning was a required teaching practice in creating equitable classrooms. The creative practice of visual journaling was a linchpin in this study because the tool was an occasion for active art-making, art-thinking, and reflection. Consistent use of tools is a vital material mediator of learning and acts as a social mediator in co-constructing learning and making individual and collective decisions about classroom practice (Wong et al., 2020). Teachers believed that self-power was a necessary part of developing creative practices within their instruction. Teachers activated discourse with colleagues on the relevance of creative practices within classroom teaching practices, which concurs with educational theory. Adult learning and experiences preceded the teachers' abilities to address student creativity; in this case, their creative experiences and dialogue were essential components to shifting their teaching practices (Craft, 2005; Sawyer, 2006). As they reimagined themselves as learners, they could reimagine their roles as teachers and their students as learners.

Reimagining Teacher as Learner

As a result of CPR members' immersion in creative experiential learning and collaborative dialogue during the PAR study, they nurtured their creative mindsets, found new joy in their creative experiences and in teaching, and transferred creative practices to student experiences in the classroom. Ongoing engagement in creative practices involved learning to be creative, which amplified *possibility thinking*, for making choices in their teaching lives

(Loveless, 2002; Wong et al., 2021). Teachers elevated their individual capacities and possibilities to reimagine themselves as learners through an experiential process of intentional, art forward professional development that nurtured their creative mindsets and sparked joy. Through visual journals and dialogue, teachers reimagined themselves as learners and creative practitioners who could foster more equitable practices in their classrooms (Drago-Severson, 2012).

According to Mehta and Fine (2015), if educators are to fully engage in integrating anything considered new to their pedagogical practices—in the arts or other fields, they must have deep experiences so that they feel comfortable with the practices in their classrooms. Teachers had arts forward experiences that impacted how they saw themselves as learners and teachers; as a result, they changed how they approached their classroom instruction through an arts integrated lens. They created authentic learning experiences for their students that centered student voice and agency by amplifying their teacher creative voices and commitment to arts forward teaching that was inclusive and equitable. Thus they became teacher-leaders who transformed practice for others by helping to promote a culture of collegiality and imagining how to explore new ideas and possibilities as a faculty.

Nurturing Creative Mindsets

To do so, the teachers needed to re-imagine. In other words, their mindsets needed to include a feeling and an outward stance that they were creative, which two of the three teachers did not fully express at the outset of the study. As they developed and established their creative voices, they could nurture similar mindsets and practices with their students. Such a shift required teachers to change personal boundaries to strengthen their self-power and permit themselves to ignite their creative practices. When teachers allocated time to commit to creative

practices and to engage fully in experiential opportunities for their growth, they were more likely to connect the arts to other content areas in the curriculum and value arts integration for student engagement and learning (Kennedy Center Education, 2020; Sawyer, 2014). As they questioned their current approaches and reflected on how to center student voice and agency, they considered how the arts could inform their teaching practices. Teachers who make this shift are more likely to recognize the value of art integration as critical to enhancing student academic achievement, but more importantly, they support student voice, access, and equity in their classrooms (Burnaford et al., 2007; Eisner, 2002; Gardner, 1983; Hetland et al., 2007; Kennedy Center Education, 2020; Sawyer, 2014).

Teachers committed to creative practices that included artistic, intellectual, and creative skills and making and using art in the professional learning experiences. They collaboratively engaged in an intentional creative process. Engagement in daily creative practices led to the teachers embracing possibilities in the curriculum and in students; they demonstrated new capacity to imagine alternative and equitable pathways in the classroom. Teachers connected with Greene's (1988) idea of envisioning and imagining for what has not yet occurred and with Sawyer's (2014) concept of emergent creativity. Thus, educators who committed to creative practices developed their abilities to support the arts in the classroom as a critical pedagogy by making the arts an intrinsic part of the curriculum and learning conditions for students.

As their creative mindsets developed, they unlocked self-power as a driver to their teaching and a practice of education as freedom (Freire, 1997; hooks, 1994). Teachers expressed their creativity as possibility thinking, a concept that includes seven habits of mind: posing questions; play; immersion; innovation; risk-taking; being imaginative; and self-determination

(Cremin et al., 2006). That sparked joy as they implemented arts-integrated practices that continue to grow as they think about their teaching beyond the duration of this study.

Joy

Our study recognized that as teachers engaged in creative work, feelings of elation or joy permeated their experiences. Joy is defined as kind of learning process or experience which could make learners feel pleasure in a learning scenario/process (Wei et al., 2011). Joy arouses curiosity, perhaps the most observable sign of joy in learning. Ostroff (2016) posits that curiosity is a “joyful feature of a life well-lived” (p. 3) and foundational to curiosity. In turn, learners release a brain chemical, dopamine, that indicates pleasure; develop intrinsic motivation; and exhibit enhanced cognitive skills. Muhammed (2023) contends that we must design curriculum to unearth joy, a critical factor in culturally and historically responsive teaching. To her, joy is “helping students uplift beauty, aesthetics, truth, ease, wonder, wellness, solutions to the problems of the world, and personal fulfillment” (Muhammed, 2023, p. 1). As she calls for humanizing pedagogies in our classrooms, she guided us to foster joy in adult learning by humanizing pedagogy they can transfer to classrooms. Centering joy in teaching practice required teachers to give themselves permission to pursue creative practices first so that they could infuse their lessons with imaginative approaches. The CPR team naming *joy* in connection with their creative process, as they felt it, encouraged their creative momentum. Joy, as emotion, is information that signals to teachers that they are meeting their needs as learners (Aguilar & Cohen, 2022).

As I look beyond the PAR, I continue to stretch and explore using an arts centric mindset rooted in experiential learning that encourages teachers to spark their creativity in service of students. As I engage all teachers in creative collaboration (Wong et al., 2021), I can support the

entire school in implementing an arts forward approach. Nurturing creativity and centering joy are essential elements for teacher learning and the learning that teachers design and implement for students (Sawyer, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978).

Framework for Creative Change

Sawyer (2014) proposed a framework for the emergence of creativity. I used his framework to construct an image for supporting changes in teacher practice. Figure 24 represents my use of the Sawyer framework to represent the PAR findings. To increase equitable classrooms based in arts integration, we engaged in experiential professional development to center teacher creative voice and practices. In this case, the focus was on articulating creative voice. Professional development that is creatively experiential supported teachers in articulating their creative voices and reimagining themselves as learners. Furthermore, to promote transfer of knowledge, skills and dispositions to the classroom practice, we employed instructional coaching and creative practices. Integrating these three factors led to the transformation of teacher practice with the aim of creating equitable classrooms.

Review of Research Questions

The overarching research question that guided the study was: *How do educators develop creative practices to support pathways for equity?* The three sub-questions were:

1. To what extent do teachers who engage in creative practices develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions about arts integration?
2. To what extent do teachers implement curriculum and instruction that reflects arts integration in classrooms?
3. How do I change as a leader by effectively supporting teachers to develop creative practices and implement arts integration?



Figure 24. Framework for changing teacher practice towards arts integrated teaching.

Over the process of eighteen months, as CPR group met consistently and engaged in experiential professional learning. We used Safir and Dugan's (2021) *Street Data* and Marshall et al., (2021) *Teaching Contemporary Art with Young People* as anchor texts. In our co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group and in our visual journals, CPR members reflected on their creative practices and dialogued with one another. I facilitated experiential professional development with community learning exchanges coupled with one-to-one member check-ins to reinforce implications for teaching practices and to deepen arts integrated methodology. That creative focus on teaching practices with attention to creative process and making meaning increased the integration of the arts in their teaching practices.

Secondly, teachers in this study nurtured their creative mindsets and found joy in their teaching—all to the benefit of their students. Teachers engaged in coaching conversations to implement creative practices to support student agency and voice. Teachers needed to articulate their creative voices to increase their self-power to implement creative practices with their students. To support teacher practice, we nurtured teachers' creative dispositions. CPR members' commitment to creative practices nurtured their creative dispositions in order to support creative implementation for their students.

Implications

The PAR study has implications for practice, policy, and research. The study provided creative opportunity for me as the lead researcher to observe closely how creative leadership work can support teachers in transforming their teaching and learning practices.

Practice Implications

Through the study, we revealed the significance of engaging teachers in experiential professional development and creative practices. The PAR process magnified how impactful

professional development, creative collaboration, and accountable coaching practices can spark joy and transform teacher practice. Instructional leaders, both teachers and administrators, could begin a creative journey toward transforming teaching practices by attending to experiential professional development that integrates creative, collaborative practices that are directly applicable to teacher practice.

Arts Integrated Professional Development

For leaders to successfully facilitate professional learning, they must believe that teachers have the potential to be radically creative. Furthermore, leaders must recognize that allocating time to make connections and build meaning through experiential professional learning is a critical part of the creative process that contributes to equitable conditions for learning (Montuori & Donnelly, 2017). As with students, they need to differentiate the learning to match the learning styles and rates of the participants. To engage in this work, leaders must consider constructivist learning theory to advocate for learning as a process of engagement through which learners activate and extend layer upon layer of individual knowledge (Marshall, 2019; Piaget, 1936). To deepen understanding and implications for teaching practice rooted in creativity, teachers need to engage in the learning themselves, and then can cultivate and craft dynamic, rich experiences for their students.

In the past thirty years, educators have used arts integration to develop curricula that integrate the arts with other subjects (Burnaford et al., 2007; Schramm, 2002; Strokrocki, 2005). Eisner (2002) identified a possible curricular application of arts integration by noting how a unit that is centered on a major theme or idea can be explored through the arts and other academic disciplines. When teachers integrate the arts with another academic area through process, content, or a performance of learning, the result is a deepened understanding of knowledge in all

content areas (Efland, 2002; Winslow, 1939). Practitioners should take note that the arts is a trauma-responsive practice (Perryman et al., 2019) and is a key factor in equitable access and rigor (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Therefore, arts integration is an essential component of professional development for teachers so that they can experience the arts in their learning and transfer to classrooms (Sawyer, 2004). Thus, school leaders and teachers can incorporate these practices.

Creative Leadership

Motivating change in teacher practice requires leaders to connect with teachers by engaging in meaningful experiences that ignite energetic response and purpose (Marshall, 2014b). According to Montuori and Donnelly (2017), creative leaders lead with flexibility and openness as they support teachers in meeting their goals in creating equitable classrooms in which student agency is centered. The PAR study illustrated these core elements in effective leadership: openness to change and flexibility of approach; both qualities related to and developed through creative practice (Fullan, 2001; Marshall, 2014b; Wheatley, 2006). To spark change in our professional development series, I listened and connected with the reflective feedback of our CPR team: led with *art forward* experiences, “because that’s what we do here” (Olivia, CPR Meeting, April 2022). Arts offer a catalyst for experimentation when the experiences are intrinsically purposeful and meaningful for adult purposes (Ostroff, 2016). As a result, teachers can acquire skills through that experience that helped them develop clarity and understanding (Fullan, 2001). Thus, leaders need to nurture creative mindsets and include the arts as a learning strategy in all professional learning.

Policy Implications

In her revolutionary voice, hooks (1994) urged us to “open our minds and hearts so that we know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions” (p. 12). To rethink and transform teaching practice in schools will take more than creative practice and centering experiential teacher learning. First, we must examine policy and its implications across pedagogical practices, curriculum, and teacher professional development at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Local Policy: Micro

As creative leaders, we can directly transform the schools in which we lead by setting up systems of working with adults in which they become self-authoring in terms of their practices and transform classrooms and schools to be more engaging and more equitable (Drago-Severson, 2012). Leaders of small schools and public charter schools have the opportunity to facilitate change due to the autonomous power they hold. To center student agency and ensure that our students of color are seen and heard relies on changing school policies that advocate for teachers to engage in experiential learning that reflects the arts integrated education that we envision for our students. At the school level, in a union-led school, the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) notes that teachers who teach at our school are required to engage in anti-racist teaching and curriculum. As a member of the Leadership Team, we center our Black students’ experiences and historical truths and coach teachers in partnership with our Director of African American Achievement to disrupt biased-based curricular approaches. Thus, we need school mission statements and the policies that follow to focus on processes and structures that support the aims of arts integration and social justice.

Meso and Macro Level

The findings from the PAR study have implications at the meso and macro level. At the school district, the study findings spotlight implications for professional development. The study supports designing and funding a system for professional development that provides teachers with the experiential learning required for them to facilitate experiences for their learners. Furthermore, professional development should support teachers in developing their creative voices to then imagine the possibilities for their classrooms of learners. District and charter school leaders can support the design of creative learning classrooms that nurture creative mindsets by addressing the teacher, learning, and curriculum paradox. Through professional development, structures must be implemented in order to support teachers in developing creative learning (Sawyer, 2004).

Research

While the research study included a small number of participants, the processes we used would be useful to a researcher. The study used participatory activist research (PAR), an iterative and admittedly messy process of creative experimentation and co-creation, much like the artistic process itself (hunter et al., 2013), and others could engage in this non-linear approach to research. In this study, the PAR was rooted in actions that inspired social change and supported reframing power structures (Hale, 2008; Hale, 2017; hunter et al., 2013); thus, I used the framing of activist action research.

As the lead practitioner-researcher, I collaborated with a group of three teachers who formed the CPR team. Engaging systematically in these PAR methods, participants as co-practitioner researchers (CPR) collaborated toward collective liberation, which is not just a value, but an action (Okun, 1999, p. 1). PAR is a replicable methodological approach for small

research studies that focus on working from the inside to effect change (Grubb & Tredway, 2010).

Limitations

As the primary researcher for the PAR project, I began this study with experiences in arts education that influenced what I wanted to study. The choice of the CPR team was purposeful, and I conferred with the CPR team throughout the PAR cycles. As a result, I heard multiple perspectives on the processes of implementing the focus of practice in iterative cycles of inquiry. We collectively made decisions through praxis, our deep reflection practice.

All qualitative studies have certain limitations because of the size of the study. However, while this was a small sample, the recursive data sources and analysis provided rich descriptions of the findings. Secondly, while the exact study cannot be replicated, the process for the study could be used for future research.

Leadership Development

Throughout the PAR cycles, I led with leadership rooted in praxis and love for my students and staff that reflects what Mitchell (2018) expressed, “The challenges that we face in our lives require us to show up as our best selves, guided by the heart-based wisdom of divine truth” (p. 150, see Figure 25). Teaching students and supporting teachers through the process of enacting creativity in an anti-racist way brings me joy and actively reflects my personal beliefs. Centering joy within the context in collaboration with the CPR group and greater community, I felt that I crafted each day with purpose. I experienced joy myself as a gift because we together grounded our school community in their creative voices to better support students and create equitable spaces for learning (Ledo-Lane, reflective memo, September 1, 2022).

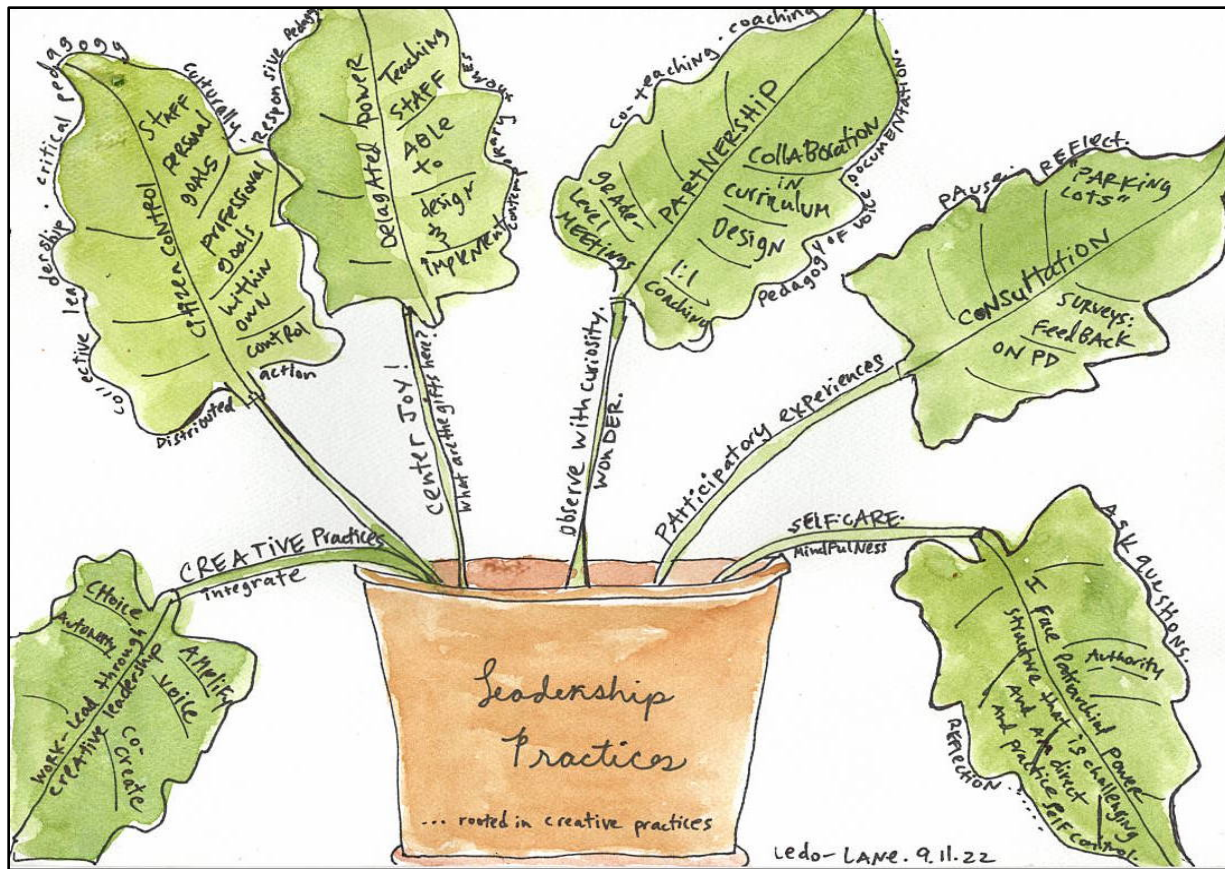


Figure 25. Ledo-Lane, visual memo, September 11, 2022.

I was guided by Freire's (1997) central tenets of critical pedagogy as they integrated with my experience as a creative practitioner-researcher-leader: "Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation" (p. 71). Freire's concepts strengthened my understanding of how I lead with a commitment to creative practices, being art forward in leadership and what shifted in my leadership practice.

The creative acts of research, observation, and writing enabled me to solidify my commitments to the arts in learning and to reflect on my leadership using the theoretical lens of critical pedagogy. As a leader, I learned how I lead with a creative mindset and practice what I believe; that the arts are an essential component of equitable learning spaces. Awati (2013) discussed Habermas' concept of *lifeworld* and described it as a social space that we share with others. The process of conducting this PAR sparked my reflection of my lifeworld of curiosity, art, creativity, wonder, joy, nature, and family. I realized that my lifeworld provided strength and encouragement to lead with clear purpose, center relationships, and persist. As with so many of us, the pandemic left a powerful imprint on our context and amplified the attention to the diverse learning needs of our students. Upon the return of staff and students, I led with the purpose that the arts were required for healing, to renew and build personal connections, and—as a pivotal tool in praxis—enacted a transformative experience as a leader (Freire, 1997).

As a researcher practitioner, I have learned to intersect what I have acquired from leadership findings. Fullan (2001)'s three key elements of effective leadership interconnected how to address learning gaps (Ledo-Lane, memo, 2021). My creative leadership practice, woven with

with creative practices and my roles as a researcher-practitioner and leader, include these conclusions:

1. Leaders must see themselves as active learners, learning through practice.
2. Leaders must learn by doing and then apply theory to practice.
3. Leaders must know themselves and be metacognitive in their learning and actions (Ledo-Lane, reflective memo, October 2022).

Seeing patterns of domination enabled me as an anti-racist leader to recognize the core patterns that impacted collectivism or a collaborative emergent creativity process and enact the espoused beliefs about effective leadership (Sawyer, 2012). I am self-reflective; I then consider, amplify, and center voices that should be heard and step back. I strive to be truthful and disrupt false narratives and inequities directly. I lead with consultation and partnership practices (Ledo-Lane, reflective memo, October 2021). I lead as a collaborative and hands-on practitioner by modeling and embodying practices that could influence and change teaching and learning practices. As I move toward a more collaborative emergent leadership approach, I employed frameworks of culturally responsive and anti-racist thinking, including centering Freire's (1997) critical pedagogy approach. For example, I now co-design and co-lead staff professional development each month in collaboration with our Director of African American Achievement, a collaborative emergent creativity process through which we are open to constant change and pivot in our interactions and recognize that the professional development is more effective if co-created through our social processes. Our ongoing dialogue as leaders reflects a commitment to our relationship, through which trust "is the logical consequence" (Freire, 1997, p. 64). Rooted in creative practices that promote voice, choice, autonomy, and mindset, I decided that these tools and processes inspire possibility and opportunity to lead collectively rather than in a covert

power model of authority (Ledo-Lane, visual memo, September 2022).

Over this PAR study, I learned to embrace vulnerability and acknowledge power dynamics in real-time (Ledo-Lane, reflective memo, October 2022). To embrace vulnerability is to express empathy towards those I collaborate with, support, and directly supervise. The process of building relational trust demonstrates vulnerability as I express aspects of myself without fearing judgement. Recognizing feelings and assessing where I exist within the power dynamics is important in developing myself as a leader. Approaching leadership with authentic collaboration is an inherent part of collectivism. Moving forward, I will continue to emphasize that creative practices present vibrant opportunities to engage educators in playful and reflective experimentation that is a catalyst for divergent thinking and arts integrated approaches. Motivating teachers to commit with intention and give themselves permission to explore and create themselves is grounded in experiential learning that is purposeful and meaningful. Our collective hope is that it leads us to serving our students with heartfelt intention.

A Call to Reimagine Teacher Learning

The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in a world beyond itself.
– hooks (1994)

As I bring closure to this PAR study, I imagine schools where teachers are invited to ignite their creative practices by engaging in professional development that makes time and space for collective creative learning. Such professional development is rooted in the belief that we need to honor teachers' creative processes so they can nurture creative spirit in their students. I am inspired by collective creative acts and the power of creativity to transform learning.

Educational leaders are in the midst of relentless challenges stemming from the pandemic

with increased mental health issues faced by youth. In this present moment, we must reimagine what teacher learning could be—engaging in creative practices to spark possibility—thinking and centering joy in our collective work with students and teachers. Leading with a joyful, creative mindset will instill wonder and reflection in our students, resulting in enhanced life possibilities for them. Imagination and creativity are empowering. Teachers and leaders hold the capacity to self-evolve and to support students to do the same.

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PPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284**
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [ann.ledo-lane](mailto:ann.ledo-lane@ecu.edu)
CC: [Matthew Militello](mailto:Matthew.Militello@ecu.edu)
Date: 9/20/2021
Re: [UMCIRB 21-001517](#)
The role of creative practices in equitable pedagogy

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 9/20/2021. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 1 & 2ab.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
3.5 Public Observations (0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
3.9 Other Educational Procedures(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
3.9 Other Educational Procedures(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
3.9 Other Educational Procedures. (0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Appendix C: Consent Form: Adults(0.01)	Consent Forms
Appendix E: Interview Protocol(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Ledo-Lane Proposal_Sept 1.(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Ledo-lane_recruitment script.pdf(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: CITI TRAINING CERTIFICATE



Completion Date 31-Dec-2020
Expiration Date 31-Dec-2023
Record ID 40133755

This is to certify that:

ann ledo-lane

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Human Research
(Curriculum Group)

Group 2.Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel

(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

East Carolina University



Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w18ffb669-9a7b-4297-a3b7-7d810c403ebf-40133755

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL PERMISSION

CREATIVE ARTS

CHARTER SCHOOL

EST - 1994

June 23, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Creative Arts Charter School recognizes the benefits of participating in relevant, well-designed research studies proposed by qualified individuals. Approval for conducting such studies is based primarily on the extent to which substantial benefits can be shown for Creative Arts and its mission of educating students. The purpose of this letter is to notify you of the **approval** to conduct your dissertation study focused on how teachers can have deep experiences in creative practices and then transfer their learning and experiences to art integration for students in support of equitable pathways. We also give permission to utilize the following spaces at Creative Arts to collect data and conduct interviews for her dissertation project: identified classrooms of the research participants and the office of the researcher, Ann Ledo-Lane.

The project meets all of our school/district guidelines, procedures, and safeguards for conducting research on our campus. Moreover, there is ample space for Ann Ledo-Lane to conduct her study and her project will not interfere with any functions of our Creative Arts school. Finally, the following conditions must be met, as agreed upon by the researchers and Creative Arts.

- Participant data only includes information captured from the state data collection strategies.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants can choose to leave the study without penalty at any time.
- Any issues with participation in the study are reported to the school administration in a timely manner.
- An executive summary of your findings is shared with the school administration once the study is complete.

In addition to these conditions, the study must follow all of the East Carolina University IRB guidelines.

We are excited to support this important work.

Respectfully,



Fernando Aguilar
Executive Director

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM - ADULTS



Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: The role of creative practices in equitable pedagogy

Principal Investigator: Ann Ledo-Lane

Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University, Department of Educational Leadership

Address: Creative Arts Charter School, 1601 Turk St, San Francisco, CA 94115

Telephone #: 917-676-4589

Study Coordinator: Dr. Matthew Militello

Telephone #: 252-328-6131

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) project is to examine the extent to which teachers use creative practices to fully integrate the arts into classroom content. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a teacher at Creative Arts and are interested in arts integration as an instructional approach. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, you will engage in creative practices as teachers, in order to expand teacher capacities to design and implement arts-integrated curricula that promote equitable access and rigor. If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about three people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?

You can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at Creative Arts Charter School in your own classroom. You will need to attend meetings *approximately ten* times during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately ten-hours over the next eighteen months.

The research will be conducted at Creative Arts Charter School in your classroom. You will need to attend meetings *approximately ten* times during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately ten-hours over the next eighteen months.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to participate in an interview and/or an observation during the study. The interviews or observation may be recorded in addition to handwritten notes by the research team members. You may be asked to document your creative work in a visual journal that will be provided to you. All interview questions and visual journal will focus on your arts integration experience to improve our instructional approach at Creative Arts.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you, but the information gained by doing this research may help other educators in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Consent forms and data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups will be maintained in a

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact Ann Ledo-Lane at phone number 917-676-4589 (weekdays, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm) or email annledolane@gmail.com.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (PRINT)

Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE (CLE)

ARTIFACTS PROTOCOL

Each semester for the duration of the participatory action research study, the researcher will host a Community Learning Exchange on a topic related to the research questions in the participatory action research (PAR) project. At the CLE, the researcher will collect and analyze artifacts that respond to the specific questions listed below. The researcher will collect qualitative data based on the activities in which the participants engage at the CLE. The data will be in the form of posters and notes that participants write and drawings that participants make in response to prompts related to the research questions.

Participants will include the Co-Practitioner Researchers and other participants who sign consent forms. If students are participants, consent and assent forms will be used.

Date of CLEs: Fall 2021/Spring 2022/Fall2022

Number of Participants: 4

Purpose of CLE: The purpose is to promote dialogue about how creative practices could support equitable classroom learning.

Questions for Data Collection:

What are your creative practices? What are examples of arts integration lessons and practices in your own classroom? What is the connection between arts integration and equity? How can leadership support the implementation of arts integration in our classrooms?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Role of Creative Practices in Equitable Pedagogy Individual Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview and will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Ann Ledo-Lane. I will serve as the moderator for the interview. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. The interview is part of this study to learn about individual teachers' use of creative practices and how those skills and dispositions can be transferable to arts integration.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- The interview will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the interview data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about creative practices and arts integration. It is my hope that you will contribute to the conversation.
- The interview will last approximately one hour.

Interview Questions

TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:

"This is Ann Ledo-Lane, interviewing (*Interviewees Name*) on (*Date*) for the Role of Creative Practices in Equitable Pedagogy Study.

Please describe the art pieces you created at the community learning exchange to represent your teaching experience with arts integration.

Can you cite 2-3 specific examples of creative practices you use?

How did your participation in this study enhance your understanding of and appreciation for arts integration?

Describe what actions and conditions you have created in your classroom environment to support arts integration.

APPENDIX G: VISUAL JOURNAL PROTOCOL

The researcher will facilitate an overview of the visual journal protocol during the pre-cycle. In the pre-cycle, participants will engage in creative practices to have a deep experience in the arts. One creative practice will be to keep visual journals before we fully implement arts integration to ignite the planning for this study. The researcher will use open coding (Saldaña, 2016) and codes derived from the research on visual journaling (Shields, 2016). The researcher will use this information to assess the teachers' skills and dispositions that could contribute to the development of arts integration in the classroom and share the codes and analysis with each participant.

Overview of the visual journal: The visual journal is a place and a tool for arts-centered inquiry and learning. In this PAR study, your visual journal will focus on your observations, learning, thinking and ideas as they relate to your creative practices, your arts integration approach, and the connections to equity in your classroom.

Your visual journal is:

- A tool for exploring knowledge, recording, and creating knowledge.
- A place to record and expand learning, thinking and ideas.
- A place to experiment with ideas and images, play with them, and create new ones.
- A place to map out concepts, make connections and transform them through creative strategies and play.
- To be used as a creative practice and lens to generate, record, and understand learning throughout the study.
- An authentic representation of your experience as a creative practitioner.

Your visual journal could include:

1. Your questions and through lines that evolve throughout the study.
2. The understanding goals for your arts integrated units.
3. Your reflections on your creative practices and arts integration methods.
4. Your thoughts on the arts experiences facilitated during the study.
5. Any interpretations, visual or verbal, of the ideas, activities and issues discussed in the study.
6. Your thoughts and understandings of the readings shared.
7. Images and maps of ideas and your thinking (concept maps and inquiry maps).
8. A record of your artworks and resources related to them.

Your visual journal could have:

1. Pockets for papers and notes
2. Envelopes for artifacts
3. Doodles, drawings, photographs, concept maps
4. Anything else you want to add

Protocol for Journal

PAR Pre-Cycle: Fall 2021

Each participant will receive a blank sketchbook to use as their visual journal during the study.
Each participant will discuss the coding and analysis with the researcher in a member check.

December 2021

Submit visual journal to researcher for review, coding, and analysis

PAR Cycle One: Spring 2022

Continue visual journal.

June 2022

Submit visual journal to researcher for review, coding, and analysis

PAR Cycle Two: Fall 2022

Continue visual journal.

Submit visual journal to researcher for review, coding, and analysis

APPENDIX H: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Classroom Observation Form

Utilize the chart to take selective verbatim notes. It is important to note the time of all notes.

After the observation, analyze the selective verbatim notes and create initial codes.

Time	Selective Verbatim	Code

