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The Lived Experience of Teachers Choosing an Arts-Rich Approach in Turnaround Schools

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Dedication

Dedicated to Jacinto and Sebastien, who supported this degree wholeheartedly, and brought wildflowers and hugs to my desk each morning.

And, to the teachers who work tirelessly alongside of their students to help them find their voice, to love thinking, and to acknowledge their inherent creativity.

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Abstract

Increased metacognition, social-emotional growth, and career viability are all researched benefits of including the arts as part of core content instruction, with even greater impact for struggling students, English Language Learners, and students with special needs. Some turnaround schools that are federally funded School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools are beginning to implement an arts-rich method of school reform by teaching core content both through and in the arts. This approach is most often presented as a choice in the high-stakes testing environment of turnaround schools. Since teachers have the most direct impact on students, yet a relatively low amount of authorship in the way school reform is approached, their voice and experience is highlighted in this phenomenological study.

The participants are from three public turnaround schools in the South. The researcher used traditional research methods layered with an arts-based research approach mirroring the techniques used in an arts-rich classroom. The researcher found that participants experienced their work as a vocational calling, used methods of engaged pedagogy, and experienced a number of roadblocks to their work. They swiftly moved through these roadblocks to create pathways leveraging the arts to change their curriculum and classroom contexts, applied the arts as an access point for content areas, and then experienced the use of an art-rich classroom as a contagious practice. Potential implications for this study include a scalable model for turnaround schools, investment in engaged pedagogical practice for turnaround schools, and increased agility for teachers to become curriculum bricoleurs.

Keywords: arts-rich environment, arts integration, arts enhancement, turnaround schools, arts-based research

Chapter One: Introduction

Throughout the history of curriculum in public schools, the practice of student-centered learning rises and falls (Cuban, 1984). At the turn of the 20th century, John Dewey's work (1938) inspired select schools and districts to move away from teacher-driven instruction and recitation to student-driven instruction steeped in a child's ability to process through real world experience (Elmore, 2004). Implementation of engaging and experiential curriculum has since been encouraged by many curriculum and education scholars including Dewey (1938), Egan (2001), Eisner (1994, 2002), Greene (1995), Robinson (2015), and Whitehead (1929), to name a few since the 1900s. Both research and curriculum theory suggest that curriculum best engages students when children can experience learning and think critically.

Many avenues exist for creating a school environment that harnesses engagement, experience, and problem-solving as the end result of teaching and learning. One of the contemporary approaches gaining momentum is the implementation of an arts-rich environment that includes not only arts classes, but additionally core content lessons that employ arts enhancement and arts integration (Silverstein & Layne, 2010). This study will focus on the use of an arts-rich environment in turnaround schools for four reasons:

1. The arts open pathways for students to bring their knowledge and voice to center stage (Annenberg Institute for Reform, 2003; Corbett, McKenney, Noblit & Wilson, 2001).

2. The arts connect to core content subjects in a direct and applicable ways (Deasy, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Mintrop, 2004; Ruppert, 2006).

3. These connections are particularly relevant in low-performing schools (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Arts Education Partnership, 2017; Bamford, 2009; Catterall, 1999)

4. The use of the arts is a flexible strategy that can mold to the needs of individual

    schools and their students (Goldstein, 2014; Seidel et al., 2009).

Teaching both through and in the arts occurs simultaneously in an arts-rich environment, but there is a distinction. Teaching *in* the arts assumes an art for art's sake approach such as a dance class, theater class, or photography class. Teaching *through* the arts uses an art form to teach core content (Bamford, 2009). This instructional strategy engages students in discussion, problem solving, real world connections, and applications.

Art-Rich Environments and Turnaround Schools

An arts-rich environment is present in many high-performing schools (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). In contrast, low-performing schools often use a more back-to-basics approach to curriculum implementation. This approach places an inherent focus on literacy, numeracy and English Language Arts (ELA), and narrows the curriculum (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). Sir Ken Robinson (2007) affirms, "The earlier 'back to basics' movements failed because schools obsessed about the *Three R's* to the exclusion of creativity, fun, art, music and physical education." The incorporation of an arts-rich environment presents an opportunity for low-performing schools to offer multi-modal entry points to these "basic skills" and expands a narrowed curriculum to benefit low-performing students.

This study focuses on low-performing schools that have been moved to turnaround school status. Turnaround schools are schools taking over a failing school. They typically replace staff and leadership and maintain the student population seeking to reform culture, state standardized test scores, and student success rates with data-driven instruction and often strict parameters for behavior and discipline (Duncan, 2009, Pappano, 2010). An arts-rich approach

does not change the content of the curriculum but rather the approach to the curriculum, lending itself as a choice instructional strategy for turnaround schools in need of adapting curriculum to the needs of their students.

The net gains from an arts-rich approach parallel the needs of turning around a low-performing school including "overall academic attainment, a reduction in school disaffection, and the promotion of positive cognitive transfer" (Bamford, 2009, p. 71). Using the arts progresses student thinking to problem solving, increases cognition, and the ability of students to answer and solve for questions on their own (Heath & Roach, 1999). These skillsets lead to scholarship, 21st century skills, and higher performance.

The use of the arts to teach core content is also a statistically significant method of raising test scores, morale, behavioral data, and attendance specifically in low-performing schools (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Arts Education Partnership, 2017; Bamford, 2009; Catterall, 1999; Catterall, 2009; Heath & Roach, 1999; Ingram & Riedel, 2003; Jensen, 2001). The multi-modality of the arts enhances metacognition, verbal and spatial reasoning, and cognitive and motivational competencies that lead to independent learning strategies and collaboration (Ho, Cheung, & Chan, 2003; Malyarenko et al.,1996; Redding, 2014; Silver, 1989). Turnaround schools are often populated with struggling learners, a high poverty population, and English Language Learners who need engaging multi-modal curriculum to engage in the content.

Schools are most effective when students are enabled to develop independent learning strategies and focus on communication and collaboration skills (Gatto, 2005). Therefore, when the use of the arts directs the curriculum, which may be centered around the basics of math and

English Language Arts, students encounter multi-modal way of knowing. A multi-modal approach aligns with school accountability standards and the common core standards, making an arts-rich classroom an accessible way to solve for the obstacles turnaround schools encounter.

For example, after Catterall's (2009) longitudinal study of arts-rich environments demonstrated a positive correlation between arts implementation and success in low-performing schools and with low-performing students, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities released a report of recommendations. This report catalyzed an approach of whole-school reform through the arts in 68 schools falling in the lowest 5% of performance measures across the country. In the pilot study from 2011-2014 eight turnaround schools in eight different states adopted an arts-rich approach. Math scores increased by 22.5% compared to area School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools that improved by 16.25%. English Language Arts scores increased by 12.62% compared to area SIG schools that increased by 5.58% (Stoelinga, 2015). One school in New Orleans lowered its in-school suspension rate by 81.13% (Stoelinga, 2015), suggesting that an arts approach is a match for school improvement both in terms of culture and academics in low-performing turnaround schools. Similar studies parallel these findings and are highlighted in the review of literature.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

Students in turnaround schools often receive a fast-paced scope and sequence that is test aligned. Because many students in turnaround schools are already behind, the curriculum focuses on content knowledge instead of metacognition, community, and self-efficacy (Bosser & Rosenthal, 2012; Chen, 2017; Mintrop, 2004; Goldstein, 2014). The arts provide an opportunity for students to harness their own power to learn (Ingalls Vanada, 2016) without asking schools to

change their systems or structures. While research (Catterall, 2009; Mintrop, 2004; President's Committee on Arts and Humanities, 2011; Rabkin, 2004) demonstrates that an arts-rich approach to school reform is a successful option, three roadblocks to implementation are also present:

1) A high-stakes testing landscape (Dee & Jacob, 2010; Ladd, 2017),

2) The turbulence of a turnaround environment (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2006; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009), and

3) The bandwidth afforded to teachers to learn the tools of quality arts strategies and apply an arts approach to their curriculum (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Moore, 2012; President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 2011).

High-Stakes Testing Landscape

No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) passed as an act in 2001 and signed into law in 2002 hastened an era of high-stakes accountability where taking a creative approach to instruction proved more difficult (Dee & Jacob, 2010). NCLB narrowed the focus of schools to performance scores. This focus eliminated the broadened role schools play in giving students skills that not only allow them to participate in 21st century career options, but also to experience a well-rounded education (Ladd, 2017). William Pinar (2004) explains this era of accountability as one that emphasizes skill as opposed to study and goes so far as to say that a "skills driven curriculum creates historical amnesia, political passivity and cultural standardization" (p.17). He likens the example of a teacher asking students to memorize dates on a timeline as opposed to study and respond to the Civil Rights era to the effects of narrowing the curriculum.

Schools in compliance and accountability mode often view arts-based learning in opposition to meeting testing standards. Immense pressure is placed on turnaround schools to pass basic skills tests, propagating the perception that teaching outside of basics is wasting valuable learning time (Herman, 2004; Mintrop, 2004). In this context, multi-modal learning may be reserved for special times in the week, a reward for the students who perform well academically or behaviorally, or for the high-performing schools despite research that reveals arts-based learning to be beneficial for turnaround schools (Sanders & Albers, 2010).

The Turbulence of Turnaround

Perpetually low-performing schools are placed in turnaround status. A turnaround school environment is a turbulent experience, meaning that teachers and staff are constantly living a binary existence of perpetual unknowns with a high demand for results. The high-stakes testing environment is exacerbated when a school is determined to be failing or placed in turnaround status (Ladd, 2017; McNeil, 2009). Approximately 5000 schools are in the chronically underperforming category, or 5% of the total number of schools in the United States according to former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009). The majority of these schools are populated with students who are well below grade level, fall into the low socio-economic category, and can also include a high population of both English Language Learners and special needs students (Corbett, 2015; Vince & Dunn, 2015). The students come through the doors of these schools each day with the struggles of a school that has failed them in the past.

Transforming a failing school through the turnaround school process often involves the drafting of a plan that requires swift and impacting changes to be made (Lutterloh, Cormier, & Hassel, 2016). These schools are under an immense amount of pressure from multiple

perspectives to create change quickly in a system that has previously failed the children that it serves. The stakes are high when reporting is mandated and the school staff, status, resources, and often salaries are configured according to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). At the center of this work lies the future of the students inside and their right to an equitable education, or one similar to that of a high-performing school in a neighboring district.

While faculty in turnaround schools may have a desire to develop a child's self-esteem, self-efficacy, creativity, sense of community, and independent voice, all of which align to better academic results and school environment, they are often not afforded the luxury of time to figure out how to do so when the turnaround time period is two to four years (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; Vince & Dunn, 2015). In turnaround schools, art blocks, and in some cases even social studies and science, are replaced with doubled ELA and math blocks, and academic interventionists pull students out of any remaining electives (Byrd-Blake, Fabunmi, Pryor, & Leander, 2010; Dee & Jacob, 2010). Principals and instructional leaders make this choice because the schools are situated in a math and ELA test-centered climate and pressured to show quick gains on a basic skills test.

Teacher Time and Capacity for Change

Because instruction in turnaround schools is results oriented, regulated, and data-driven, (Fullan, 2006; Pappano, 2010) it fills teachers' agendas and leaves little time or capacity building opportunity for teachers to create their own lessons outside of a given curriculum. Students return to the same school building after being placed in turnaround status to find new rules, new curriculum, new teachers, and a new administration. Teachers, both new and returning to a turnaround school, experience a shift in faculty, curriculum, policy, and procedure, situating

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them in a constant state of flux. Students, accustomed to a school in failing status, may present challenges to the new staff as they have not experienced school as a safe or time worthy environment in years past. These changes, for better and worse, are identified as loss (Evans, 2001; Byrd-Blake, Fabunmi, Pryor, & Leander, 2010).

A turnaround school creates an action plan, often before opening, that attempts to address the challenges presented, and complies with results required by the School Improvement Grant most turnaround schools receive. This plan, curriculum, and framework is often created before the new staff is hired (Hayes, 2009; Miller & Brown, 2015). While it is critical to walk into a turnaround with an action plan, this scripted nature can generate an environment of compliance as opposed to creativity (Duke, Tucker, & Salmonowicz, 2014) and limits the time and capacity a teacher has to change curriculum.

Significance of Study

Literature exists about the effectiveness of arts-based reform and strategies for successful turnaround work (Ayers, 1995; Catterall,1999; Deasy, 2002; Rabkin, 2004; Robinson, 2007). There is however, a gap in the research that exists from the teacher's perspective. Despite the problems turnaround schools carry in contrast to the expectations to meet growth goals, a subset of turnaround schools is investing time and resources into an arts-rich environment. Within these schools, some teachers take it upon themselves to generate lessons, invite in teaching artists, and develop a different environment for their students. With any reform methodology in the most vulnerable schools, an approach outside of the curriculum provided is often a suggestion versus a mandate (Evans, 1996). While the principals may opt into a school reform method through the arts, they are ultimately measured by their schools' test scores. If a school opts into an arts-rich

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environment, teachers are given professional development at the discretion of the district, budget, and principal to implement such techniques in the classroom and may take it upon themselves to learn in their own time. For that reason, teachers are not mandated to use arts methodologies in turnaround schools in the same way they are mandated to align their standards to the test.

Teachers offer a critical perspective that differs from policy makers, leaders, or theorists about what works for their students in this environment, and they have the potential to influence teaching and learning practice in turnaround schools. Teachers are arguably the closest change agents to the students, yet have been generally omitted from policy making and often in the case of turnaround schools, advisement on curriculum and teaching (Rowan & Miller, 2007). The purpose of this study is to illuminate the experience of teachers' choice to change their curriculum using arts-rich methods of teaching in a turnaround school environment.

Arts as a Catalyst for Effective Curriculum in School Turnaround

The research on the effectiveness of the arts in low-performing schools suggests that curriculum incorporating the arts is not in addition to a turnaround model, but rather an approach to turnaround. Former Assistant Secretary of Education, Diane Ravitch, claims a logical consequence of the traditional reform model is a preoccupation with test scores. At the same time, these scores do not tell us about the dimensions of learning (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Proponents of high-stakes testing argue that the United States can no longer afford to graduate middle school students who read at a second grade reading level or cannot complete basic computation tasks (Lee & Reeves, 2012). At the same time, a creative approach to curriculum and accountability does not need to be omitted from school reform to accomplish these goals

(O'Day & Smith, 1993). The requirement to raise reading and math levels can include a curriculum that converts standards into a creative pathway that allows student minds to expand, create, and connect through to their own lives using the arts. A multi-modal learning or arts approach to the curriculum allows students to use creativity to release their intellectual momentum (Pinar, 2004) and often engages lower-performing students through a modality that helps them learn the best (Cornett, 2007; Jensen, 2001; McLaughlin, 2000).

Alignment with Turnaround School Objectives

Principals in turnaround schools are aware that quality curriculum is needed for their students. Mark Petruzzi, principal of a turnaround charter declared, "This bottom five percent of schools needs radical intervention, not tinkering along the edges" (Miller & Brown, 2015, p. 18). The encouragement from leadership to sculpt curriculum in such a way that students interact with one another, problem solve, and create using arts for core content can be viewed by districts and superintendents as a radical approach or as a suggested option (Hayes, 2009). When implemented, it results in the unusual case of optional school reform. Teachers opt to use the arts and spend their own time to do so in addition to remaining compliant with the expectations of curriculum and formative and summative assessments required by the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and scope and sequence. It takes initiative, planning and forethought on the teacher's part to use the provided basic skills curriculum, bring students up to grade level, and add a layer of planning to teach through the arts. The results of this work complements the efforts of school turnaround and expands teachers' repertoire with the existing curriculum.

Teacher Experience as Model of Creative Curriculum

The objective of this research is to illuminate the experience of PreK-8th grade core content teachers infusing the arts in the curriculum to engage and develop their students. This experience may open doors for turnaround schools as a whole as a scalable model. Laura Pappano (2010) proposes that, "whether we close a school, open a new one, or fire the principal and replace the staff, the point is that schools must now engage students differently" (p. 10). This research will focus on the experience of teachers who change their approach to curriculum in the turnaround environment by using the arts to re-examine the implementation of curriculum.

The three Southern turnaround schools in this study have opted into an arts reform model. Field observations made it clear that these schools readily add arts electives to both the school and extended day programs, paint murals on their walls, and invite families and communities in for arts programming. Adding arts to the school is visible, but teaching and programming through the arts is viewed as a riskier choice despite the research that suggests positive results for struggling students. Through investigation of the experience of participants who prepare students for exams while simultaneously incorporating the arts, education reformers and school leaders who fundamentally want to create a successful, high-performing school environment may see potential models of implementation at the classroom level. Turning the focus to the teacher's perspective of an arts-based school reform also illuminates a gap in the research and holds the potential to engage the critical mass, (Fullan, 2006; Elmore, 2004) as teachers are most likely to input suggestions and techniques tried from their peers (Mintrop, 2004). If the lived experience of these teachers is replicable or approachable, and the strategies of arts-rich school reform could be applied by teachers in failing schools, then their experience could catalyze a turnaround

school's success both in assessments and in creating a high quality equitable education, illuminating not only content but metacognition, social and emotional growth, and self-efficacy using the arts.

Rising Above the Odds

Parker Palmer (2007) writes that "when we teach by dripping information into passive forms, students who arrive in the classroom alive and well become passive consumers of knowledge and are dead on departure when they graduate" (p. 42). Despite the odds in a turnaround school environment, some teachers are creating an arts-rich environment, and in so doing, are inviting their students to join them in engaged pedagogy. The voices and experience of teacher practitioners are missing from the research. The themes generated from the lived experience of teachers who choose to change their curriculum in turnaround schools illuminate practices and experiences that could merit replication. Relaying the experiences of other teachers in this work may charge schools with the capabilities of modeling teaching methods and curriculum differently. Ideally, the sharing of this experience affects approaches to teaching and learning in turnaround schools.

Additionally, this research is being conducted at the same time that educational law is converting from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). States are currently submitting their drafts of fund appropriations. With both of these changes coming down the pike, the lived experience of teachers has the potential to generate arts advocacy for the beginning of the ESSA era, and for systematic appropriation of funds to turnaround schools. Finally, by participating in the research, it is the hope of the researcher that

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participants will benefit from the process by engaging in reflective, dialogical, multi-modal process.

Theoretical Framework

This study will use both a critical theory of engaged pedagogy (Freire, 1997; hooks, 1994; hooks, 2010) and change theory (Burnes, 2004; Fullan, 2006; Medley & Okan, 2008) as the underpinnings of the research framework. The research connects school turnaround using the arts to a method of engaged pedagogy, illuminating life skills including problem solving, community building, self-efficacy, and collegial learning between teacher and student. Since the teachers in the study are experiencing the consistent change of turnaround work and embedding change to their curriculum within turnaround, the theory of change also applies to their experience.

Research Question

This phenomenological research study will highlight teachers who opt out of the standardized approach and instead teach curriculum with an arts-rich approach. With the stakes so high, the obstacles so many, and a job potentially on the line, the primary research question is: *What is the experience of teachers who choose to change the curriculum to an arts-rich approach in a turnaround school environment?* A variety of questions followed in interviews, a focus group, and conversation around the contributed artistic piece that expanded on this question that remained at the center of the research.

Limitations

It is the desire of the researcher that this work be used as a continuum of conversation about the approach to curriculum in turnaround schools. Implementing an arts approach impacts

the experience of education for students and the autonomy given to teachers to modify

curriculum in such a way that students earn more than a test score at the end of their schooling.

As will be outlined in the methods section, this study will be limited to PreK-8 teachers who

work in turnaround schools in the South. The turnaround schools in this study intentionally take

over failing schools and accept all students who were previously in the school without preference

for skill level and with a particular mission to serve students with special needs. Schools in other

parts of the country use this approach, but their differences are nuanced, and for congruence in

this study, the teachers will be bounded to the Southern region of the United States. This limits

perspective to a regional response, omitting input from other regions. This phenomenon could be

examined from many angles. By choosing the perspective of the teacher, the perspective of the

leader, the student, and the family are not included but could be the topic of additional research

studies.

Methods

An arts-informed approach to phenomenological methodology (Douglas & Moustakas,

1985) was used in this research. This choice acknowledges that the "self as researcher" is present

throughout the process, "growing in self-awareness and self-knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p.

17), yet provides a format for bracketing. This choice in qualitative research created a research

environment that echoed the content of this study. Participants engaged in one traditional

interview, created a piece of art that represented their experience, and mirrored the work they are

doing to teach through the arts. Finally, they brought their art pieces to a focus group conducted

in the format of an art critique. Each of these methods of data collection were coded using in-

vivo coding, axial coding, and visual analysis. This design allowed teachers who may feel that

they work in isolation to form a community based in both verbal and artistic dialog about their experience. The researcher analyzed data according to phenomenological methods and generated themes referred to as horizon lines. With each phase of data collection, the research returned to the horizon lines to re-evaluate the generated themes both visually and through a traditional approach.

Trustworthiness

While as a researcher I recognize the need to bracket the study and abstain from inputting personal opinions or predisposed theories, I acknowledge that the use of the arts to reform low-performing schools is my profession, and it was difficult to remove researcher bias from the process, especially when researching teachers who work in this context. This complexity, coined as "backyard research," (Creswell, 2007, p.122) requires several validations to ensure trustworthiness and quality research. As part of the data collection process, a participatory research approach asked teachers to engage in discussion about the findings, allowing member checking and conversations about the themes to emerge. After completing data collection, I used member checking in the focus group and follow-up communication to ensure that the findings and analysis adequately represented participant experience. Two colleagues in the field located in the Northeast and the South served as outside reviewers for this research and assisted with the bracketing process by highlighting areas where researcher bias should be removed to illuminate participant experience. One colleague engaged in similar work in Connecticut read the manuscript for trustworthiness and pointed out areas that needed more participant support, the other read for accuracy as it relates to a charter school in the South.

Definition of Terms

Arts Enhancement: Arts enhancement does not include the arts objectives as its purpose. The core subject receives priority as a final product, and the use of the arts content supports or augments the core (DeMoss & Morris, 2002). With arts enhancement the arts and the content coexist but do not necessarily interact.

Arts Integration: Arts integration uses both the arts and core content area to achieve objectives in both subjects (Bamford, 2006; Silverstein & Layne 2010).

Arts Subjects: Arts subjects for the purposes of this research are defined by the National Arts Standards (2014) and include Visual Art, Media Art, Dance, Music, Drama and Poetry.

Turnaround School: Arne Duncan describes multiple versions of a turnaround school. For the purposes of this study, a turnaround school is a model in which a school is declared to be failing, so the children stay and the staff members leave. Teachers can reapply for their jobs and some get rehired, but most go elsewhere.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This research investigates the lived experience of teachers who make their own decision to change their curriculum to teach through the arts in turnaround schools. For the purposes of the study, this literature review includes literature on the formation of turnaround schools in the United States, followed by the evolution of arts education in the United States. This chapter concludes with the content and implications of using arts in turnaround schools.

School Reform Legislation

In 2010, more than 5000 failing schools began to restructure as turnaround schools. It was estimated that 2.5 million students, predominately students of high poverty and students of color fell into this bottom 5% of schools. Failing schools are not a new problem in the United States, but it is within the last decade that turnaround schools began to emerge as an official approach to change the trajectory of failing schools (Kutash et al., 2010). In order to understand how they came to be, a brief overview of the legislation leading up to school turnaround is provided.

A timeline of education demonstrates changing policies over the past five presidential administrations and is helpful to understanding the evolution of turnaround schools. In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* (Department of Education) was published under the Reagan administration. This study made the country aware both of the fact that it fell behind other European countries and Japan in achievement and that there was an internal achievement gap, launching the comprehensive school reform movement (Graham, 2013). During the Clinton Administration, the *Goals 2000, The Educate America Act* (Stedman, 1995) was established with the goal of ranking the United States first in achievement in industrialized nations. State standards evolved

from this era and this movement focused more on outputs and numbers than inputs through school improvement plans (Shoup & Studer, 2010).

When *No Child Left Behind* (2002) was published in the Bush administration, these standards were then matched to high accountability standardized testing, and measured by Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), an annual percentage ranking. AYP, measured on a state by state basis, is calculated based on the School Performance Score (SPS) and subgroup components (Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017). When a school does not meet the required AYP, it is labeled as failing. It is this label of failure, "a persistent and pervasive reality" that led to the creation of turnaround schools (Kutash, et al., 2010, p. 10).

The National Common Core standards (2010) emerged during the Obama administration. With these standards, states received the choice to opt into national standards still aligned to accountability and testing. The Obama era also ended with a new educational legislation, replacing No Child Left Behind (2001) with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015). ESSA gives states more autonomy in federal dollar allocation and authorship in state priorities. At the time of this study, what will evolve under the current Trump administration is still unknown, though it is speculated to be a pro-charter landscape with decreased oversight from the Department of Education (Quinlan, 2016).

Formation and Definition of Turnaround Schools

During the Obama administration, the terminology of turnaround began to emerge as commonplace, and schools were placed in turnaround status in the attempt to close or turnaround failing schools. If schools do not test out of failing status within a given time period, they are

determined to be chronically failing and placed in turnaround status (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Mintrop, 2004,). There are three general responses when a school is failing.

1. A traditional public school restart converts a public school to a public charter school using School Improvement Grant funds and an approved strategy for reform.

2. A replacement restart option leaves the school open but changes the principal and 50% or more staff is replaced.

3. A school closure transfers students to area schools.

(Brinson, Kowal, & 2008; Corbett, 2015; Kutash et al., 2010). This study focuses on the first model, a traditional public school restart that converts to a public charter. In the case of a public charter turnaround, a state education agency selects a charter operator through an application and authorization process, invites the staff to reapply for their positions, and hires a new principal. All students are invited to return without application or lottery (Corbett, 2015), replacing adults, but not children. This variety of turnaround is still public and beholden to state reporting.

The schools placed in turnaround status are given a timeline, typically three years inclusive of School Improvement Grants, to achieve their growth goals and remain open (Carr, 2013; Vince & Dunn, 2015). Turnaround school AYP may be higher than years prior to turnaround, but the turnaround must be sustained and demonstrate continual growth in order for schools to be released from turnaround status (Center on Innovation and Improvement, 2008).

Mandated reporting and AYP configures the school staff, status, resources, and often salaries in turnaround schools. In some cases, AYP determines whether or not the school can keep its doors open. Public charter turnarounds will likely hire entirely new faculty members

who can be hired and fired more readily (Center on Innovation and Improvement, 2008; Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016), use standardized curricula that is test aligned, design a strict school culture policy and procedure, implement multiple academic reading and math interventions, and collect data on assessment scores (Olsen & Sexton 2009; Sondel, 2015; & Garland, 2016). Compounding these challenges, teachers in turnaround schools are less likely to be licensed, to have extensive formal education, or to have teaching experience (Corbett, 2015; Vince & Dunn, 2015).

When schools do not sustain growth or increase proficiency, the state of turnaround is long lasting and a high-stakes learning and working environment is perpetuated. At the same time, the work of mastering standards in schools where the majority of students are at minimum two grades behind does not happen overnight (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2003). In fact, the timelines for school improvement stating that 100% of students would be successful at the end of the turnaround period were so far from reach, "many states simply stopped complying" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012. p. 40).

Expanding the Definition of Failing Schools

Schools can fail students in multiple ways (Duncan, 2009). Measuring a school by outputs of test scores rather than inputs to the school culture, climate, and curriculum narrows the definition of failing and implementation of turnaround status to AYP scores. But schools also fail their students with a lack of creative instruction or invested staff, a curriculum that highlights content over connections, misallocation of resources, or complacence with average performance (Hayes, 2009; Duke, Tucker & Salmonowicz, 2014). While the policies addressing the issue of failing schools have many iterations, the formation of turnaround schools under new ESSA

legislation and a new administration leaves many questions to be answered. Currently, public schools in general focus on evaluation state or national standards with standardized testing, progress monitoring, and direct instruction. What is missing, and what has a bit more breathing room under ESSA is expansion of the curriculum, focus on culture and climate, critical thinking and creativity, student engagement, and cultural responsiveness (Arts Education Partnership, 2017).

Curriculum and Assessment in Turnaround Schools

The sense of urgency in a turnaround school comes from a variety of sources. The majority of these turnaround schools are already high-poverty, high-needs work environments. They seek to provide a quality education to those who most need it and to prevent another takeover or school closure (Evans, 2001; Miller & Brown, 2015). The curricular result of this pressure that most turnaround schools operate within is often test oriented, regulated, and data-driven (Fullan, 2006; Pappano, 2010; Matheson & Ross, 2008; Player, Hitt, & Robinson, n.d.). "It [curriculum] is very limited in its nature and design and leaves many questions unresolved, particularly with regard to equity" (Lee & Wong 2004). This process according to Lee and Wong (2004) has been more regulatory than supportive.

Teachers often follow the scope, sequence, and method of teaching prescribed by the school or district and are most often not included in the pacing design of the curriculum. Their curriculum is aligned with assessments and therefore has the propensity to sacrifice depth for breadth. This puts even more pressure on faculty to teach to the tests (Chen, 2017). The pressure to succeed on tests, and expectation to teach according to a particular model can leave little time or energy for teachers to create or modify curriculum. Consequently, students have less time to

explore or develop their interests as opposed to prepare for the very tests that keep their school afloat (America Next, 2015). Students of color and students of a high poverty background are therefore less likely to have access to "robust learning opportunities" (Boser & Rosenthal, 2012).

<div align="center">**Challenges and Opportunities of School Turnaround**</div>

The turnaround school model comes with many challenges and opportunities, and its success depends entirely upon the staff, scheduling, curriculum, and culture choices made. Larry Cuban (1984), Professor Emeritus of Education at Stanford, likens this kind of school reform to a hurricane at sea. More specifically, "storm tossed waves on the ocean surface, turbulent water a fathom down, and calm on the ocean floor" (p. 237). Since 2007, low-performing schools have received more than 5.8 billion dollars in funds through the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program, yet the results are scattered and intended outcomes are still greatly needed (Corbett, 2015). Either school improvement merits more funding, or schools are charged to continue to look inward to develop existing resources. At the same time, the model of whole school change brings with it opportunities to regenerate a failing school into a successful one.

Effective School Turnaround

Pivoting work in turnaround schools to a successful exit from turnaround status indicates school stabilization. This growth takes a strategic sense of urgency and an understanding of how to bring a sense of responsibility and agency to students. Many turnaround schools show a large amount of growth in their first year, but then plateau after the first three years. When they plateau, "there's a tendency to double down on what they've [turnaround schools] been doing-- tightening the screws to get everyone to follow the prescribed program" or bring in a new approach, policy, or curriculum (Goodwin, 2015). Repeating or repealing an approach rather

than refining an approach is not successful. Schools that leave turnaround status are able to examine the problems they are having and tweak the momentum they have already established as opposed to invest in the next shiny agenda (Hochnein, 2012). In other words, schools that have found both effective adaptive change processes look beyond obstacles towards their locus of control for solvable issues (Goodwin, 2015).

For example, a turnaround school in Texas had high rates of teacher attrition. While it did not have the agency to change district hiring practices with immediacy, the school took a deeper look to find that teachers stayed when the principal gave more frequent feedback (Bryk, Gomez Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015). The ability to adopt strategies and curriculum and then adapt them, rather than change them builds momentum as opposed to reset the starting point (Chenoweth, 2007). Research has also shown that successful turnaround schools adopt minimal strategies for change and do them well, whereas schools that adopt multiple strategies have less growth (Sparks, 2012). When the right strategies are adopted, the model becomes scalable. When strategies or curriculum are carefully selected to engage students in their natural propensity to learn, schools see success. Before the term turnaround school was coined, Rutter and colleagues (as cited in Pines, 1984) completed seminal research on effective urban schools in poor communities, which they defined as schools that improved the longer those students were in them. They found that these schools gave students a great deal of responsibility, and in being treated as responsible, students responded accordingly. This study which is over forty years old is still applicable today as turnaround schools, typically in high poverty, urban areas, investigate how to align school turnaround to critical thinking skills. bell hooks writes that, "The heartbeat of critical thinking is the longing to know --to understand how life works. Children are

organically pre-disposed to be critical thinkers" (2010, p. 7). Schools that provide opportunities for children to embrace their critical thinking through experiential learning are improving. Wilson and Corbett (2001) interviewed students to find out what worked for them in school reform. One student explained science class as follows:

> We have lots of fun. All we do is projects where we try and understand how variables affect each other. Everyone understands what we are doing 'cause we do lots of hands-on stuff. We also sing and dance in there. The teacher comes up with songs for things that help everyone remember stuff. (p. 99)

What this student defines as fun, correlates to the concept of adapting an existing curriculum to students as opposed to changing curriculum, or a method of creating successful school turnaround.

Adapting Turnaround School Curriculum

One existing and potentially malleable resource that each turnaround school can maximize is the curriculum and/or scope and sequence. Accountability in a turnaround school is measured by growth, not proficiency levels on standardized tests. Using formative assessments to determine gaps in student knowledge grounds practice in data-driven results to help faculty assess likely growth in the timespan allotted. So long as this growth continues, the curriculum has the potential to be an adaptable asset to a turnaround school.

Narrowing the curriculum. Historically and currently, low-income children who comprise the majority of a turnaround school student population are likely to spend their time in "drill and kill" lessons, as well as watching other students be disciplined by their teachers (Goldstein, 2009, p. 233). "Many teachers [in turnaround schools] believe they are forced to

teach to the annual standardized tests, and activities like recess and lunch have been cut way down to make more time for academics in light of the new testing procedures" (Chen, 2017). This approach furthers both the achievement and opportunity gap as their peers in neighboring schools gain exposure to a larger variety of teaching and learning styles (Ladd, 2017; Lane, Unger & Rhim, 2013). The Gates Foundation collected videos of 1333 teachers and found that only a third were teaching at a level generating student growth in metacognitive areas as opposed to rote learning. Closer to standardized tests, whole class discussion happens even less frequently (Plank & Condliffe, 2011). A lack of dynamic lessons and solid school culture furthers the inequities students have already experienced attending a failing school as they are omitted from a dynamic learning environment (Ingalls Vanada, 2016). This systematic implementation of standards learning takes away students' rights to their own voices and access to multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 2009; Gardner, 1999; Noddings, 2002), the very instruments that help them learn.

Turnaround schools may not intentionally narrow curriculum but rather feel forced to align to grade-level testing with students who are grade levels behind. The tightening of curriculum to mastery of assessed standards as opposed to skills such as problem solving and synthesis generates what Elliot Eisner (2005) would label as the null curriculum. This concept posits that we teach what we do not teach, and the absence of that content has an effect just as the presence of content does. In a content-driven curriculum, depth, problem solving, and critical thinking are often missing, constituting the null curriculum. The problem with test-based accountability in the wake of No Child Left Behind is its narrow focus (Ladd, 2017) as opposed

to a curriculum with a broad view that recognizes the role schools play in developing people and citizens (Brighouse, Ladd, Loeb & Swift, 2016).

The impact of testing on curriculum. Teachers and schools innately want to do right by their students (Mintrop, 2004; Strunk, Marsh, & Bruno, 2017). The skill and standards-based approach to curriculum is not because teachers and administrators do not believe in nurturing higher-order thinking skills. The high-stakes test covers such a wide array of content, that instructional strategies such as cooperative learning or project based units give way to vocabulary and identification problems in an effort to align volume of content to assessments (Matheson & Ross, 2008). Since this test can determine grade level promotion, teachers justify a skills approach to curriculum as a means to cover the content necessary but can sacrifice quality instructional strategies as a result (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012).

One teacher whose career was steeped in creative methods that facilitated group work, student reflection, and robust connections switched to test preparation with due diligence to the testing environment. She reported not only a change to her classroom environment with this transition, but also a group of cognizant students who were frustrated that they had to learn this way. One of her highest performing students looked at a sample test problem and proclaimed, "There is no way I can read all of this, form a graph, and write about it in 30 minutes." This teacher wrote that some of her "highest performing students put their heads on their desks and began to sob" (Mintrop, 2004, p. 42). Both the teacher and the student are left in need of care in moments like these, as neither feels fulfilled in their task. Nel Noddings writes that "instead of helping students to identify and develop their own talents, schools try, quixotically, to prepare everyone for college" (p. 33). It is in moments like those experienced by the teachers and

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students that teachers call upon a way to alter teaching and learning such that it cares for the students inside their classroom walls without compromising the curriculum, but rather by bolstering it.

A call for authorship. The effort to change curriculum is not an easy one. Despite the responsibility placed on teachers to affect change, many teachers in school turnaround experience few opportunities for authorship (Moore, 2012). In a profession originating in the exploration and transition of knowledge, the lack of voice can be an added obstacle. Mintrop's (2004) study of Maryland schools on probation (the stage before turnaround) found that many of the administrators were tightly managed to implement a curriculum that was often scripted with instructional coaching for the teachers. This depleted the opportunity for the teachers to teach what they know and how they know to teach it. When teachers do not have authorship, their profession is in effect demoted (Moore, 2012). In this regard, school reform can feel to teachers like an imposition from people who are non-experts in the teaching field (Goldstein, 2014), or who do not have enough classroom teaching experience to justify their methods.

Teachers as Critical Stakeholders

Multiple stakeholders in school turnaround have experience that can be of value to understanding curriculum, and adapt curriculum in turnaround schools. However, no stakeholder in school turnaround is as close to the students ultimately serviced or disserviced by the curriculum on a daily basis as the teacher. "A common finding in resilience research is the power of a teacher—often without realizing it—to tip the scale from risk to resilience" (Benard, 2003, p. 115). Outside of family members, a favorite teacher is among the most frequently cited positive role models (Werner & Smith, 1989). Teachers not only serve as role models but also

hold the power to help students unlock their voices. As Mary Anne Raywid (1995) writes, "It is the teacher who decides what kind of power students will possess: to what extent and in what degree they will retain the power to express themselves within the classroom" (p. 79).

When Louis and Ingram (2003) completed a study about schools that work for teachers and students, they found that in all of the schools teachers took full responsibility for the curriculum despite alternate messages from administration. The design of this study looks at participants who go above and beyond what is asked of them to modify curriculum according to what their students need, implying that these modifications are potentially of high quality. Seidel et al. (2009) write that, "a hallmark sign of high quality arts learning in any program is that the learning experiences are rich and complex for all learners, engaging them on many levels and helping them learn and grow in a variety of ways" (iv). Engaging, hiring, and nurturing the growth of teachers who are capable of turning their passion for teaching to producing quality is a contributing factor to successful schools. Not only are quality teachers who choose to work in low-performing schools difficult to find (Klein, 2011), but when passion enters their classroom:

> It is a bridge that connects us to the intensity of young people's thoughts and life experiences---things that they rarely see as a part of school. Once that connection has been made, we can help transfer passions about ideas into habits of hard work, discipline, and practice that will remain with them even when the going gets rough. (Fried, 1996, p. 6)

Focusing on the teacher contribution to school turnaround is vital as quality, passionate teachers have the capability to discern what is of use to their students. In a turnaround environment that can involve initiative fatigue, or attention on the next shiny thing, quality teachers will not bring

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strategies to their work if they do not see it as meaningful to students (Fried, 1996). They adapt strategies that fit the needs for their classrooms.

Teacher Experience in School Turnaround

School reform cannot happen without the "journey that students and teachers take together" (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p. 119). Teachers serve not only as instructional guides, but also mentors, counselors, coaches and champions of their students (Bernard, 2003). This assumption about what teachers can do and added responsibility placed on the teacher as the ultimate key to school reform creates an immense amount of pressure (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). Teachers may often feel as though they are not good enough to get this job done, and the multi-faceted requirements of school turnaround leave teachers drained and exhausted. When ordinary people who are committed and dedicated can get this job done, it makes them extraordinary (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

Teaching requires the ability to operate in imperfect conditions no matter the context. In the case of a turnaround school, the profession can feel more like triage in the front line of battle (Duke, Tucker, & Salmonowicz, 2014; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). Turnaround work is filled with staff members who are working harder than they ever have, and often close the work day leaving more frustrated than they have ever been (Evans, 2001). Teachers are required to raise test scores for students with varying needs and grade levels while simultaneously stabilizing school culture and responding to social and emotional needs of their students. A consistent message is presented in the turnaround school environment that everything needs to change, and *now,* placing the schools and teachers in a "destabilized context" (Evans, 2001, p.13).

Additionally, teachers must adapt to constant changes in staffing, curriculum, student population, and procedures that come from the top down.

According to a survey of over 20,000 teachers by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Scholastic Inc. (2013), only a third of teachers felt their opinion was valued at the district level, 5% at the state level and 2% at the national level. This combination of high expectations and low value on the teacher perspective for how to put those expectations into practice can be emotionally debilitating for teachers trying to stay the course in school reform, much less for teachers attempting to deepen their scope and sequence.

Opportunity for Autonomy

When testing becomes the center of instruction and school centers around a drive to basic skills, it overshadows, "what gives teaching its mystery and majesty--what brings children joyfully to classrooms, what introduces them to interests that will absorb them for the rest of their lives, and what lifts them back up when their lives have taken a tumble" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012, p.10). There are opportunities to bring this mystery and magic into the classrooms in turnaround schools that include teacher autonomy and flexibility, and the contagious nature of the successful changes to curriculum implemented by those teachers.

Flexibility of Practice

Teachers are psychologically rewarded when their students are learning (Louis & Ingram, 2003). For this reason, turnaround school leadership will always generate more from allowing teachers to create than from being authoritative (Howe, 1994; Moore, 2012). The consortium of Chicago Public School Research found higher gains on standardized tests when teachers were allowed to sculpt the curriculum in such a way that students are engaged in "authentic

intellectual work" rather than a rote, skills-based method designed to prepare for tests (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001). This is exemplified by higher-performing schools that tend not to lean into the tests but rather assume students will learn how to problem solve on a test through instructional methods encouraging metacognition and problem-solving (Boser & Rosenthal, 2012). In order to change the way in which curriculum, or scope and sequence is taught, teachers require a flexible amount of autonomy with their approach to curriculum. Furthermore, schools with structures that promote learning of new practices are likely to succeed (Elmore, 2004).

Infectious change in practice. Consistent implementation of a high quality action plan and the right mix of authority and autonomy are the ingredients to schools that have succeeded (Evans, 2001; Vince & Dunn, 2015). Changing how schools approach learning and curriculum in high-stakes environments, not what they teach, is a proven method for turning schools around (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). As President Obama pointed out (2009), there is not one silver bullet approach that will turn our schools around but there are indicators of success that many turnaround schools have seen (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Williams, 2004).

Teachers in a pilot study who were able to accomplish a merge of the set curriculum with creative teaching approaches in a turnaround environment often felt alone. They wondered if their efforts would be appreciated and even feared administrative backlash for altering the prescribed method of teaching. At the same time, all of these teachers were on par with their peers or exceeded them on standardized tests.

In this regard, the teachers successfully implementing curriculum changes have the power to tip the scale as their work is infectious. Turnaround schools need more than a handful

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of teachers in a building that use these strategies to scale reform efforts (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012; Elmore, 2004). When teachers change their practice, alter curriculum, and make the learning visible to the school community, it is contagious. Teachers in the building want to know what is happening in a room with the same students in the same environment that is making a difference. Often, new practices inspired by professional development, experience, or personal practice start with a pilot group of teachers and then disseminate to other teachers (Li, 2017). This transference of practice presents the opportunity to transform a school into an environment that accomplishes both depth and breadth in its curriculum through contagious practice.

Arts in Education

"Imagination is no mere ornament, nor is art. Together they can liberate us from our
indurated habits. They might help us restore decent purpose to our efforts and
help us create the kind of schools our children deserve and our culture needs" (Eisner,
2004, p. 11).

The research for this project on teachers using the arts situates itself in the existing research that an arts-rich environment in a turnaround school facilitates engaged pedagogy. The use of arts in core content classrooms is not so much about creating a product but rather opening the classroom to the existing knowledge and experience of students bringing their voices, experiences, and problem solving skills to the center of the curriculum rather than the margins of the school day (Bernard, 2003). The arts can be a tool for unlocking the curriculum to employ culturally responsive teaching mechanisms (hooks,1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994) that foster the value of experience and context students bring into their classrooms. The arts do not change curriculum but instead change how the curriculum is taught. This follows Chenoweth's (2007)

suggestion that turnaround schools will do better when they adapt to given resources as opposed to seek out new ones. Using the arts in schools can pivot change in turnaround schools (Bouffard, 2014; Catterall, 2009; Deasy, 2002; Just, 2017). The next section of the literature review will begin with the broad policy and rationales for the arts in any school setting, define an arts-rich environment, and review the literature on the implications of an arts-rich environment in a turnaround school.

Arts Education Policy

Policy makers and schools tend not to question the appropriateness of math and English, but the arts often require a solid case to be made in order to allocate limited resources accordingly (Mackh, 2014; Pogrebin, 2007). Funding opened by ESSA is one potential opportunity, but schools need a pedagogical rationale for allocating funding, time, and resources to the arts among many other competing needs in school turnaround. The more resources that are allocated towards the arts, the easier it becomes for teachers to use arts as a strategy for core content mastery in their classrooms.

Arts education has experienced a fluctuation of implementation and policy over time (National Endowment for the Arts, 1995). At the time of this research both the of National Common Core Standards (2010) and the National Core Arts Standards (2014) are used to determine scope and sequence. The art standards are centered around the metrics of creating, performing, responding, and connecting, strategic parallels to connect to the verbiage of the National Common Core Standards. Accompanying these standards is the policy transition from *No Child Left Behind* (2002) to the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),* (ESSA, 2015). The latter of these laws allow states to allocate Title One funding towards arts should the states so choose.

The combination of parallel standards with new educational policy creates the perfect storm for arts in schools, should the schools so decide.

The Case for Arts Education

Michael Fullan (2016), a scholar on school and systems change writes that in order to change schools such that the achievement gap is narrowed, schools need to choose focused key levers that impact the intrinsic motivation of both teachers and students. This focusing direction should prioritize methods that optimize learning for teachers and students through a supportive, engaging and active environment. Using the arts as a driver of change deepens learning, focuses direction, and creates collaborative cultures identified as the "right drivers" of school change (Fullan, 2012b). Turnaround schools using an arts-rich approach benefit from aesthetic appreciation, economic impact, social and emotional growth, metacognitive growth potential for students, and impact on teaching, testing and struggling learners (Deasy, 2002).

Aesthetic appreciation. Often, the pull for stand-alone arts classes is derivative of the environmental impact these classes provide for the school and learning culture. When a school implements some form of the arts, music can flow under the classroom door, artwork can brighten hallways, or a performance can dress up an auditorium stage. This aesthetic and experiential addition to a school is an evident addition of quality to a school environment and school experience. Many scholars agree that the existence of arts for art's sake should not be a privilege tied to success in other areas of schooling but rather a right in and of itself (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, Sheridan & Perkins, 2007; Mackh, 2014). Advocates of aesthetic, sensory-based education promote arts classes in schools as standalone subjects (Greene, 1995).

Economic impact. Beyond the school impact, the arts provide skill sets demanded by a 21st Century job market. Howard Gardner (1999), published theorist of multiple intelligences, explains, "people are creative when they can solve problems, create products, or raise issues in a domain in a way that is initially novel but eventually accepted in one or more cultural settings" (p. 119). Educators and policymakers who view schooling as job preparation note the rise of the creative class and the economic impact to a generation of creative young adults suggesting that an education should foster problem solving, creation, and conceptual understanding in an effort to graduate creative students (UNESCO, 2009; Robinson, 2007). Simultaneously, Americans for the Arts surveyed future employers and found that 85 percent of employers seeking creative employees were having difficulty finding quality candidates (Lichtenberg, Woock, & Wright, 2008). As jobs shift out of the manufacturing sector, 21st century workplace skillsets include many of the researched benefits of an arts education in their descriptions. This job sector and market projection suggests the need for creativity as a part of schooling. Creativity starts with the impulse to develop meaning (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005). This is valuable for the workplace, but more critically as a life skill.

Social-emotional benefits. Arts education scholars consistently refer to the arts in schools as a means of soft data gains citing increased attendance, community building, lowered behavior referrals, and social emotional health (Darby & Catterall, 1994; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Ruppert, 2006). The arts by design often necessitate social interaction and community building. They require resources to be shared and community problem solving related to the creation of a concrete piece from an abstract idea.

The use of the arts in the classroom can have such a profound effect on social emotional skills that a national trainer for the Kennedy Center at the 2014 Partnership for Education Conference remarked that she had never observed classroom management problems in an arts-integrated classroom (Biscoe & Wilson, 2015, p. 4).

Another example of a social/emotional benefit is stress reduction, one of the ways the arts enable students to focus on the tasks at hand. A recent study measured the cortisol levels in preschoolers over the course of a year four times a day and found that the levels were lower after arts classes than after homeroom (Jacobs, 2016). Another study on adolescents who participate in the arts found them less likely to be suspended, consume alcohol or engage in delinquent behaviors. Elpus (2013) also found that adolescents engaged in the arts were more optimistic than their peers. Turnaround schools typically struggle to set culture and give all that students in previously failing schools have been denied in the social-emotional domain. Aligning the arts as a potential way to solve for this omission constructs a potential solution.

Cognitive benefits. Students cannot learn as readily when their social-emotional needs are not met (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; McLeod, 2016). Increasing opportunities for multiple approaches and learning styles gives creativity a chance to "stretch" as students engage in the problem solving processes that the arts provide (Gardner, 1999, p.121). Educational scholars define authentic learning as the ability to analyze, synthesize, apply, and question concepts and ideas as opposed to repeat facts. (Levi-Strauss, 1972; Gardner, 1990; Piaget, 1977). Artistic intelligence, a form of authentic learning, is honed by symbol systems, inducing metaphor into learning and thus increasing cognitive and metacognitive skillsets through multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999). The use of arts helps students spin a web of

understanding in a world that bases meaning on relational, causal, and constructed concepts (Gardner & Perkins, 1989). This increased ability for meaning making and metacognition impacts students' ability to problem solve, a skill that will inevitably promote higher test scores in the long run, rather than memorization of content.

Moreover, when arts are offered to students over a period of time, they have the potential to rewire the brain (Jensen, 2001) extending the purpose of the arts beyond the discipline itself to the way in which students think about their learning. Brain research shows that arts inherently function through connection making and bridge building, enhancing both cognition and metacognition (Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Greene,1995). One of the largest neuroscientific studies undertaken involved cognitive neuroscientists from seven universities using brain imaging to study the connections between arts and academic performance (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities [PCAH], 2011). The researchers in this study from the Dana Foundation cited increased intelligence and memory skills in children involved in the arts which applied to other cognitive domains. Moving arts into core content areas brings these skillsets into subject areas measured in turnaround schools. Researchers at Johns Hopkins hypothesize that arts integration gives multiple pathways to understanding a subject and creates embedded knowledge that is stored in long-term memory and therefore has the potential to change the structure of neurons in the brain (Rudacliffe, 2010).

Curricular Implications

Bringing arts into measured subjects like English and Math can open learning pathways for students. Because the use of the arts generates a "familiar vernacular" (Seidel et al., 2009), students transfer meaning and create an entry point to curriculum that may not have otherwise

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been accessible. Using arts as an access point presents a multimodal way of knowing that

engages a variety of needs for a variety of learners (Bruner, 1979; Dewey, 1938; Gardner, 1982;

Green, 2001).

Scholars who have investigated the effects of arts education on curriculum note that it is

not just the option to be creative that makes a difference but also the way in which both students

and teachers are asked to practice the art of teaching and learning (Egan, 2001; Eisner, 2002;

Greene 1995). When the arts are employed as a means to teach the core curriculum, John

Dewey's (1938) concept of transactional teaching and learning is made possible.

Since the arts objectives focus on the skillsets the Common Core Standards (2010)

require of students, the arts are not only cognitively but mechanically aligned to transfer ideas

between one another and the standards that turnaround schools are held accountable to. When the

arts are aligned to curriculum, teachers have the potential to adapt a known curriculum to the

needs of their classrooms.

Approach to Teaching and Learning

An arts-based approach is one way to change the access point to content (Harvard Project

Zero, 2001; Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2003). If the teacher chooses an arts-based

approach, students shift into a creative mindset and experience a "string of aha moments over a

period of time" (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009). This string encourages

them to become ideators, explorers, and critical thinkers (Perkins, 1981). Turnaround schools

and schools in general are challenged to cultivate the desire to learn as opposed to respond to the

fear of failure (Mintrop, 2004). The arts can serve as motivational entry points to the desire to

learn. Elliot Eisner (1994) and Maxine Greene (1995) would add that arts education is not solely

about the content being taught, but the art of *how* content is taught in the classroom that allows educational imagination to be a part of school reform. With an arts-rich environment, teachers participate as learners in adapting and implementing curriculum, enabling students to become a partner in, rather than a subject of learning, and preventing boredom (Fullan, 2012).

Learning is an emergent and generative process, yet Fullan (2006) finds that by ninth grade, only one-third of students remain engaged. Learners who make mistakes are more likely to truly engage in the problem solving process, the crux of learning (Tanner in Uhrmacher & Matthews, 2005). An arts-rich environment encourages teachers to openly make mistakes along with their students, authorizing experimentation and the quality of the process over the product of learning. DeMoss and Morris (2002) found that the use of arts in classroom instruction motivated learners to be invested in their learning. Likewise, the study found that arts-integrated instruction changed students' "characterizations of learning barriers into challenges to be solved" (p. 1) bringing students into a deeper level of content exploration. When students are more engaged, teachers are more likely to feel involved in the curriculum, investing teachers in best practice of teaching and learning as well (Evans, 2001).

Transfer and Connection

Curricular access points are provided through artistic mediums and the curriculum is then transdisciplinary (Marshall, 2014). For an arts-rich classroom to affect core content knowledge, the connections between the art and the content are vital. Developing connection does not happen intuitively but rather with guidance. The Arts Education Partnership conducted a meta-analysis of 62 studies and found that skills from the arts transfer to other content areas (Deasy, 2002). In the *Critical Links Study*, 65 distinct relationships between arts and core content and

skillsets were identified. To name a few, visual arts instruction transfers to reading readiness, drama to conflict resolution, dance to nonverbal reasoning, and piano to mathematics proficiency (Deasy, 2002; Ruppert, 2006).

For arts reform to be successful, teachers need to explain the connection of the arts and core content objectives and identify classroom strategies that ensure that the connections benefit one another (DeMoss & Morris, 2002; Marshall, 2014). This connection creates an entry point to different intelligences that help students access their own analogies and create a mechanism of transfer, hence the purpose of using arts in the classroom as a means to deepen learning of a core subject. The application of transfer can be coined as executive function, or the ability to plan, focus, memorize, switch tasks, and problem solve in the cognitive process (Dege, Kubicek, & Schwarzer, 2011). It is therefore not what curriculum is, but how curriculum is taught that helps students obtain a meaningful educational experience (Egan, 2001). From aesthetic, economic, social-emotional, and metacognitive perspectives, inclusion of the arts generates implications for arts-rich turnaround schools and adds depth and understanding to teaching and learning practices (Booth, 2003; Efland, 2002).

Arts-Rich Environments

As research on arts and education has formalized, so has the generative concept of an arts-rich school environment. In an arts-rich environment, arts are leveraged throughout the school and are not isolated to electives classes. Multiple factors could contribute to such an environment including but not limited to:

- Arts electives and dedicated arts spaces
- The use of arts as a method of teaching in the core content areas

- The use of arts in teacher professional development and allocation of time for teachers to learn arts-based strategies

- Co-teaching with a teaching artist into classrooms

- Leveraging arts programming to attract family and community members and partnerships

- Budgeting for artistic improvements to facilities

- Regular arts experiences and field trips

- Community partnerships (with museums, theaters, galleries, studios etc.)

In this environment, the arts become a mechanism of learning, culture, and understanding. While various terms can be applied to this environment such as arts expanded, aesthetic education, or simply, arts in education (Biscoe & Wilson, 2015), this research will use the term arts-rich environment as it encompasses the spectrum of arts in all facets of the school, or in some cases, a singular classroom.

The Spectrum of Arts Implementation

For turnaround schools focused on test results to subscribe to an arts-rich environment as a mechanism of school reform, teachers and curriculum planners need access to the varying entry points that can be leveraged (PCAH, 2011). One rationale for an arts-rich approach in turnaround schools is the malleability of access points to curriculum and ability to tier implementation. These entry points connect arts to the core content curriculum at varying levels outlined in *Figure 1*. This spectrum of implementation diversifies the benefits of the arts in their approaches.

SPECTRUM OF ARTS-BASED INSTRUCTION

Art Technique
(Art for art's sake)

Art Process
(Meaning making)

Art Enhancement
(Use of the arts to
 introduce or augment topic)

Art Integration
(Combination of mutually
beneficial art standards and
core content standards)
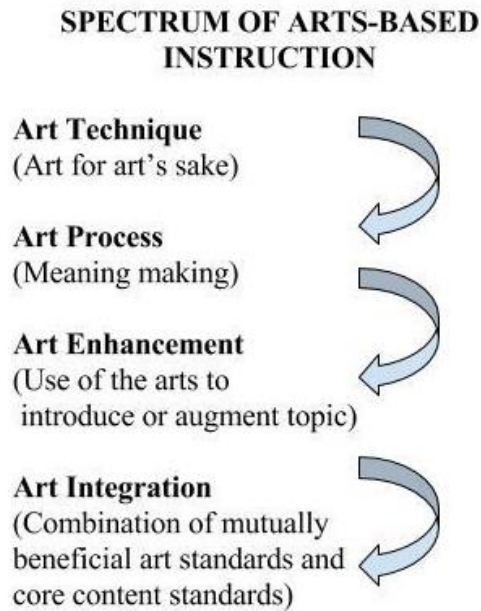
Figure 1. Spectrum of Arts-Based Instruction. This figure illustrates
the progression of arts and core content instruction. Moctezuma (2017).

The spectrum of arts implementation *(Figure 1)* rank orders arts implementation by direct transfer of arts content to core content objectives. Each tier yields important contributions to the school environment of teaching and learning. An arts-rich environment would employ several of these approaches within the same building (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). While each part of the spectrum has its own benefit, they are ordered in terms of direct core content transfer.

Art for art's sake and meaning making. Teaching art as a technique-oriented subject is akin to the atelier method ("DaVinci Institute," 2017) that hones artists for a trade or profession. The inherent value is a skillset that can be used to replicate, express, or represent an idea or image with symbol and quality through any modality of the arts. This method does not always focus on meaning making, or conceptual expression behind an art piece, but rather the skill with which it is made.

When arts classes shift their focus to process over product, metacognition results as long as technique is not privileged over meaning making (Seidel, 2009). Incorporating meaning making into art making moves the implementation to the next tier. For example, a drama class directly correlates to higher order language and literacy skills, music to language learning and spatial reasoning, and art experiences to literacy and numeracy skills (Furman, 2000; Jensen, 2001; Marshall, 2014). Focusing on meaning making does not omit the need to teach art skills, but rather encourages the teacher and student to focus on process, connections, and student thinking.

Art technique example: Students create color wheels and shading spectrums as an exercise. This builds skill but does not inherently develop metacognition.

Art process example: Students reflect on their work and on questions as to why a color wheel or shading spectrum will enhance the quality of their art. In this second example, students enter the process of meaning making.

Arts enhancement. Arts enhancement brings art into a core content area but does not include the art objectives as a portion of instruction. Often times with arts enhancement, one subject receives priority as a final product, and the use of the arts or core content is an aside (DeMoss & Morris, 2002). With arts enhancement, the arts and the content coexist but do not necessarily interact.

Example: Students are learning about the path of food through the internal organs. They create a series of movements to trigger the sequential order of digestion. The art form in this case serves the purpose of the science lesson but does not directly teach specific qualities or objectives related to dance.

Arts integration. Arts integration has been defined by several key arts education institutions, all of which emphasize that arts integration focuses on connecting arts and core content standards with a focused outcome (Burnaford, Brown, Dougherty & McLaughlin, 2007; DeMoss & Morris, 2002). The Kennedy Center has also worked to establish the definition as a method of teaching in which the arts and core content subject meet evolving objectives in both subjects (Silverstein & Layne, 2010). Benefits of arts integration include gains in achievement and positive school climate, teacher collaboration and the use of inquiry-based, personalized learning, and the ability of students to convert abstract concepts to realistic meanings (PCAH, 2011). According to the National Research Council (2000) an "integrated curriculum offers opportunities for learners to apply concepts across domains and disciplines" (Seidel, et al., 2009 p. 33). The practice of making art becomes routine in history, science, reading, writing and math, and becomes an essential part of assessment (Rabkin & Raymond, 2009). This approach can be incorporated at little cost, and at varying degrees of implementation; an appealing strategy for schools.

Example: Students are learning about character development, and after reading a text, create a tableau as a group to depict character growth. In this example, the arts help students articulate the core content standard, and the core content informs the practice of the art form.

Arts-Rich Environment in Turnaround Schools

Traditionally, schools have tended to separate out students who are not succeeding – who tend to be disproportionately poor children and children of color – and give them watered-down instruction so that they can reach "at least" some level of proficiency. But the result of this practice is that such students end up farther and farther behind their

peers and never catch up. Arts education frequently offers a different approach: all students are given the same chance to succeed. And, the results show, the students seize these opportunities and demonstrate that achievement is not inexorably tied to income or ethnicity. (Annenberg Institute of School Reform, 2003, p. 23)

A curriculum based on testing may not teach interaction, creativity, ingenuity, or socially normative responses to peers, self, and academia (Carr, 2013, Mintrop, 2004; Evans, 2001). As noted by the Annenberg Institute above, the use of an arts-rich environment in turnaround school settings may have the capacity to turn the tables on the "command and control environment" (Evans, 1999) often found in turnaround schools. Dan Weismann (2004) studied three high-poverty districts in Boston, Minneapolis, and Chicago who chose arts as their model of school reform and found that when arts integration takes root it is a truly transformational part of the school environment.

With the limited time and resources that turnaround schools have, every curriculum choice made is vital and needs to be measured against other methods. Three end results would identify an arts-rich approach as a problem solving approach in a turnaround school:

1) The approach must work with struggling/high-poverty/ELL learners who comprise the majority of a turnaround school population.

2) Test scores must show positive results, or an arts-rich environment cannot impede the results of test scores.

3) The teachers who bring an arts-rich environment into their classroom must be able to do so and maintain the requirements of their existing curriculum and school culture protocols.

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An arts-rich environment does not replace a curriculum. It is a way of teaching the curriculum, and asks teachers to modify existing lessons, augmenting rather than replacing standards.

Effect of Arts-Rich Education on Struggling Learners

Turnaround schools are typically populated with struggling students who need multiple access points to content and multiple opportunities to feel successful in a classroom. Some students have attended a failing school for multiple years. Other students bring with them the emotional and physical ramifications of poverty, have special behavioral or academic needs that may not have been addressed in years prior, or are English Language Learners. Some students experience a combination of all of the above. Methods of instruction that work most successfully with poor and language minority students tend to focus on meaning making out of context (Zeichner, 2003). Because the arts bring another way of learning into a classroom environment, multiple studies have shown that arts integration, arts in the building, and/or an arts-rich environment is in fact most beneficial for struggling learners including those with disabilities (Brouillette, Childress-Evans, Hinga, & Farcus, 2014; Mason, Steedly, & Thormann, 2008). Just one hour of theater or dance per week led to higher achievement for ELL students (Brouillette et al.) Using arts essentially presents students with a dynamic of, "try this another way" which generates success rather than remediating failures (Annenberg Institute of School Reform, 2003, p. 26) and makes it more likely that low income youth will be high achievers (McLaughlin, 2000). In fact, the longer students are involved in arts classes the higher they score on their SATs (Ruppert, 2006).

Multiple measures for success in a turnaround environment include increased attendance, lowered behavior referrals, and increased teacher and student morale that all lead to a more

successful academic environment (Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016). Orchard Gardens, a turnaround school in Boston with a student population of 90% poverty and a school culture record of high violence, turned the school around by firing the security guards and hiring arts teachers. It was in the top rank of improving schools after implementing an arts program strategized for turnaround schools (Americans for the Arts, 2014).

To investigate the connection of arts to academics, James Catterall (2009) conducted a landmark longitudinal study that surveyed over 25,000 students and measured the effects of an arts-rich environment on students from 8th grade until they turned 26 years old. This study found that children engaged in art have comparative gains to those that do not, and the results held true for students from a low socio-economic group and English Language Learners. In addition, students from a lower socio-economic status that comprise the majority of turnaround school environments who attended a school in a high-arts environment were twice as likely to still be a student at age 20 and twice as likely to be in a four-year college. Heath and Roach (1999) looked at the effect of afterschool programs with low-income students. This study is notable because it was not setting out to compare the programs against one another, and included sports, academics, community involvement, and the arts. All students performed better than their non-participating peers, and those engaged in the arts programming were doing the best.

Effect of Arts-Rich Education on Test Scores

These studies point to the arts as an avenue for reform that fits the needs of students and school structures. Successes generated through the arts with struggling students are noteworthy. However, when making curricular and pedagogical decisions, turnaround schools will most likely look to the numbers on a standardized test for which they are held so highly accountable.

There are several key studies that have shown that an arts-rich environment is a particularly dynamic choice for struggling students and test results in turnaround schools (Deasy, 2002).

Turnaround schools may not see a score-based boost the very first year they implement an arts-rich environment, but if executed with fidelity, they will see gains over time. The A+ schools in North Carolina with higher proportions of high-poverty and minority students performed just as well as their neighboring high-income populated schools. A+ is a nationwide program using nine pillars of an arts-rich environment. These schools achieved gains on tests without narrowing the curriculum (Corbett, McKenney, Noblit & Wilson, 2001). In a similar study of high poverty, high ELL (84% poverty, 30% ELL) population in Chicago, reading scores increased by 22% and math scores by 18% when the arts were introduced (Leroux & Grossman, 1999), and adolescents engaged in the arts scored higher on a standardized literacy vocabulary test (Corbett, Wilson, & Morse, 2002; Elpus, 2013).

The Arts for Academic Achievement program in Minnesota cited that scores in third and fourth grade reading and math were greater in arts integrated classrooms. Additionally, the relationship between gains scores and arts integration was stronger for students on free and reduced lunch and English Language learners (Ingram & Seashore, 2003). When the arts are applied, students are inherently asked to rethink, rehearse, replay and then output a reasonable performance. Essentially, an arts-rich environment is an "insistence on excellence" (Annenberg Institute of School Reform, 2003, p. 22), and appears to be making a difference in the scores at turnaround schools. In some cases, teachers who select arts integration are so successful with this method, they choose to do this with every relevant part of the curriculum (DeMoss & Morris, 2002).

Educational Equity and the Arts

Regardless of policy change, low-performing schools are less likely to have arts access (Government Accounting Office, 2009). When schools do not offer the arts, families of means can compensate with museum visits, music lessons, or a trip to the symphony (Seidel, et al., 2009). These opportunities and excursions are not an option for students in high-poverty areas (the general population of turnaround schools) due to transportation, location, or affordability, which furthers the opportunity gap (Hayes, 2009). Another contributor to this gap is an economic and racial divide. Childhood arts education has declined 49% for African-American children and 40% for Latino children (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Sir Ken Robinson explains (2007):

> We are educating people out of their creative capacities. Picasso once said, 'All children are born artists, the problem is to remain an artist as we grow up. . .we don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it, or rather, get educated out of it.

Mintrop and Sunderman (2009) further this thought in regards to turnaround schools explaining that "learning gets stuck while the system succeeds" (p.25). Bringing the arts back into the schools for populations who have had them taken away by creating an arts-rich environment has a track record of positive results.

Teachers as Change Agents

Turnaround schools are charged with a huge task of exiting failing status. In a standards-based accountability educational system, the teachers motivate school improvement in the creation of an equitable classroom (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2003). Bringing the arts into a school that is low-performing has a direct effect on student achievement. However,

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teachers in turnaround school environments may or may not have the ability to take on this

format of arts-rich instruction under such high pressure.

Many of the instructional weaknesses perpetuated in turnaround schools occur because

teachers are new to the job, and/or concentrating on standards and classroom management for the

purposes of school culture and assessment (Goldstein, 2014; Holme & Rangal, 2012; Matheson

& Ross, 2008). When testing is around the corner, tactics of instruction such as whole class

discussion and peer feedback happen with even less frequency in favor of testing practice (Plank

& Condliffe, 2011). According to Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999) teachers in mandatory

high-stakes testing environments often resist arts-based learning as they feel pressured to "pack

in" as much test-based learning as they can into their allotted teaching time. Teachers in a

sequential study expressed low morale and pressure to teach test preparation as a rationale for

being hesitant to use arts-based methods in their classrooms (Winner & Hetland, 2000).

Academic teachers who use arts-based instruction become more artistic and creative

themselves by bolstering both the teacher and student learning process at a deeper level (Eisner,

2002). An arts-rich approach provides teachers with the opportunity to meet accountability

measures as well as stay the course of the prescribed curriculum. This approach simultaneously

gives freedom for teachers to create their own indicators of success outside of the required

measures. Teachers become curriculum bricoleurs, weaving a multi-faceted, transdisciplinary

web to generate a transactional learning experience (Marshall, 2014).

Margaret Grumer (2004) posits that using the arts in the classroom paints the students in

a better light. Teachers find the opportunity to hear new voices and insights when using arts in

their classroom. Through this lens, not only do teachers broaden their perspectives about

students, but they also engage in a learning process themselves. Since they are not expected to be experts in the arts objectives, teachers build a collective class identity of problem solving. This study asks teachers to share their lived experience of changing curriculum despite the obstacles they face. Arts-rich classrooms are appealing to teachers who want to see a measure of success for their students that will carry them beyond a school performance score.

Theoretical Framework

This examination of teachers who choose to use arts in their classroom aligns to two theoretical frameworks. Teaching using arts-based learning is derivative of engaged pedagogy as it transforms a curriculum to use student voice. The way in which teachers change their curriculum in a changing school environment is undergirded by change theory. This study will use both the theory of change and engaged pedagogy to inform the purpose and methods of research.

Engaged Pedagogy

According to bell hooks (2010), "Engaged pedagogy is a teaching strategy that aims to restore students' will to think" (p. 12). Her application of Freirian pedagogy is relevant both to the teacher experience of implementing an arts-rich curriculum with students and to the research design process that makes this research an active process for the participants. Engaged pedagogy views "education as the practice of freedom" (hooks, 1994, p.14). In the practice of engaged pedagogy, students are removed from the banking system, or one in which content is deposited for the learner and withdrawn as repeated fact, and placed in the context of conscientization (Freire, 1997). In this process, the teacher and learner together become active participants in the learning, the cornerstone of engaged pedagogy. The literature review for this study suggests that

both teachers and students in turnaround schools are marginalized, and engaged pedagogy brings their voices and experience to the center. Ira Shor (1992) explains that:

> The responsibility of the problem-posing teacher is to diversify subject matter and to use student-thought and speech as the base for developing critical understanding of personal experience, unequal conditions in society, and existing knowledge. In this democratic pedagogy, the teacher is not filling empty minds with official or unofficial knowledge but is posing knowledge in any form as a problem for mutual inquiry. (pp. 32-33)

Creating opportunities for active student participation and contribution is a natural outgrowth of working from this strengths-based perspective in turnaround schools. Engaged pedagogy begins with the assumption that, "We learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher" (hooks, 2010, p. 21). Hence, engaged pedagogy makes the classroom a place where student learning is celebrated.

Teachers changing their curriculum to include the arts in a turbulent turnaround environment are using arts as a vehicle for student voice, processing, and problem solving. With engaged pedagogy, it is not the students alone who are empowered to grow, but also the teacher as they generate new learnings. This research design engages teachers to explore their own experience verbally and non-verbally and bring their experience to the forefront of discussion. This combination of action and reflection defines Freire's application of praxis and parallels the outcomes of an arts-rich classroom.

Theory of Change

The second theory used to inform this study is the theory of change. Michael Fullan (2006) expresses the idea that crisis is a powerful motivator for change. The participants for this

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research take it upon themselves, despite the pressures placed upon them to fulfill the demands of standardized testing and a "No Excuses" environment, (Carr, 2013) to use an arts-rich approach. This decision layers two components of change, furthering the choice of change theory.

1) Teachers in a turnaround school first experience change of environment, staffing, curriculum and policy while in turnaround status.

2) The teacher then decides to change a tightly composed curriculum into an arts-rich learning experience.

This work will examine the ways in which teachers experience these embedded changes.

Kurt Lewin's theory of change. Kurt Lewin unpacks the components of change in three stages. Stage one is the unfreezing stage. In this stage, the equilibrium established needs to be destabilized (Burnes, 2004). In the second stage, moving, the change makers consider all moving parts and possibilities as the results of the change cannot be readily predicted. In an ideal situation, this thought process takes the form of action research and may be trial and error. In stage three, the refreezing stage, change is established as a new pattern and the change becomes solidified or begins to stabilize. This theory is most often demonstrated by melting an ice cube, reforming it, and refreezing it (Kritsonis, 2005).

Turnaround teachers who elect to change the curriculum may find themselves in the moving or refreezing stage while the school is still in the unfreezing or moving phase. This study unpacked the experience of teachers as they muddled through the stages of change and examine the potential of refreezing the curriculum and pedagogy with an arts-rich approach.

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Change as Loss. Robert Evans states that the concept of change is one associated with innovation and revolutionaries (2001). In schools and classrooms that are in a state of reform, the word "innovation" is often applied to the word "change." However, according to Evans (2001), "Growth and development may be the ideal synonyms for change, but grief and bereavement are every bit as accurate" (p. 2). Even when change is for the better, people experience a sense of loss in the disappearance of known structures and established equilibrium (Marris, 1986). Teachers are then charged with melting the ice of the curriculum, adding arts in an effective way, and refreezing their practice. They are all the while perhaps experiencing a sense of loss in their practice and school systems, personnel, and structures. This study examines the experience of teachers in turnaround schools who change their curriculum and maintain that change despite a no excuses environment commonly used as a change agent in turnaround schools (Fullan, 2006; Carr, 2013).

Chapter 3: Methods

What is the lived experience of teachers who change the curriculum to include an arts-rich approach in turnaround schools?

Statement of Research Question

The research question for this study examines the lived experience of eleven teachers in turnaround schools who changed their curriculum approach to include an arts-rich environment. By focusing on teachers, who most closely interact with students on a daily basis, this phenomenological study brought forward the experiences of teachers who are finding a way to generate a creative classroom in a high-stakes testing environment. Expanding on teacher experience provides an opportunity for scaling and improvement of teaching and learning in turnaround schools. It is the hope of this researcher that this study not only asked questions of participants but also brought teachers together as a creative community through engaged pedagogy.

Method

This research is a qualitative study because, "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience" (Merriam, 2009. p. 5). This researcher uses a heuristic approach to phenomenology through both traditional and arts-based research. The application of arts-based research is a fit for phenomenological research that searches for insight through experience as J.H. Vandenberg writes:

> [Phenomena] have something to say to us — this is common knowledge among poets and painters. Therefore, poets and painters are born phenomenologists. Or rather, we are all

born phenomenologists; the poets and painters among us, however, understand very well

their task of sharing, by means of word and image, their insights with others — an

artfulness that is also laboriously practiced by the professional phenomenologist. (Van

Manen, 1997, p. 41)

The design of this research illuminated insights of participants through both the use of traditional

and arts-informed approaches. These methods were used in the investigation of the experience of

teachers, and for the researcher's process of bracketing and data analysis.

Heuristic Approach to Phenomenology

A heuristic, phenomenological approach to qualitative research allows the process of

discovery through the revelation of experience by both researcher and participant (Moustakas,

1994). The heuristic approach to phenomenology illuminates the capacity of researcher to find

and discover through the perspectives of the people involved (Welman & Kruger, 1999), in this

case, the teachers who directly impact their students. According to Moustakas (1994), the stages

of heuristic engagement are (a) initial engagement. (b) immersion in topic (c) incubation (d)

illumination (e) explication (f) culmination in creative synthesis. These stages of research mirror

the practice of arts-rich teaching and learning in classrooms. New images and meanings

regarding human phenomena are discovered in data collection by unearthing new meaning and

access to content. This study mobilized both participants and researcher to follow the process of

discovery as defined by heuristic phenomenology.

Through the phenomenological methodology, participant voices and experiences are

taken at face value in the engagement stage and allow the conscious and lived experience to be

the tool of analysis through the remaining stages. The analysis of teacher experience provided a

platform to the teachers in turnaround schools and ideally allowed teachers to walk through the remaining stages of the heuristic approach and be of use. The final result of this process created the description, both arts-based and traditional, of the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants focusing on both common themes and individual perspectives.

Arts-Based Research

This research study used traditional interviews and a focus group. It also added an extra layer of the immersion, illumination and creative synthesis stages through a variety of art forms. Phenomenological research organizes and synthesizes data including "interviews, notes, poems, artwork and personal documents" that are gathered together and organized to tell the experience of each participant (Moustakas, 1994). Van Manen (1990) suggests that researchers ought to look at the work of poets and artists in research "because it is in this material that the human being can be found as a situated person, and it is in this work that the variety and possibility of human experience may be found in condensed and transcended form" (p. 19). Phenomenology therefore lends itself to mirror the method of an arts-rich curriculum examined in teacher's classrooms by using an arts-rich approach as a form of research. As a part of this study, participants created a piece of artwork that generated a visual/kinesthetic data set.

Sarah Pink writes, "The imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of research. Visual elements and artwork carry meaning and therefore make themselves available to analysis" (2001, p. xi). This is the same principle applied in arts-rich classrooms. The visual or arts-based component to this research also served as a measure of trustworthiness to triangulate findings and includes a data set for the reader to interpret. Douglas Harper (2003) gives the example of photography that provides a pathway for viewers to create their own interpretations:

"The power of the photo lies in its ability to unlock the subjectivity of those who see the image differently from the researcher" (p. 193). Including visual and written artwork invites those engaged in reading this research to participate in the process of analysis with a visible data set.

Arts-based research reflects the approach for arts-rich education in schools. The artistic portion of the research project is not a separate voice of the research but part of the "palette of options" for the context of meaning making (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p. 242). When students engage in the arts, they are engaging in research, approaching the information from multiple perspectives, and learning to make inferences based on a visual or an artistic experience. In this study, teachers who chose to create an arts-rich environment used the same approach to reflect on their experience.

While an arts-based research approach extends the traditional arc of research, it will not replace traditional approaches. In fact, "The visual has always been a vital part of fieldwork investigation" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 98). Barone and Eisner (2011) propose that arts-based research broadens the approach to traditional research, allowing the "phenomena the research addressed to have a productive heuristic through that a deepened understanding can be promoted" (p. 3). Arts-based research asks the participants and researcher to engage with the research question by creating, synthesizing, and applying ideas, revealing a perspective that may not have otherwise been unearthed. To this end, arts-based research does not replace, but deepens the analyses of data collected.

Design

     This section explains the parameters of participant selection, the data collection process as it relates to both phenomenological and arts-based research approaches, and the data analysis process as it relates to both phenomenological and arts-based research approaches. It also outlines researcher limitations and background, as well as the structures designed to ensure trustworthiness.

Participants

     The schools appropriate for this study began as a whole school takeover, replaced the majority of the staff and leadership, and retained every student that chose to stay without application, lottery or an admissions process. Participants for a phenomenological study need to have a direct experience with phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Participant selection in this study identified teachers who use an arts-rich environment in a core content classroom. Quality of implementation was considered but not formally assessed for participant selection, as this study examines the lived experience of teachers who use an arts-rich environment in their classroom. In this regard, teachers reveal their own perspective of quality arts implementation.

     In order to qualify as a part of this study, the participants had to match four criteria. Participants needed to use arts integration or arts-enhanced projects in their classroom at least one time weekly and participate in arts related professional development. The also needed to have experience working and co-planning with a teaching artist. Finally, they needed to serve on the school arts team that develops a strategic plan of arts implementation in the school.

These criteria limited participants to teachers who were highly invested in arts-rich classrooms, in using their own time to incorporate arts into their classroom, and in going above and beyond to think strategically for their campus. The participants were specifically selected from core content areas as opposed to arts electives with a preference for Math and ELA teachers. These two subjects are the bedrock of performance measurements and therefore often subject to a more prescriptive approach. Finally, the candidates were selected as a proportional representation of the teacher population of these schools in terms of grade levels, as well as self-identified race and gender. It is notable that no first year teachers are in this study in a school landscape that hires a large proportion of new, alternatively certified, and temporarily posted teachers through programs such as Teach for America and The New Teacher Project. This was not an intentional omission but rather a result of the selection process. Teachers in their first and second years are not as likely to be on leadership teams or have time afforded to them to implement a curriculum outside of the CMO's curriculum in the early stages of their career. Resulting participants are demographically described in Table 1-1. Participant Demographic and Experience.

Table 1-1. *Participant Demographic and Experience*					
Name	**Subject**	**Grade**	**Years Teaching**	**Gender**	**Racial/Ethnic Identity**
Dime	Special Education Literacy	6-8	6	Female	Caucasian
Hall	ELA and Social Studies	3	16	Female	African-American
Harper	Social Studies	5	14	Female	African-American
Ly	Math	4	8	Female	Vietnamese-American
Perry	Math	8	4	Female	African-American
Piper	Social Studies/ELA	4	4	Male	Caucasian
Sanders	English	7	8	Female	Caucasian
Turquoise	Special Education	K-2	3	Female	Muslim-American
Turner	Kindergarten	K	7	Female	Caucasian
Vicks	ELA	8th	3	Female	African-American
Wheeler	ELA	6th	7	Male	Caucasian

Gatekeepers

In order to obtain access to the teachers selected, the research was approved by the

Director of Leadership, the three school principals, and the participating teachers. Principals

were assured that teachers would not spend any school time on the research process (the

researcher collected field notes but without disturbing classes). They were also informed that this

study is not an evaluative framework but rather a research project built to engage teachers in

reflection of their experience, and that confidentiality would be maintained. In conjunction with

principals and arts leadership teams, qualifying teachers were identified. Finally, a letter

requesting participation (See Appendix B) was sent to the identified teachers. The research

process in this study asked teachers to engage in interviews and arts-based research. Before

signing, participants received written notification of the time required to remain in the study for

the duration.

Bracketing

In order to maintain the process of bracketing, a journal with separate personal responses

was kept in order to separate personal bias from findings at the end of each field observation,

interview, and the focus group. This allowed the research to stand on its own according to

phenomenological methodology. "The primary research strategy of phenomenological study is

through interviews. Personal ideas, theories, and suppositions are bracketed to allow for the

essence of the experience to speak for itself" (Merriam, 2009). Visual bracketing was also used

by the researcher at the end of the data collection and prior to data analysis. This process brought

forward perceived themes and allowed the researcher to label those and carefully review codes to

make sure that the creation of themes and categories followed the protocol and procedures of the

qualitative research methods.

Data Collection

Data collection used multiple data sources to unveil differing ways of knowing and data

points. Data included field observations and historical documents sourced from participants

(lesson plans, journal entries, and notes from their professional development), a semi-structured

interview, an art piece, and an arts-based focus group. Each phase of research contributed

additional questions that were then added to the sequential phase of research. Data was collected

and categorized (engagement, immersion and incubation phases), with a specific interest in

finding and refining themes (illumination phase). These themes were compared with themes generated by sequential layers of data and triangulated for authentic data sets (explication and creative synthesis phase). Ideally, these research methods provided a more holistic opportunity for participants and researcher to engage in multiple ways of knowing and synthesizing.

Field Notes

Field notes were taken with the condensed account method (Spradley, 1979). This method asks the researcher to make notes for things that occur including phrases, signal words, and other notes. The amount of conversation and action in a classroom made this method appropriate. After each field observation, a reflective journal was added to the notes to bracket personal response. For this research, field notes were used as background information to complete the data collection process. They are not on the front line of data analysis as what is observed by the researcher may be different than the teacher perspective of that same moment in time.

Teachers scheduled or suggested a time for field observation in order to align the observation to their experience of an arts-rich implementation of curriculum. Field observation took place in the teacher's classroom as the convenience of the teachers. Field notes were recorded and if available, lesson plans were provided.

Interviews

After field notes were collected for background information, the process of individual interviews began. The semi-structured interview was a sixty-minute interview that targeted the acquisition of depth and detail (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) to allow for accurate portrayal of the experience and detailed analysis of findings (See Appendix C for interview protocol). The questions in the protocol were a mix of more and less structured questions. These questions were

specifically designed to eliminate bias and create a neutral stance from the researcher to allow

the experience of the participant to emerge. The protocol included background and demographic

questions, experience-based questions, opinion and value questions, hypothetical questions, and

a final question asking participants to synthesize their experience through an art form. The

interviews followed the protocol, but also included the river and channel approach. This

approach follows a concept but also allows the space to follow a "channel" that may deepen or

expand responses illuminating the voice and the direction of the participant, while

simultaneously going into depth about a topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Patton (2002) writes, "We

interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot

observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions" (p. 341) that did emerge as a part of the interview

process. Questions were pre-designed but also followed the experience of the teachers as they

explained it, in a logical sequence flow, allowing the lived experience to emerge in the interview

process.

Work of Art

According to Barone and Eisner (2012), arts-based research is an "approach to research

that exploits the capacities of expressive form to capture qualities of life that impact how we

know and how we live" (p. 5) which adds an additional dimension of data to the

phenomenological research process. The final interview question asked participants to synthesize

their experience of creating an arts-rich classroom in a turnaround school in an artistic format.

Artistic formats add a nonverbal source of lived experience (Van Manen, 1990) that make

themselves available for analysis. The third point of data collection mirrored the idea that

heuristic investigations "culminate in creative synthesis" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 34).

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In so doing, using participant-created art for data collection expands, rather than replaces, the traditional approach.

This method also mirrors the content of curriculum teachers are using. Participants were asked to use a different modality of processing and reflection, adding a metacognitive process to the description of their experience just as they are trying to do with the curriculum in their classroom. In the same way that arts deepen content and understanding, arts-based research adds a deepened understanding and process of discovery in the research process (Eisner, 2002; McNiff, 1998). At the end of the first interview cycle, participants created a piece of art (See Appendix D for arts invitation) in the format of their choice that best represents their experience of changing the curriculum into an arts-rich classroom environment.

Focus Group and Art Critique

Focus groups are often used when the topic is not overly sensitive and a community of participants may bring forward further data through their interactions. Teachers in turnaround schools changing the curriculum often feel siloed, so this final data collection point asked participants to join into a creative discovery process with one another through engaged pedagogy (Shor & Freire, 1987). In the case of this research, a focus group of purposefully sampled participants was utilized to both deepen and triangulate data through the interaction of participants. This final stage of data collection asked participants to bring their art project to a focus group structured as an art critique and share in one another's experiences. The focus group was videotaped and audio recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription. Since part of the job of a phenomenological researcher is to observe cues about experience, all language was included in

the transcription. However, for all participant quotes, speech markers were removed to enhance readability.

This portion of data collection also reflects the process of heuristic research, in which the researcher returns to the participants to share meanings and seek their "assessment for comprehensiveness" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 34) as well as "examine their own views in the context of others" (Patton, 2002, p. 386). The addition of a focus group enabled participants to interact with one another and share their experiences both in conversation and through their artwork.

In hermeneutic research, the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). The original design of the focus group critique used the Kennedy Center method of art critique (Payne, 2017) to bring participants together to examine their artwork through the following four prompts:

- Describe the work

- Analyze how the work is framed and organized

- Interpret how the work makes you think or feel

- Evaluate the work

As Graeme Sullivan (2005) explains, an art critique "is dynamic, reflexive, and revelatory as creative and critical practices are used to shed new light on what is known and consider the possibility of what is not. This approach is not only systematic and rigorous, but also imaginative" (p. 192). The idea of this focus group was to use the artwork as a catalyst for conversation and comparative thinking among participants as it related to their own experience. Using engaged pedagogy as an overlay to this portion of the data collection process invited

participants in as arts-based researchers through the critique process. Bringing their art pieces to the focus group transformed the space into one of dialog and generated a community of teachers who practice arts-rich approaches in their classrooms.

During the focus group, participants used their own artwork to discuss the lived experience of changing the curriculum of a turnaround school into an arts-rich experience. As the focus group commenced however, the original protocol was not eliciting responses that created interaction among participants. Therefore, when the question set changed to a method of *See Think Wonder* ("Visible Thinking," 2017) that teachers were familiar with and had been taught, teachers began to fill in the silence with their opinions. Changing the protocol became an important decision in the research process. As Patton (2002) says, "Using words that make sense to the interviewee, words that reflect the respondent's world-view, will improve the quality of the data obtained during the interview" (p. 312). This change in protocol was made at this juncture to shift the method of art critique to familiar language. With the shift to a known question set, participants began to share more, unpacking layers of meaning as the original protocol intended. This turn of events was a reminder that teachers who use art may not necessarily be artists versed in the language of art, but rather skilled teachers who pay attention to multimodal ways of teaching and connection making.

Participation

Eleven out of eleven participants completed the interview. Eight out of eleven participants created artwork and attended the focus group. Two of the three who did not participate in the focus group resigned their positions prior to that stage of research but are still working in the field, and the third could not come at the last minute due to a family illness. This

focus group was held on the first day of summer vacation. It is perhaps a notable data point that every participant in town and returning to school chose to spend their first day of vacation sharing ideas about their work.

<div align="center">**Coding**</div>

Data was coded in layers at the conclusion of field research, interviews, and the focus group. After the transcriptions were completed, text was first reviewed and then coded using an in-vivo coding process. This coding process selects key phrases and words from the participants to capture the essence of the experience and voice of the participants (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Using their own words in the coding process allowed experience to inform the coding and creation of categories and themes. These codes were then grouped into meaning units that were grouped into categories and subcategories through the process of axial coding.

Once the subcategories were formed, a visual check for missing language was used in a computer-generated visual aid that notated the number of times a word is mentioned in the transcripts. This visual (*Figure 4)* was cross-checked with the sub-categories and compared with the tentative categories from axial coding. In addition, one unit of data was compared to another to look for irregularities (Merriam, 2009). Findings and analysis were member-checked with the participants via in person follow-up questions. To make sure the codes did not drift, all data was then re-read after the findings and analysis were written to check for congruence and alignment. Once no new categories or themes were appearing, saturation was reached (Creswell, 2007, Mason 2010). At this juncture, sub-categories were combined into themes to develop an overall description of the phenomenon as participants experienced it (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

Data Analysis

With each new intake of data, the researcher returned to the horizon lines to re-evaluate

thematic choices using Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral. These steps to the spiral include

organizing the data, perusing the data set to get a sense of what it contains as a whole, identifying

categories or themes, and integrating and summarizing the data for readers. This spiral applies to

phenomenological research that uses "the analysis of significant statements, the generation of

meaning making units, and the development of what Moustakas calls essence description"

(Creswell, 2009, p. 3). The themes were checked against the subcategories and coding to

determine if they held up to the data and accurately portrayed the essence of the experience of

the participants, and were mutually exclusive (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, two colleagues in

the field (one from New Orleans, LA, and one from Bridgeport, CT) reviewed the findings and

analysis sections for missed opportunities, accuracy, and application of research literature to

findings. This process in the analysis cycle moves "from the empirical trenches to a more

conceptual overview of a landscape...connecting the two with successive layers of inferential

glue" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 261) or the stages of explication and creative synthesis

(Moustakas, 1994).

Five themes were identified and then synthesized into both visual analysis and traditional

analysis. In alignment with an arts-rich approach, the researcher analyzed and reanalyzed the

themes, or horizon lines not only with the coding and analysis process, but additionally through

multi-media visual artworks that assisted in the alignment of themes with the inferential glue that

Miles & Huberman (1994) speak towards. Douglas and Moustakas (1985) use the term "portrait"

as a description of phenomenological research analysis, as once the data is coded, the researcher

created a portrait of that experience. Taking the word portrait both literally and figuratively, the researcher synthesized the data in conceptual portraits of each theme. In this regard, the written analysis informed the art-based analysis and visa-versa as the method of an arts-rich environment suggests.

Researcher Identity and Trustworthiness

I am a white, middle class female who has worked in the arena of urban public schools for eighteen years. I am product of the public schools in Louisville, Kentucky and a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I have worked as a middle school English teacher, art teacher, dean of students, principal, and director of arts-based reform, all in urban, low-performing or turnaround school environments in Louisiana, Honduras, and the South Bronx. I have also worked as a photographer and visual artist, my medium of choice. My way of knowing is both visual and written, influencing my career path. Throughout my time in public education, I have experienced school turnaround, high-stakes testing, low and high faculty morale, and obstacles and opportunities for teachers and schools. I hold the belief that our current school landscape subjects students from high-poverty, high-needs backgrounds to a banking system of education signifying that information is deposited like money in a bank (Freire, 1997) and that a just educational system promotes the opportunity for students to find the power in their own voices. My work centers on the use of arts as a tool for engaged pedagogy.

I recognize with humility that the use of the arts to reform low-performing schools is my profession, recognize the difficulty of removing researcher bias from the findings. In order to ensure that this research is solid and unbiased, I used member checking, external peer review, and reflective journaling to identify places where my values and assumptions might have

interfered with the process of qualitative research. This helped me to suspend preconceived notions that could have influenced my analysis process. This process is known as bracketing or epoche (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Moustakas, 1994) and required the suspension of judgement to reveal the true nature of reality or experience. After separation of bias, I examined the phenomenon from multiple angles engaged in analysis through artwork, an acceptable approach to heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1994).

Figure 2. Moctezuma. (2017). *Climb Me a Tree Like a Fish.* Acrylic and collage on canvas.
Figure 3. (Close up of *Figure 2*).

As part of the research methods in this study, the experience of teachers who use arts-rich classrooms in turnaround schools incorporates arts-based research. To that note, prior to the results section is a process of arts-based research that allowed for bracketing. I completed a process of visual bracketing prior to coding and after journaling about each transcribed interview. This piece, *Climb Me a Tree Like a Fish,* was prepared for the focus group and offered at the end for feedback. Using a visual as the participants did in the focus group allowed time for participants to question assumptions of themes I noticed and bracketed them as my own reactions as opposed to the coded research. Participants responded as passionate teachers (Fried, 2001) wanting what is best for their students. Mr. Wheeler's response represented the rest of the focus group responses:

> I can't think of any good reason not to do it [arts integration], but there is a good reason not to do it poorly or half-heartedly. Because if you are not fully behind trying to make it work then you are just giving up instructional minutes for something that you are not going to be enthusiastic to the kids about and it is not going to help get the point across. So, you got to be behind it if you are going to do it (Focus Group, May 31, 2017).

Visual Bracketing

After concluding the interview portion of data collection, I sat back to reflect on the essence of what I heard and create a visual response to contribute to the focus group alongside the teacher participants. Cahnmann-Taylor, and Siegesmund remind us that data is not found, but rather constructed, and that in this process the researchers are bound to generate their own meaning just as they generate external meaning (2008). *Climb Me a Tree Like a Fish (Figure 1)* is the visual portion of the reflective journal created prior to the coding process and serves to

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bracket personal meaning I may have brought into the research process. As phenomenological research is layered and looks toward essence, the following description of this piece serves as the initial layer of the research process.

Reflecting on eleven interviews, it was notable that three participants used a quote credited to Einstein, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid" to describe their experience of choosing to use art in a turnaround school. Ms. Ly rephrased this idea to a southern colloquial version as she believes the written curriculum makes her students feel they have to, "climb me a tree like a fish." Having observed in her classroom, I know that she infuses thoughtful intersections of visual art and song among other strategies to help students articulate their many talents and skillsets in her math class. In so doing, she metaphorically turns her tree into water for her students. This observation on the heels of individual interviews, set the stage for this visual piece, which was my interpretation of what arts-based teaching means.

The doorway in this painting depicts one of the turnaround schools that was remodeled the year prior, yet the paint was already peeling off of the wall and the dirt splotches on the floorboards were clearly remaining from more than a year of use. The scene in this picture was across the hall from one of the participants' classrooms. In field observations, I heard her calm preparation of students flood the hallway during testing weeks. She used the call and response lyrics of Nas (2002) to calm students and prepare them for their second week of state testing.

I know I can (I know I can)
Be what I wanna be (be what I wanna be)
If I work hard at it (If I work hard at it)
I'll be where I wanna be (I'll be where I wanna be)
Be, B-Boys and girls, listen up
You can be anything in the world, in God we trust

An architect, doctor, maybe an actress
But nothing comes easy it takes much practice

Ms. Hall is a teacher who talked a great deal about joy she gives through exciting ways to learn and the joy she receives when students master a skill. Imagining being a student in her class, I appreciated her ability to transform the sterile, wordless, testing environment to one of joy and confidence. This picture depicts the way she brought forward life through song each day to prepare her students. She is an example of all eleven participants who transform their classrooms through the arts.

The tree painted on the other side of the doorway felt like the perfect metaphor for the participants in this study who all chose to work in a turnaround schools. Cypress trees, existing in many areas of the Deep South, have a portion that sticks out of the ground called knees. Scientists have yet to understand why cypress trees grow these knees, but the hypothesis is that the roots of the tree are planted in water and muck of swampland, and the knees help to bring additional oxygen as well as stabilize the tree in the swamp. Cypress wood is used for construction in swampy areas as it is naturally water resistant. The essence of the interviews upon an initial re-read suggested that teachers choose to take a written curriculum and of their own volition, then stabilize and feed it in such a way the fish can climb the tree. The cypress is tough, and well-evolved for its environment, and in this painting, is painted as water. The way Ms. Vicks (2017) describes her practice, she metaphorically weatherproofs content to create shelter from obstacles:

Kids in my classroom, they weren't really getting the material when I was just, you know – a lecture, a call and response, and answer this question. But when we started putting movement to it, and started doing stuff in a different way, they were getting it and

I was like, what, you kidding me? I literally just said this yesterday but now that you are

up doing something, now that you get it. It was like [takes a deep breath] ok.

Ms. Turquoise (2017) follows this concept:

I have chosen to stray from the curriculum that has been given to me just because I think

it is dry. The reason I wanted to be a teacher is I thought I would have so much creativity

and freedom to integrate just all sorts of ideas and topics and parts in every form.

The egret is depicted not leaving the school, but flying into the hallway from the swamp scene,

representing the impression from the interviews that all of the participants believe in their

students' ability to learn and grow, and come to work every day with purpose and vocation. "I

get joy from seeing my kids be successful," Ms. Perry confirms (Personal interview, May 8,

2017).

The participants in this study are not lined up at the exit when the last bell rings, they are

busy working hard to give their students a chance to swim. Ms. Hall (personal interview, May

19, 2017) expresses that she tries "to put it in as much as I can and still make it relevant to the

lesson and fun --creative. Whenever I integrate the arts, the kids pretty much master that skill

quicker than they do without using the arts." To that note, the teacher is depicted as a great white

egret. Part of the swamp ecosphere, these birds have the ability to puff their feathers and create a

protective powder that shields them from oils and gases accumulating in the swamps. The

participants in this study gave the impression they have the ability to do the same as they

navigate obstacles such as a fast paced scope and sequence, the social and emotional well-being

of their students, and the pressure of working in a turnaround school that needs to meet a growth

gains score target to keep the doors open.

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Codes, Categories, and Themes

In phenomenology, the essence of the phenomena is unpacked through the layers of data, similar to peeling layers of an onion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each set of data generated its own set of codes merged into categories that were then compared with one another and triangulated for authentic findings.

Formal interviews, a focus group, and field observations were conducted, but research was codified by the contribution of the artwork synthesizing teacher experience from their point of view. The artwork created by participants generated another lens to participant experience. Eight out of eleven participants contributed a piece, and in many ways their art pieces summarized their experience with an access point for the researcher that would have been otherwise unavailable. In the production of this arts-based schema, knowledge could be both produced and constructed. Sarah Pink (2001) refers to this process as Visual Arts Knowing. The addition of art allowed the research to compare intake and output triangulating image to word, word to word and word to image. Hugo Ortega Lopez (2003) suggests that this interplay generates moments of learning. The artworks are included in this chapter and also available with the descriptions from participants in *Appendix H.*

In order to check the codes for authenticity after comparing them against the varying layers of data, they were entered into a wordle that auto-generated the repetition of words input by size. In this way I could visually detect if my categorization of the data codes aligned with the number of times a code was used in the first round of coding (*Figure 4*). This visual brought to light the omission of the concept of change that appeared in greater quantity than other words

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initially used to create categories. Upon returning to the data sets, the categories were shifted to reflect this omission. In this way, the wordle served as a visual auto-regulation of coding. This omission confirmed the need for a continual return to participant voice to verify coding. It also illuminated the complex process of cross-checking interpretations of data as Patton (2002) describes:

> The ongoing challenge, paradox, and dilemma of qualitative analysis engages us in constantly moving back and forth between the phenomenon of the program and our abstractions of that phenomenon, between the descriptions of what has occurred and our interpretations of those descriptions (p. 480-481).

Categories were reassigned, and a final review of documents, transcripts, artwork, and field notes were reviewed back and forth between codes, categories, and themes for accuracy until they reached a point in which "no new insights were forthcoming" (Merriam, 2009, p. 183). Categories were checked to make sure they held up to the original codes, were responsive to the research, mutually exclusive, and conceptually congruent (Merriam, 2009). Those categories were then merged into themes that are developed in this chapter through both image and text of the participants.

Figure 4. Coding Wordle. Generated by Worditout.com, July 9, 2017. https://worditout.com/

Applying words and phrases used by participants with in vivo coding, over 500 codes were assigned to the interviews and focus groups. These codes were assessed for frequency and potential groupings to generate categories. The most repetitive codes included the words: change, teaching, student, learning, curriculum, creative, freedom, engagement, love, problem, retention, challenge, excitement, support, gap and relevance, the wordle illustrates this and gives context to the highest recurring codes. Codes with lesser frequency were grouped together with recurring codes to generate categories that subsequently merged into five themes:

1) Participants who chose to use an arts-rich approach in turnaround schools experience their work as a vocational calling and reflection of a personally developed pedagogy of teaching and learning. The theme of personal pedagogies and vocational calling included

categories such as a belief in student ability to connect to curriculum, belief in student ability to achieve, high expectations for both themselves and their students, and a deep sense that students deserve the very best. The participants are service oriented and see themselves as lifetime educators.

2) Participants experience a number of roadblocks to their personal pedagogies. When examining the frequency of codes, it is notable that the words indicating roadblocks are less frequent than words indicating opportunities. They still appear often enough to merit the categories of testing interference, pressure, achievement, opportunity gap, and struggling students.

3) Participants create pathways through the roadblocks to leverage the arts and change their curriculum and classroom contexts. Categories that contributed to this theme included using the arts as a tool, finding the right time and space, making sure test data was positive, good teaching practice, and balancing creativity and innovation with concrete and straightforward tasks.

4) Participants experience an arts-rich classroom as an access point for their core content areas. Categories generating this theme include students recalling, retaining, and applying content at a higher rate, noticing a greater student lift, feeling "tricked" into learning, increased engagement, and students raising their hands with greater frequency.

5) Participants experience the use of an arts-rich classroom as a contagious tool for engaged pedagogy. When participants found the right places to change their curriculum, their practice became contagious. Categories of community building, higher engagement, co-

teaching with a teaching artist, and intra-faculty conversation merged into the theme of contagious practice.

These themes are unpacked and included in the sections to follow. Each section will begin with participant artwork and a description that adheres to the theme, describe the data that comprises the theme, and conclude by unpacking each of the themes.

"It's Not a Perfect Ocean, but We Knew it was Water"

Participant Experience of Vocational Calling
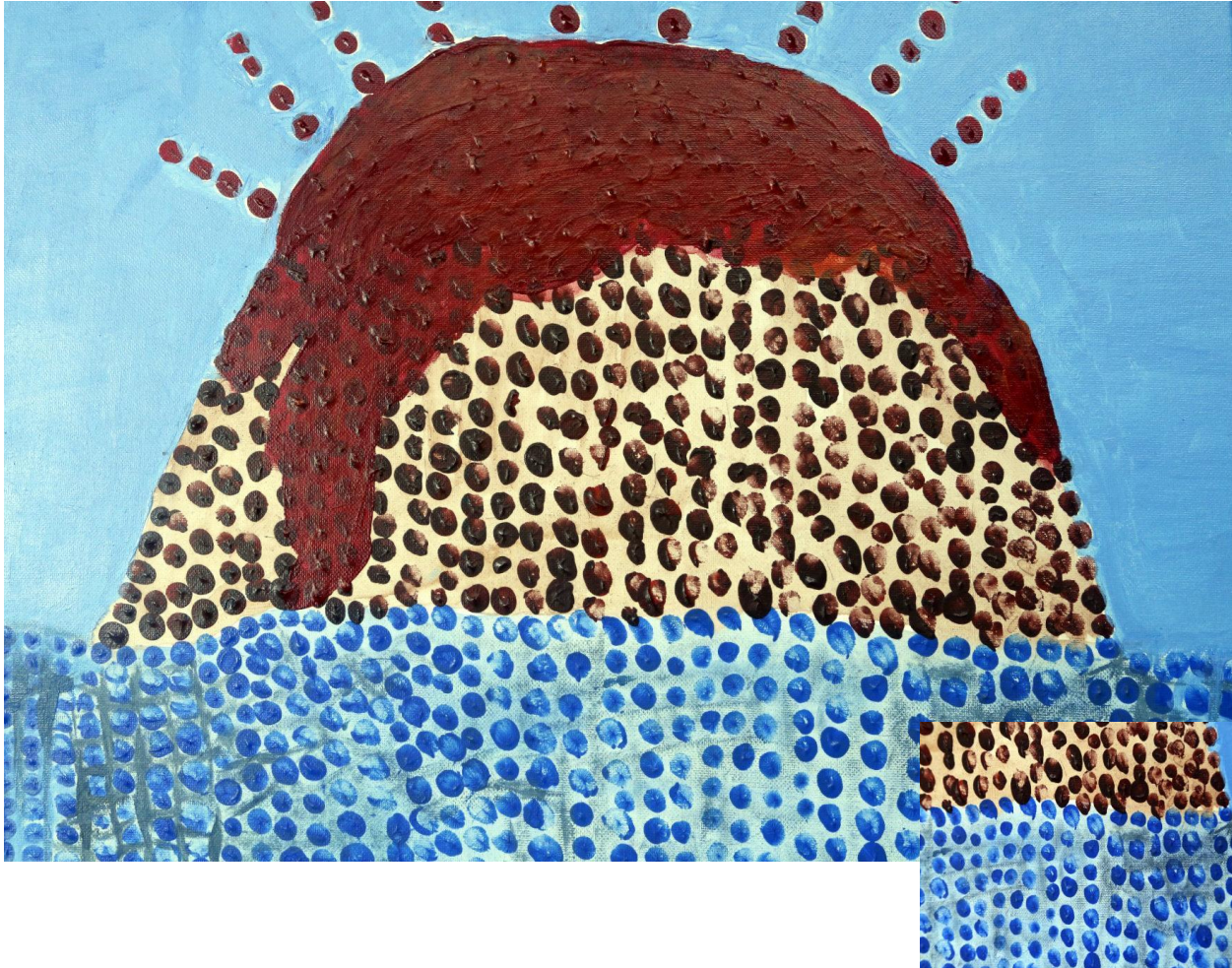
Figure 5. Turquoise. (2017). *Original art integration.* Acrylic on canvas.

Figure 6. Close-up of fingerprints.

Ms. Turquoise spoke about the piece that she created with her class:

> Everything on here was painted by someone's hand. So it is kind of like a comment of a
> hands-on approach. And it is not a perfect volcano but for the most part, we knew it was a
> volcano. It is not a perfect ocean, but we knew it was water. And the sky isn't perfect but

we knew it was the sky which I think is what my class is really representing. All my

students knew what was happening to some degree and they were all part of my art. The

only thing I did was the certainty of the red. So the red sludge – this is solid. This is like

the actual content, if you will. That is going to stay the same, but everything else is fluid

and the students had the flexibility about which color they were going to put where.

There wasn't an outline. They did this themselves. (May 30, 2017, Focus group.)

Participants choose their work. Whether they "fell into" teaching in a turnaround school

or moved to a new place specifically for that reason, they have all elected to be in turnaround

schools and believe in the capacity of their students to learn. For this reason, they set a high bar

for their students, and adapt the curriculum to enable student voice to be central in their

classrooms. Ms. Turquoise highlighted a common theme among participants with the statement

quoted above. Participants believe that student voice is key to quality learning and that is part of

the intention of using an arts-rich approach. This is particularly relevant in a turnaround

environment where the scope and sequence is often so fast paced that student voice and input can

be unintentionally omitted.

The interview protocol for this research was designed with particular attention to

allowing participants to define their experience without leading questions. Teachers were asked

to share their resume walk and their rationale for working in a turnaround school, as well as their

definition of a turnaround school. The responses made it clear that they do not see their work as a

job, but rather a vocational calling to bring student voice to center stage through their

curriculum. After several pieces of art were discussed in the focus group, Ms. Sanders chimed in:

Everything that has been presented so far is student-centered on student experience. Even

the kids who weren't 100%, they tried. And I think this road is the big mission of

education and what we are all really fighting for because that stuff [arts integration]

breeds success inherently. That's where all the joy comes from. Those are the moments

that keep us tethered to what we are doing -- that success and that joy. (Focus Group,

May 30, 2017)

Participants hold a firm belief that students should be in charge of their learning and will rise to

the bar set for them.

This theme is illustrated by Ms. Turquoise's painting in *Figure 5.* She created the concept

for her piece but worked with her students and literally, put her idea in their hands. She believed

her early childhood special education students could work together to make her vision a reality,

and asked them to think of a time they learned something of importance in her class each time

they added a fingerprint. The collective learnings comprise what she calls the original arts-

integrated lesson plan, the papier-mâché volcano students make for science class. Her painting

synthesizes the emergent theme of engaged pedagogy as teachers and students worked together

to generate an idea. Ms. Turquoise's description of her process and the title of this section, "It is

not a perfect ocean, but we knew it was water" (May 30, 2017) mirrored the responses of the

participants who see their work in turnaround schools as a vocational calling to help students

come to their own way of knowing and understanding curriculum. Ms. Perry (personal interview,

May 8, 2017) proclaimed her manifesto for being in the teaching profession. "Hey, I am going to

dedicate so much to you and show the world that you are able to exceed expectations." Teachers

in this study create a cornerstone of setting high expectations in conjunction with supporting students to get there.

Participants experience a common pedagogy of teaching and learning. They believe that every child has a voice and any child can meet the standard set for them. They also express a preference for working with the student populations in turnaround schools. Ms. Dime, who works with students further behind than their peers in literacy levels, incorporates tableau and media arts into her reading lessons. Like other teachers, she knows her students need a sense of confidence before they can engage in academics. She sees the arts as a tool for, "a huge increase in engagement and it's a huge increase in their voice and their confidence and just how they feel about themselves" (2017).

Participants Choose to Teach

According to definition, a job is a task an employee feels obliged to, and a vocation is a sense of calling and impulse to follow a particular career path (Merriam-Webster Online, 2017). Parker Palmer (2000) distinguishes vocation as a calling that is heard versus a goal that is pursued. As the participants spoke about their career decisions, they outlined their transition of a job into a vocation regardless of roadblocks and challenges they experienced.

Ms. Perry affirmed:

> Teaching becomes a part of you and it is literally who you are. And it is hard. I mean I have days where I am like, 'Oh my gosh, these kids today.' I just told one of my co-workers, I am so ready for the end of the year and then after the second week, I am going to miss them (students) like crazy. So, it's just I couldn't imagine doing anything else and

it is ironic because I never imagined doing this. But now that I have started doing this, I couldn't do anything else. (Personal interview, May 8, 2017)

Through this vocational calling, outlined by Ms. Perry as a part of who she is, participants have developed a personal pedagogy of engagement for and with their students that sets a high bar for their success. Teaching in a turnaround school is not just a profession, but rather a part of participant identity. The first interview question asked participants to go on a resume walk. In response, most began with their college experience and how they arrived to the teaching profession. The participants in this study hail from all over the country. Several "fell into" the profession of teaching and now say there is no place they would rather be. Others grew up knowing they wanted to teach but were unsure of societal and family approval. At the end of each resume walk, all participants concluded they would not want to work anywhere else; their calling was school turnaround. Speaking to his old job teaching in a high performing school, Mr. Wheeler (personal interview, April 28, 2017) said, "I felt that many, many people could do that job. But I wanted to do something more." So, he packed up his house and moved to New Orleans to look for work in a turnaround school.

Ms. Hall is a participant who "fell into teaching." She recalled the first day she went to the district office to be signed up as a substitute and was placed in a full time teaching position, "Oh my God, what did I do? So, that was in 2001 and I have been teaching since 2001. Love it" (Personal interview, May 19, 2017). Using the river and channel method of interviewing, I followed up with Ms. Perry during her interview about her long time childhood dream of being a sportscaster. When she found out she was pregnant with her daughter, she enrolled in the school system temporarily and has been there ever since. When asked what she would do if she received

a job offer in sports-casting that met every desire of her childhood dreams, she sighed and responded:

> Oh Lord, I think that would be very, very appealing but it would be very hard. I feel like
> a part of me would be missing. That would be fun for me but I don't feel like I am doing
> as much in the community and changing the world. My sportscaster position, that would
> be all fun and glam and glorious but it wouldn't give me that self-satisfaction that I feel
> knowing that I am inspiring somebody even if it is only one child a day. So I wouldn't be
> able to do it. (Personal interview, May 8, 2017)

Ms. Perry returns to the internalization of her profession to teach in turnaround schools as a part of her identity and belief system. Unlike Ms. Perry who found teaching circumstantially, Ms. Ly knew she wanted to be a teacher since childhood. She described playing school since she was a little girl. "I felt like if I could get kids to love learning then they would like school and would be better at school and even if you sucked at school and loved learning, then you are going to be a successful adult. That's why I became a teacher" (Personal interview, May 11, 2017). Whether participants come to the profession of teaching with intention or by happenstance, they develop vocational calling and choose to work in turnaround schools.

Participants Choose Turnaround Schools

The participants in this study not only feel called to teach but are all in turnaround schools with intentionality as opposed to a result of district placement. Five of the participants in this study intentionally moved to a turnaround environment, and several stated they would not go elsewhere. Ms. Harper explained:

I don't necessarily see it [a turnaround school] as a more challenging school. I have been

doing it for a while so I am used to it. Most of these kids, they all are different and have

different personalities, but they're all the same – like I have been through it before. These

kids are fun. They keep me on my toes. You never know what they are going to say or

do. You can definitely get a piece of a comedy show every day you know. And it is just

refreshing. They [students] can make you mad and they can make you laugh at the same

time. And you really won't find that anywhere else like the schools that are performing

really, really well and have high scores – not to say that they don't have different

personalities, but probably not as much personality as the kids that we have here. I like

working with them. (Personal interview, May 17, 2017).

As Ms. Harper supported, participants see their students as at-promise as opposed to a

common rhetoric of at-risk (Ayers, 1995, p. 7). This perspective enables teachers to set a very

high standard for the work they will do together with their students. As teachers began to settle

into their careers, they also became self-reflective and appreciative of a job that feels more like

a vocational calling to work in turnaround schools. Ms. Hall asserted, "I can do what I do

wherever I go. It just so happens to be turnaround schools that have the need for me to come in

and kind of just like do my thing. So I think more so that the school chooses me" (Personal

interview, May 19, 2017). Ms. Vicks elaborated on her experience of teaching in turnaround

schools with a job description that exceeds that of instructional facilitator.

I did not know how much teachers had to go through because it is not just coming up

with a lesson plan and implementing it in the classroom. It is more than that. You are just

not a teacher in these types of schools. You don't just come to school and then go home.

They [students] have our phone numbers; they call us for help for things that are not

related to school. You are a teacher; you are a mom; you are a mentor; you are a

counselor. All of these different roles that come with being a teacher. It was just mind

blowing. It's stressful, but I love it so much because I love teaching and I love my kids.

(Personal interview, May 17, 2017)

Despite the multiple roles and pressures, the participants in this study divert their

vocational calling to the specificity of turnaround school work. Ms. Ly worked in several

schools that were selective in their admissions processes and intentionally shifted to an

environment where the students who were most underserved were chosen to be in her school.

She teaches with a mission of social justice and desire for educational equity.

I really, really liked the idea of a turnaround school because on the very surface it meant

that we weren't picking kids. If you come to our school, we will teach you and not only

will we teach anyone that shows up, we are coming to you because you have been

underserved in the past and that is not ok. ...We are going to come to you and make sure

that you are getting the same sort of thing that other kids get to have because they have

people who advocate for them or because they have other resources. (Personal interview,

May 11, 2017)

Ms. Ly chooses to teach in a turnaround school because she views the work as a means to

create equity. The teachers experience varied outcomes of their vocational calling. Ms. Perry

spoke to this in her reaction to hearing about the turnaround school she would take a job with:

Somehow, somewhere, life put you (the students) at a disadvantage and it is not fair to

you. I feel like it is my duty to make sure that I am able to do whatever I can to help you

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realize your potential. When I met the principal in 2014 and he gave me his vision of going from an "F" school to an "A" school by 2020, I looked at this man like he was out of his freakin' mind. He was crazy. But that also mirrored this motivation that I have. I have always been known to do something that is extremely tough that a lot of people don't think they can do. So that passion, it really sparked something inside of me. I was excited to be here because I thought about the kids – somebody has to do it. (Personal interview, May 8, 2017)

Not every teacher found the work to be a natural fit, but like Ms. Perry, they defended the work to be an ethical/moral fit. Mr. Wheeler echoed Ms. Ly describing his intentional move from a school in his home state to a school that was failing further south. Ms. Ly's intentionality to work in a turnaround school is based in her belief that historically underserved students have the right to a quality learning environment. In his interview, Mr. Wheeler recognizes teaching in a turnaround environment to be a murky, difficult task. Yet, it is still one that he chooses despite not always feeling like a success.

It was very intimidating at first. And it can still be intimidating some days. Coming into a school that is trying to get turned around and make new things happen, in a way, that in itself is what was a strength and a weakness. Weakness because you are still trying to get your feet underneath you; you are still trying to figure what is going to work with the population, what's not going to work, and as you go through those systems, sometimes when you have some failures, you know, it doesn't work out. And that hurts the kids; it hurts the year; it makes things harder. (Personal interview, April 27, 2017)

Mr. Wheeler referred to strengths and weaknesses he experiences as a constant stretch between finding solid ground in his work, and the times where he feels he has not created a lesson or classroom that best serves his students. He, like other participants, places tremendous pressure on himself to give students all he believes they deserve through his lesson planning, classroom culture, and incorporation of multimodal teaching strategies that engage his students.

Engaged Pedagogy Elevates Student Voice

Ms. Harper's Performance Piece
It's theater every day. Performed May 30, 2017.
I couldn't have asked for anything more My year Their year Amazing Beautiful Tableau Freeze Action Movement Up and down Kids all around "Ms. Harper, do we have theater today?!" "Oh my dear it's theater every day!!!"

Part of a shared vocational calling for participants was also a shared pedagogy that all students have the right to learn. They believe their students have the right to a teacher who makes sure his or her students learn despite past failures of the school or educational system that left the majority of their students at least two grade levels behind. Ms. Sanders (April 28, 2017) addresses the academic gap she witnesses in her 7th grade ELA class:

> [Working in a turnaround school] has been very eye opening. I think because I have
>
> worked in [turnaround] schools since I started. The kids have a pretty large reading gap

and writing gap. You open a textbook, and they [the district] are like, here is how you should teach this. And it just doesn't work for all kids. And that is hard to overcome even like in third grade, never mind seventh grade, if you have a big reading gap.

Ms. Sanders wants to find the ways that her classroom practices can help to close this gap. Participants actively chose, sought out, and even moved to areas that were hiring in turnaround schools for this reason. Ms. Harper, like Ms. Turquoise, sees the lives and work of her students as part of her own experience as noted in her performance piece, *It's Theater Every day.* Her poem suggested engaged pedagogy as her personal pedagogy of education by incorporating student voices through theater and student experience into her own experience in the words, "my year, their year" (Focus Group, May 30, 2017). Along with many other participants, she chooses to incorporate theater into her classroom because it gives space for her students to bring their experience to learning and provides a literal stage for their voices. Ms. Perry (2017) described her use of theater as a way to drop the walls of fear for her students and learn in tandem.

> Ms. Perry just got told she was doing it wrong and she was ok, and let me try again. And it just gave them [students] that sense of not only are you hearing a teacher say something, you are watching your teacher learn while you are learning. So then the kids weren't afraid. I got up there and I messed up in front of them and so if Ms. Perry can mess up, I can mess up. So it gave them that sense of confidence. I would definitely recommend that to any teacher if you have the opportunity to implement art. It bridges the gap between all the kids. Nobody is standing out; nobody is feeling like they are not good enough to do it. Everybody is a part of it.

Ms. Perry sees her work as a teacher and her student work as learner to be one and the same. She brings to her classroom a method of engaged pedagogy through the arts. Participants did not label it specifically as such, but in placing student voice and confidence in the curriculum, the arts become a critical piece of engaged pedagogies and curriculum in these turnaround classrooms.

Critical Pedagogy: Teachers

All of the participants acknowledged their vocational calling to the classroom in a turnaround school, but some simultaneously questioned or affirmed their role with students from a critical pedagogy perspective. Along with concern for giving a place for student voice comes the concern of the appropriate fit of the teacher for enabling that voice. For the most part, responses were divided by the race of the participant. Ms. Hill, an African-American teacher working in her hometown, identifies the student need for consistency and someone who believes in them as a reason to teach.

> They deserve the best and I think the more consistency they see, then the higher they can achieve. They may be going through things that are not consistent at home, and if school is a place where they can at least get some consistency for eight hours, I think, you know, that definitely will help them. I choose to stay because the students – I know what I can give them; I know what I have to offer them. And they deserve that. (Hill, personal interview, May 19, 2017)

In contrast, Mr. Piper, a Caucasian male outside of his hometown wants to be careful not to think of himself as the outsider who came in to save the day. Ms. Taylor, a Caucasian teacher working in her hometown teared up in her interview.

I think it [desire to work in a turnaround school] originated from wanting to do high

quality work in an area where the assumption was there were not enough people to do the

work. More recently I have really struggled with this concept. What students should I be

teaching? Who should I be in front of? Does my skin, does my whiteness, prevent me

from giving my kids everything that they need or is it enough that I am a highly effective

teacher? (Personal interview, May 9, 2017).

Ms. Taylor later mentioned that her colleagues consistently reassure her children need

good teachers who care like herself. Yet, out of a self-described genuine love for her students,

she continues to question what is best. This sense of place and belonging was recurrent in other

participant statements.

Critical Pedagogy: Students

Whether participants expressed concern or confidence about their personal fit in a

turnaround environment, eleven out of eleven participants feel that no child deserves to be with a

teacher who fails them, and every student has the potential to learn if teachers present a way for

them to do so. They also contest a classification of their students with the verbiage, achievement

gap or disadvantaged. The common denominator expressed by participants in critical pedagogy

is the perception that student voice has importance and been historically ignored. Ms. Turquoise

demonstrated this belief:

Whenever someone asks what I do, I say that I teach students. I have heard many of my

coworkers refer to them as low-income students or students who qualify for free and

reduced lunch. And even things like the amount of money you get is based on how poor

your students are which I just think…if the students know that you think of them this

way, then these classifications will exist in their minds. So, I think the more appropriate

way of defining this gap is what have we ignored. Students who have been ignored

historically. (Personal interview, April 25, 2017)

Ms. Turquoise reflected the statements of other participants who feel that their students

have often been misrepresented and mislabeled. She acknowledges her students' acute

understanding and internalization of these labels. She also adds to her rationale for working in a

turnaround school an imperative of labels that define a system, not the child, as broken.

Teacher discourse shifts to one of engaged pedagogy when they shift to speaking about

their classrooms. Participants related the success of their students as intertwined with their own

successes. Ms. Sanders (2017) commented in the focus group that teachers need to feel success

too. She responded to Mr. Wheeler's piece, *Comparison of Days* (See Appendix H) about a day

with and without arts integration as follows:

> We need to feel like we are doing something right and meaningful and successful. But I
>
> really liked how it [the poem] was not like: Here's the most perfect day ever with arts
>
> integration. But very much so when we have a successful day, even if there is a couple of
>
> humps in the road, that is what it is all about.

Alongside of their own need to feel successful, participants hold a sense of urgency that

historically-ignored students have a voice that should be part of the school experience. As Ms.

Sanders noted, using the arts in a turnaround school does not alleviate all of the challenges. The

arts rather contribute to a sense that there are opportunities for successes despite the obstacles.

This is the rationale participants cited as they closely examine their role as teachers in removing

obstacles and encouraging success for their students. They are honest about the odds against their

success, but believe students, in the right classroom environment, can overcome those odds. Their sense of vocational calling and engaged pedagogy heightens their desire to use arts-rich approaches in turnaround schools.

"Climb Me a Tree Like a Fish"

Roadblocks to Engaged Pedagogies

[Students] might be really good at math, but if they are bad test takers then their scores are even lower and don't show what they know in math – let alone kids who have many other intelligences or would display their math knowledge in ways other than bubbling in answers or writing essays. So I don't know, it's – it definitely feels like that Einstein quote about--climb me a tree like a fish – like if you judge all the animals by how well they can climb a tree, you negate the things a fish can do. A fish can't climb a tree but a fish is not an inept animal, right?
 (Ly, personal interview, May 11, 2017)

Of the participant art contributed to this project, there was not a fitting art piece for this section. The interviews included obstacles, but the reflection and artwork portion of data collection highlighted the ways in which teachers navigate those obstacles through the curriculum. It is also of note that two of the participants who did not participate in the focus group also left the schools they were working in. In speculation, if they had contributed, their work could have revolved around obstacles.

As participants grappled with the challenges and opportunities they face in their careers in turnaround schools, they highlighted sentiments similar to Ms. Ly's. Participants mentioned the transparency of their school system as well as the experience and know-how of their leadership and their colleagues. The majority of participant concerns center around the needs of

their students who are grade levels behind, the pressure they feel from the school system, and the effect of high-stakes testing both on their students and on their ability to create the type of classroom that fits their personal pedagogies. Participants acknowledge the challenges that students bring with them but move quickly away from the student to the systemic and school-based roadblocks.

Falling Behind and an Embedded Sense of Failure

When a school goes into turnaround status, the students are often grade levels behind their peers in average and high performing schools (Calkins et al., 2007). Recognizing this, teachers in this study place enormous pressure on themselves. "I expect students to be a certain number of years behind but it is very challenging when I have someone who is ten years' old who still can't read. There is something that happened there that is beyond that student," remarked Ms. Turquoise (Personal interview, April 25, 2017). Ms. Perry extended this to the realm of self-motivation and sense of complacency she experienced a lack of in her students.

> The kids are behind and knowing that they are behind, sometimes mentally, they don't want to do anything harder. They are complacent. It is easier and much more comfortable to sit here and do versus learning something new that I might potentially fail. (Personal interview, May 8, 2017)

Ms. Perry's statement suggests that students are fatigued academically, and their lives outside of the school building have a significant impact on their lives inside the school building. This perception echoes the research that teachers in turnaround schools are charged with cultivating the desire to learn, a task that is not easy in the midst of students accustomed to the label of failure. Ms. Ly spoke for a while about two students who had both parents incarcerated

this year. "There are times where I feel really helpless because I have exhausted everything that I can do for them and I don't even know where else to go to-get them what they need if I am not giving it to them" (Personal interview, May 11, 2017). Participants wholeheartedly see potential in their students, but they express frustration at the limitations of their roles as teachers and the sense of failure children are bringing with them to turnaround schools. To overcome this obstacle, teachers place pressure on themselves to serve in multiple roles and capacities and experience the tension of circumstances outside of their locus of control.

The participants in this study already place pressure on themselves intrinsically. This internal pressure is embedded into an additional layer of external pressure from leaders and the district to meet targeted growth goals. Ms. Turquoise (personal interview, April 25, 2017) felt that her leaders are so focused on other things they are not seeing what is in front of them:

> I feel like I haven't really gotten a response from them and I thought for sure I would. Is it denial or apathy? But it is clear that my students are growing and clear that they are incorporating arts and, you know, I get like those shout outs for incorporating art in the memo or whatever. But it just seems more like a formality and it does not seem like they are actually acknowledging the importance of this.

Teachers are asked to prove they can move students quickly to growth targets while addressing multiple obstacles outside of the academic arena. Ms. Turquoise suggested that her work is breaking through the roadblocks she is experiencing. While she appreciated the acknowledgement, she is invested in the overall outcome for her students and wants to see it become a contagious approach in her school. The pressure in a turnaround environment is so high that nearly half of the teachers transfer or move on each year by the years' end.

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Teachers take these academic goals seriously and all participants know not only the

personal and human needs of their students but also the academic goals both of their school

performance score and their individual students. They commented frequently on the large gap

between the reality and the goal set but did not say that closing this gap would not happen.

Ms. Sanders noted:

> I think that we do a lot. We have a lot of pressure – not in a negative way – but there is a
>
> lot of pressure on the schools. And there is a lot of pressure to perform and we want to
>
> get to being a "B" school based on attendance and high scores. (Personal interview, April
>
> 28, 2017)

The scores Ms. Sanders referred to are determined by several variables, the largest of which

stems from high-stakes state testing.

High-Stakes Testing

The participants in this study want to create an arts-rich environment illuminating student

voice in their turnaround schools. Their curricular decision-making requires them to interpret

their own version of the curriculum and often points to the pace and pressure of high-stakes

testing. Tailoring the curriculum requires time, and the lack of time contributes to the ability to

plan lessons they want to deliver to their students. While participants acknowledge the need to

assess basic standards, they resent a perceived lack of a humanistic approach that dictates the

pacing and content they are asked to teach.

> Kids have a very strong sense of their identity as a student that is defined by the test
>
> instead of defined by the millions of other parameters, most of which are way more

important for figuring out how you are going to be able to function in a job, in a career, in

any sort of thing as a human being. (Dime, personal interview, May 10. 2017)

The testing environment in their eyes affects curriculum, student and teacher health, and also

their own academic freedom to choose how to teach what they teach. Participants remarked that

testing was not fair to teachers as practitioners of learning, but even more so unfair to students.

Ms. Perry (2017) mentioned the roadblocks students feel when it comes to state assessments:

They [students] have so much anxiety; they are just ready to get it over with. They don't

feel like doing it. They have been working really really hard but once it comes time to

take the test, sometimes it shuts them down. I have had kids every day passing exit

tickets, and then come time for the test and the benchmark, they just vomit. And it

bothers me because it does something to their confidence. I've seen you all [students]

working hard. I've seen you stay with me after school where you stay for tutoring. You

call me and say 'Ms. Perry, how do I do this question?' I've seen all of the dedication you

have put in, so to put all of that energy into a test that you still fail has to be hurtful.

Ms. Dime and Ms. Perry illuminated concern for students who spend so much time learning how

to learn, and are then perhaps told by a test they have failed. This mark of failure negates the

learning that was accomplished.

I absolutely hate it (testing) with a passion. I actually, at one point, I did not like teaching

because it was no longer fun for me and I think that transition happened when I left from

second grade moving to a testing grade. It was like--I don't like this. I don't like this at

all. So, yes it takes the fun, the excitement of being creative out of learning. So no, it is

not fair. (Hall, personal interview, May 19, 2017,)

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Overall, participants recognize the need for students to demonstrate their skills, and were not critiquing an appropriate basic-skills assessment. They hold pause to the systemic implementation of testing. "I have two days to cover this one standard in this one book and if the kids don't master it, I am still supposed to move on, and that is really challenging" (Wheeler, personal interview, April 27, 2017). When the participants feel they cannot not teach in the way that they want, they experience a sense of failure to both themselves and their students. Participants experience testing as more of a roadblock than a tool for their own curriculum and student needs.

> I mean my personal feelings with high-stakes testing are that it is such an inaccurate measure of everything on both ends of the spectrum. We are given test items and all I am doing as a teacher is trying to get my kids to answer those questions as opposed to crafting questions that will display their knowledge. That's what I mean by they give us all this stuff but it is just all the wrong things. (Ly, personal interview, May 11, 2017)

Ms. Ly brought into focus a thought that the test is asking students to recall facts as opposed to engage in learning. It is important to note that the majority of the interviews took place during and after the two weeks of high-stakes testing for grades 3-8, and this timing could have a sway on participant responses. This response distinguishes the banking system (Freire, 1997) of education from engaged pedagogy. Time and testing constraints make Ms. Ly feel as though she has to deposit information as opposed to help students unearth answers on their own. Both the pressure to prove results and the time constraints produce increased anxiety for students and teachers. Observing the roadblocks of an embedded sense of failure, a mismatched scope and

sequence, and pressure of high-stakes testing is key to the research question as participants

nevertheless create a pathway for an arts-rich education.

"Brave Enough to Give Every Kid a Turn"

Creating Pathways by Changing Curriculum and Classroom Context

Ms. Turner's Performance Piece
Shout out
Performed May 30, 2017

Shout out to our teaching
      artist Ms. G
      who was brave enough to give
      every kid a turn
      every time no matter how slowly
      the clock ticked
Shout out to the adults
      who know kids just
      need the time space
  to show they can do it
Here's to dancing to retell
 a story.
Here's to that time Kevin H.
      learned he could freestyle and
      Denim
      learned he could sing
(See Appendix H for full piece)

Figure 7. Le, (2017). *Math Poem.* Colored Pencil and Marker

Despite the roadblocks, the teachers in this study find pathways to change their curriculum, as Ms. Taylor's performance piece and Ms. Ly's mathematical chants illustrate, and they create an arts-rich environment in a turnaround school. The general perception from the data collected is that in order to establish a classroom steeped in student voice and to hold students to a high standard, a teacher needs to change the curriculum or implementation of curriculum. This change requires time, space, and creative implementation of standards around obstacles of time and space to learn. Kurt Lewin's theory of change mentioned in Chapter Three explains change as an environment unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The theories of change embody the experience of the participants who change curriculum by unfreezing their scope and sequence, adding multimodal elements, and refreezing curriculum in a constant search for the right approach for their students.

Participants use a great deal of trial and error before refreezing the curriculum, and additionally begin the unfreezing process immediately following the changes they implemented in a constant search for the right fit of arts-rich strategies in their curriculum. When participants find the right fit for their curriculum, they find more time to work on content. Participants share the practice of careful, artful examination of the curriculum that they are provided and the ability to tailor it to student needs. As Ms. Harper explained in the focus group (May 30, 2017):

> The arts bridge the gap between getting kids who really don't want to do anything and then getting them to actually do something. So like she [Ms. Hall] said, arts are the equalizer. For me teaching social studies, sometimes it can be super dry and so bringing in those elements of art would wake kids up, bring it on an even playing field and you

can also bring in current events, things that they actually want to do and just put it in their

faces with the understanding that they actually want to do something.

Teachers take it upon themselves to create a classroom that models engaged pedagogy.

Their classrooms uphold an underlying belief that the changes they make access student

knowledge and better prepare them for the content they are asked to master. Many of the

teachers like Ms. Harper find that changing the curriculum to suit the needs of their students is a

part of their job, though not without its challenges or cautions.

Before the curriculum can become unfrozen to include the arts and engaged pedagogic

practices, participants have to examine the existing curriculum and determine where it does and

does not meet the perceived needs of their students and timelines of expected objective mastery.

Once the time and place are identified, participants use a trial and error process to identify the

best fit for the strategies. Identifying the strategies that constitute best fit for both their teaching

styles and curriculum content become a common part of the participant toolkit. It should be

noted that for some participants, these strategies are as simple as a five-minute warm-up, while

others create a new unit based on the objectives and arts content constituting a true spectrum of

implementation (*see Figure 1).* The chart below denotes the stages of change as they correspond

to teacher actions of changing curriculum to incorporate the arts with a specific example from

Ms. Ly's class. The theory of change, as illustrated by this example, is not a finite process. When

teachers apply a change to their curriculum, it is a dynamic decision that produces questions for

future applications and begins the cycle of change at the refreeze stage once again.

Table 2-1. **Stages of Change in Identifying the Pathway for Arts-Based Learning**

Unfreezing Stage		Changing Stage		Refreezing Stage	
Teachers sense that the current curriculum is not effectively reaching their students.	Teachers examine existing curriculum.	Teachers identify timing and place in curriculum that needs change.	Participants use a process of trial and error to identify the best fit for arts strategies.	Teachers find strategies that work with their personality and their curriculum.	These strategies are on a spectrum of extremely simple to complex implementation.
Ms. Ly wanted to find out how students performed when she replaced direct instruction with student-led inquiry through an arts strategy and visual processing. After looking through her units, she decided that area and perimeter were a good fit for her idea.		For a presentation about her work she wrote, "The standards we tackled were 4.MD.3 - Area and Perimeter, 4.NBT.5 - Multi-digit Multiplication, and 4.OA.3 - Multi-Step Word Problems (Common Core Standards, 2010). We used "See Think Wonder"("Visible Thinking," 2017) to analyze visual models of math concepts to construct understanding, identify and explain elements of exemplar answers/processes, and as a protocol for error analysis of student work. Without any direct instruction and only their "See Think Wonder" ("Visible Thinking," 2017) discussions to rely upon, students began independent practice. They were asked to solve real-world area and perimeter word problems and make their thinking visible by drawing visual models, explaining why they thought it was area or perimeter, and showing the equations they used to solve for the answer.		Students solved problems of area and perimeter on their own. When she looked at their daily formative assessment, she was excited to see that students had many different drawings to approach the same problem. She found that, "By giving students the tools to look critically, they are able to understand and apply on a much deeper level because they had to construct the knowledge on their own based on their observations only." Ms. Ly's Class scored 56.6% and the district scored 45.9% on these standards in the benchmark assessment, 10% higher than their peers.	
Lingering Questions/Repetition of Cycle		How can I increase students' sensitivity so that they apply these same thinking strategies to any new problem they come across and not just when I set up a specific time for them to do a deep dive?			

In this example of the change process, Ms. Ly wanted to find out how students performed

when she did not use direct instruction. Instead, she used student led inquiry through an arts

strategy called See, Think, Wonder ("Visible Thinking," 2017) and visual processing. She was

left with lingering questions and will likely repeat the change cycle at this juncture of the

curriculum. She found that students performed better than her peers on assessment and she still seeks to improve her methods. This suggests that change is cyclical versus stagnant.

Identifying the Need to Unfreeze the Written Curriculum

Participants feel that curriculum needs to be changed because it is best practice to improve curriculum in order to learn at a deeper, more highly engaged level. These sentiments allow the unfreezing process to commence and also create a perpetual cycle of change in which the refreeze stage is a temporary place holder for reflection and modification as evidenced by Ms. Ly's lingering questions. *(See Table 2-1).* Teachers naturally change curriculum to fit a class dynamic or to improve upon what they have taught in years prior. "I have never had an easy year where I am going to use what I did last year. That has never been good enough," stated Mr. Piper (Personal interview, May 3, 2017). Most teachers agreed with Mr. Piper. Their curriculum is a living entity, not a fixed body of work.

Outside of internal motivation of continual improvement, teachers hold impressions that the curriculum is incredibly fast paced and objective driven. "Here what I am given – just a list of objectives – I can have kids master all these objectives but it doesn't mean that they can *do* that standard" (Ly, personal interview, May 11, 2017). For this reason, Ms. Ly takes the time to create units for the objectives and incorporates visuals and music into her practice (*see Figure 7).* Three participants feel that the pace, structured to prepare students for year-end high-stakes testing, not only inhibits learning content at a deep level, but also inhibits their peers from taking the time to incorporate the arts or change curriculum despite being labeled as an art school. The participants perceive some fellow teachers to be caught up in the urgency of accomplishing what is already prescribed by the existing curriculum. Ms. Turquoise spoke to this:

I think a lot of times schools with first year teachers, they feel very scrambled and they

feel, "Oh, I have to teach the curriculum; I have to teach these things. There is no straying

from it because our priority is just making sure they learn." But students learn at many

different capacities, and in different ways and I just think the curriculum is not

corresponding and does not allow you to have different learning styles which studies

show do exist. So that's why I chose to stray. (Personal interview, April 25, 2017)

Both internal motivation and discontent with the match of scope and sequence to student need

inspired participants to take the time to unfreeze their curriculum to include the arts. Participants

noted that in order to unfreeze curriculum, changes do not need to be drastic or expensive, but

rather well-tuned to the existing objective.

I think the misconception is that when you are incorporating arts, you have to buy

material, or the kids will have to draw something or paint something, or the room gets

messed up, and that is not necessarily true. You just have to know what lesson you are

doing, how you are going to use it, if you are going to bring in the song, or if the kids are

going to write their own song or act something out really quickly. (Hall, personal

interview, May 19, 2017)

When an intersection of content and approach to content are a good match for deepened learning,

teachers find the right pace to unfreeze the standing curriculum and change their approach.

Change: Finding Time and Space

Participants established that a quality change to the curriculum requires both the correct timing and fit for the objective. The time required to plan for and execute arts-rich learning and the time allotted to reach mastery of required objectives are key in the ways that participants approach a change in their curriculum. If the process of creating an arts-rich room is not well matched to the pace and needs of the curriculum, a change does not take place. Ms. Ly provided an example.

> It is really easy to do, for lack of better terms, cheap arts integration, which I definitely did a lot of. I definitely used to do a lot of, we are going to solve word problems and we are going to make a comic strip about it. That was really fun and kids loved it, but it did not help them solve word problems any better at all and it was a complete waste of time because it took a week to do one-word problem. (Personal interview, May 11, 2017)

This is an illustration of an attempt to change curriculum that did not fit the content or time parameters of school turnaround. This cycle of trial implementation can leave teachers in the state of change for quite some time until they find the right fit, at which point they refreeze curriculum to incorporate that strategy. Mr. Wheeler spoke about colleagues who tried to implement the arts because they thought it would be a good idea. However, they did not scaffold it into the right lesson and therefore had a bad experience in classroom culture or data reports. He also mentioned that when an arts strategy is not strategically placed, it can actually add confusion for students. "There are ways to [teach] through the arts but it is not always the most effective because sometimes the kids will get all the things mixed up and because they are worried about the song and getting it to actually apply" (Personal interview, April 27, 2017). Ms. Dime

furthered this concern with her special needs students, who she recognizes need structure and predictability that the use of the arts can at times, throw off center. "I think it (use of the arts) is more engaging so then it's like, why aren't you loving this because this is way better than what we should be doing? Why would you rather do something that is like more straightforward and concrete?" (Personal interview, May 10, 2017). In this case, Ms. Dime felt that her students needed predictable days and struggled with the tension of variety that arts-based lessons contributed to this schedule.

Trial and Error: Finding Strategies that Work

Teachers are constantly looking for what is best for their students and distinguish moments where the risk of changing curriculum has their students' best interest at heart. That being said, teachers want to incorporate multimodal practices into curriculum and are willing to put in the work through trial, error, and observation. After road bumps, dialog, and development, the participants find the parts of their curriculum for incorporation of the arts and implement change to strengthen their classroom, to deepen learning, and to accomplish the objectives. "Have a little bit of confidence in yourself to do it. It is all about trial and error," suggested Ms. Harper. When teachers found the right fit, they incorporated the strategy as part of their toolkit.

Implementing Strategies that Benefit Curriculum

Ms. Hall Acrostic
Arts Integration, Room 211

A-rt forms that help make connections

R-igorous learning for all students

T-hinking that goes beyond the surface

S-ee, think, and I wonder what makes you say that.

I-magination strengthens complex thinking

N-ew and improved ways of demonstrating learning

T-eaching that builds connections and retention

E-laborating brings a deeper meaning to learning

G-enerating ideas that will lead to problem solving

R-easoning prompts citing evidence

A-chievements that will bridge the gap

T-eaching that creates a richer learning experience

I-nvestigation sparks observation and engagement

O-ral and written expression that deepen understanding

N-o child left behind because arts integration is the true equalizer!!

The verbs and nouns "connect," "generate," "elaborate," "connection," "create," and "investigate" in Ms. Hall's *Arts Integration* acrostic align to Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) and key skillsets required by the common core standards indicating a safe rationale to change to an arts-rich classroom. When the changes in curriculum accomplish the words in Ms. Hall's acrostic, teachers find the incorporation of the arts worth the risk of change. When the arts accomplish connection, deeper meaning, and problem-solving, they are used as a tool as opposed to feared as a potential occupational hazard. "There is a lot of pressure with

numbers and data; let's look at this [arts] as a tool. And how can we use this as a tool to help kids be able to master this skill?" (Sanders, personal interview, April 28, 2017). The participants in this study appear comfortable navigating obstacles and incorporating the arts because they believe it helps their students reach a higher bar and generate the classroom environment they envision.

Ms. Taylor's performance piece made a salient commentary on time: "Shout out to our teaching artist Ms. G who was brave enough to give every kid a turn every time no matter how slowly the clock ticked" (Performance Piece, May 30, 2017). She thanked the teaching artist who taught her that time spent on student processing and connection is not time taken away, but rather time granted to the learning process. After learning from missteps or attempts to create an arts-rich classroom, participants actuate change in their curriculum. "I took some of the questions out, put some things in, and changed some lessons around and just kind of made it work for me and for the kids that I teach because every class is different" (Hall, personal interview, May 19, 2017). Ms. Hall's acrostic outlined her rationale for taking time and initiative to transform her classroom into an arts-rich environment, and as part of her acrostic spelling of arts integration finds that (paraphrasing) doing so builds connections, retention, deeper meaning, and problem solving. These outcomes solidify the ability for teachers to refreeze the curriculum with the use of the arts. This refreeze continues so long as students are engaged and learning at deep levels.

Mr. Piper spoke to the student response to this change. "Students are a bit apprehensive about it and then once we get going, twenty minutes into it, it is, 'When can we do this again?' And now that I am more familiar with it, even they see the benefit of it" (May 3, 2017). Piper

reminds us that this change is one experienced by the students as different from other classes, and changes their routine of learning.

Refreezing a Spectrum of Arts-Based Implementation

Once teachers find the place where arts-based strategies proved beneficial, they refreeze their teaching process. "I just stepped up and I was like "there has to be art happening in some format. I will take on that challenge. It will be in my classroom every single day" (Turquoise, personal interview, April 25, 2017). In this definition of refreezing, it is not a stagnant reinterpretation or rewriting of the curriculum, but rather a refreezing into a standard of incorporating the arts in the right places in the right times of the curriculum. Ms. Ly for example, learned that she could not use the songs she wrote to help students memorize math facts until they understood what they were doing conceptually.

> I always teach subtraction first conceptually with visual arts. I don't teach them the songs
> until I know that they understand it because then the song just kind of jogs their memory
> and allows them to be kind of like robots about it because they understand it. (Personal
> interview, May 11, 2017)

Finding the appropriate fit contextualizes the refreezing process in the approach to curriculum. Participants also emphasized that refreezing is an individual versus normative process. Time, space, and content knowledge are part of the decision-making process, but so is the art form. Mr. Wheeler mentioned that it took him awhile to see that he did not need to know how to draw to incorporate drawing in his English class, and Ms. Sanders followed with an example of making sure the arts strategy fits curricular requirements and creates the right fit. Giving advice for colleagues, she suggested:

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Find out which art form works best for you. That is the most important thing. If you're

not into acting, you might not want to get up there and do monologues and have little

scripts because it is going to make you feel out of your comfort zone. Do something that

is similar to you. There are so many different art styles that there is something –

something that will fit you. (Personal interview, April 28, 2017)

Participants found that refreezing curriculum can be a simple process. They advised that

teachers should start small with a strategy or two and use strategies with frequency, and make it

relevant, joyful and fun. In this sense, contagious practice is not the repetition of one's own

practice of curriculum, but rather finding the "chemistry of what works for you as in instructor,

what works for your kids" (Ly, personal interview, May 11, 2017) in curriculum where the arts

improve instruction. **"**But the work that they produced, they could always get very proud of

themselves" (Dime, personal interview, May 10, 2017). Ms. Dime strayed from using arts

integration as she could not find the right fit. She attributed this to her own lack of systems and

recalled the reactions students had to the lessons she presented in an arts-rich format. The ability

to change in a turnaround environment is not stagnant change but rather a refreezing in the

approach to curriculum and implementation of it.

Figure 8, Piper, *Window Panes*

Teacher Definitions of Arts-Rich Classrooms

Examining participant experience and definition of an arts-rich environment illuminates differentiated approaches for differentiated needs. All participants feel that an arts-rich classroom is beneficial and speak to their experience of using an arts-rich classroom through a variety of

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lenses. Ms. Turquoise expressed this array of implementation in one of the tools of arts integration she regularly uses. "Sometimes I just say, 'Freeze, show me in your face how the character feels.' A quick test of comprehension. They either know it or they do not. If they don't they look at their teammates and now they know it." (Personal interview, April 25, 2017).

In order to look at arts-rich classrooms as a tool of metacognition that develops into contagious practice, the following table was created from participant responses. Each participant holds a slightly different definition of an arts-rich classroom and gave an example of their work. Table 3-1 table is included here to show the nuances of implementation and definition of an arts-rich classroom as relayed by the participants. At the end of the definition and example, key ideas were added from synthesizing the artwork, definition and example.

Table 3-1 Teacher Interpretations and Examples of an Arts-Rich Classroom.			
Teacher Name	**Definition**	**Example**	**Key Ideas**
Dime	I think an arts-rich classroom has choices in it and it's not at the expense of the more traditional school-y sort of things. It is in addition to supporting and part of the process to get there. So you see kids having multiple chances to express themselves in different ways and report their thinking in different ways or to learn and internalize the content in different ways. I think about it as product and think about it as process. (Personal interview, May 10, 2017)	Ms. Dime asked students in her 6th grade reading class to take a selfie of the emotion the main character in their book experienced, and label that feeling with a digital media platform. These images were used to review character emotion and main idea at the close of class. (Field observation, April 27, 2017)	Arts are a tool both for process and product.
Hall	An arts-rich classroom has art integrated and woven throughout the lesson. It's a classroom that is decorated with art and you can hear music throughout the classroom. Every part of the lesson has art woven throughout the lesson. (Personal interview, May 19, 2017)	After reading the Lorax, students had to write a speech to convince the Once-ler to stop cutting down the trees. Students had to perform it and they were very passionate about saving the earth. And I didn't think – I thought it would be over their heads, but no. And then we went out and we planted some trees – some seeds, and we planted some seeds in the garden area and we took a nature walk around the school. And we just talked about how would the earth be without the trees. And then we came back in and they had to create a world without trees. And it was a very dark place. (Personal interview, May 19, 2017)	Arts are a tool to be woven throughout the classroom lessons.
Harper	An arts-rich environment is something where the kids can be more hands on instead of just writing, looking at the board, or writing more. Even in social studies, that needs to happen because they need to get the content. But once they have it down, just applying the content in different ways. (Personal interview, May 17, 2017)	We [Students, teaching artist and Ms. Harper] had arts inspiration on Wednesday and the kids really enjoyed it…. we mainly did a lot of improv and songs. We did raps. The kids really enjoyed the improv and it was on content so we did some things with Hamilton. We did some things with the Constitution, political parties, understanding how political parties work. We have done a debate. We did the Dating Game as a review. Those weeks during testing – I brought those things in myself." (Personal interview, May 17, 2017; *It's Theater Every Day*, 2017)	Teaching artists help with the practice of an arts-rich classroom. Content can be covered using arts strategies, even in the wake of state testing.

Table 3-1 cont.			
Ly	Arts-rich teaching is using the arts to help kids learn or retain the information, I guess period. I think sometimes you can use it to help teach or to help kids just remember things or to help make it more exciting or to help it be more sticky or more interesting. I think that all of those versions of arts enhancement are valuable. (Personal interview, May 11, 2013).	Ms. Ly's artwork is an example of her approach. She has created songs that she uses for rote memorization, and for procedures and practice of computation. See *Figure 7*.	Arts serve as a tool for re-teaching, memory recall, and engaging practice.
Perry	An arts-rich environment means smiles, laughter, joy, enthusiasm, effort. The kids are just all excited to be there. No particular one art style because art is art. Art comes in varying different forms. You know just teaching and having the kids paying attention and excited, that's art. That's a skill. So just the kids are eager, they are excited, they are fun, they are interested in learning, excited to be a part of what you are learning. It is creativity, and that can vary. (Personal interview, May 8, 2017)	Use of hip-hop with teachers and principal to prepare students for state testing. (Field document, April 27, 2017)	Arts are a tool for school climate and engagement.
Piper	I feel like it is moving past more gimmicky, or novel use of arts. But now I have a pocketful of things that we can to do to enrich a lesson. But an arts-rich classroom would look like that every day or would be more regular. It would be a way to even differentiate or personalize lessons too – that is what, how a student could express themselves - that sounds like that would be more arts-rich than what I am just still figuring out. (Personal interview, May 3, 2017)	Students took parts of a book not knowing the whole story and froze into a tableau of soundscape of their portion of the story. The teacher put students in order and students performed the story. (Field observation, *Figure 8, Window Pane,* 2017).	Tool for differentiation and expression.

Table 3-1. cont.			
Sanders	So, my definition of an arts-rich classroom is seeing art used in multiple ways that are really tailored to and essential to kids tackling difficult content or critical thinking. So not only are kids producing something to demonstrate their understanding but kind of like: create this type of map or like this visual that shows this particular character's point of view about a situation as an option rather than writing. But also internalization so that when we do – you know, we've done drawing; we've done improv; we've done theater; we've done media arts; we've done visual arts and they all have a different purpose. I feel like an arts-rich classroom if you are talking about content, it is kids having the opportunity to express themselves in understanding. (Personal interview, April 28, 2017)	You could see all the scenes were a little bit different because they had to adjust the course to fit the setting. And so then the kids were able to answer why – oh the setting was in a zombie apocalypse and we had so much fun with it. Because this was set in a zombie apocalypse for this person, they had to add in stage directions to show this person was dragging their leg and moaning like a zombie; whereas, these kids were at the beach and were adding in (sound effect --- swoosh………) waves, and we could say: well, how did that affect the ending of this story and it was like: well if they hadn't been in the zombie apocalypse, Maria wouldn't have gotten eaten and Ian wouldn't have gotten attacked by a shark. And they were able to without doing all the heavy reading, which is important, but when you are practicing the skill itself, I think the text gets in the way sometimes which probably sounds really bizarre as an ELA teacher. You are throwing a really complex text at the kids.	Arts are a tool for critical thinking, student voice, internalization and understanding.
Turquoise	Allowing students to learn in more than just one format and reaching every student by finding what engages them. (Personal interview, April 25, 2017, *Figure 5*).	So we do things as small as reading a chapter book. I read aloud and a character says something. I say, "Freeze, show me in your face and tell me how the character feels." A quick test of comprehension. They either know it or they do not. If they don't they look at their teammates and now they know it. That's small and we get bigger projects. We made puppets from *Matilda* and then to prove comprehension, we have a puppet show where students took on the role of their character. So there was a Mr. Wormwood and a Miss Trunchbull and they all do the same task, which was to brush their teeth, and they took on that role like how does Miss Trunchbull brush her teeth. It is cool to see like their different avenues of comprehending characters. Obviously, Miss Trunchbull did not have a smile when she was brushing her teeth and Miss Honey did. Small things like that where students have to dive deeper and understand what their character is thinking, what the plot is introducing - all these things. We read *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and we made wanted posters just so students had to go back to the text and find out what does the fox looks like, what is the fox doing. (Personal interview, April 25, 2017)	Arts are a tool for engagement, comprehension, and differentiation.

Table 3-1 cont.			
Vicks	I think that it [arts-rich classroom] is just more of just like being able to engage kids in different ways. Like being able to see the paintings – not just, oh, let me color something, but let me draw something and tell you how this picture relates to this. Or getting up and showing me visually. Being able to move and trusting your own body. ...just being able to show their work and being able to connect into the curriculum that they are doing. I think that is an arts-rich classroom. (Personal interview, May 17, 2017).	When me and Ms. King played a game and we were going over figurative language - so imagery, hyperbole, personification, metaphors. Each group was a different figurative language, so similes over there, metaphors over there, hyperboles, over there and somebody would come up and say a line and they would have to figure out, are we supposed to stand up for this? They stood up if they were that thing. They had to work together but they said if this is simile, you gotta say "like or as," and they would say, So we are a simile, not a metaphor – telling each other to sit down and having to figure it out. And they were having fun standing up and sitting down. The second round we would just like say the line: "I stomped so hard, my foot went through the floor." And so then like the group would stand up and then they would act that out.	Arts are a tool for connection and content delivery. Teaching artists help with the practice of an arts-rich classroom.
Wheeler	An arts-rich classroom is using the arts as a medium to address content standards, or as a way to engage students in learning, period. (Personal interview, April 27, 2017).	The majority of the class were not connecting with it. [the class text]. I decided I needed to do something to get them to connect with the characters and get them interested in the book. And this is when I was still working with Mr. G [teaching artist]. So he and I actually got together and re-wrote one of the chapters as a script and we came in and we acted it out for the kids rather than making the kids read it. Then we got them in groups and let them chose pieces of the chapter and then they had to come up with how they were going to perform it...Getting up there and doing it got them more interested and we got some pretty good performances. Then after I had a lot more kids, not all of them, but a lot more kids connect with the book and more interested in actually reading it.	Arts are a medium to engage students in content. Teaching artists help with the practice of an arts-rich classroom.

The key ideas from the perspective of the teachers included the use of an arts-rich classroom as a tool for re-teaching, engagement, creation of process and product, weaving of curriculum, school climate, internalization of content, deepened understanding, differentiation and expression. Participants have the skillset to incorporate arts strategies in their curriculum at the right time and place, and have spent time reflecting on the purpose of doing so. Participant

ability to find the right fit for change in the curriculum is an art in and of itself in the confines of a turnaround school environment. Once teachers discover the appropriate fit for change, they begin to see students access content in a context that was previously described as leaving students behind.

"Whatever it Is You Wonder"

Access to Content Areas through the Arts

Mr. Wheeler, *Comparison of Days*

A Standard Lesson Day	An Arts-Integrated Lesson Day
Students walk and talk into the room. They sit bored, distracted or playing, While the teacher tries to begin.	Students walk and talk into the room Their curious eyes catch an image on the board. The teacher stands by it and begins.
The questions pop up on the screen. Some of the students dredge up the energy or caring to work.	Questions pop up by the image The students dive into telling a story Inspired by the image's contents
The teacher introduces the daily topic and describes the activities of the day. Some students engage, others try to sleep, others play.	The teacher introduces the daily topic and describes how they will act and draw to learn. Most students engage, though a few still look on with disinterest.
The lesson goes on with some students reading, responding, writing, and learning. While others sleep, play, or just zone out.	The lesson goes on with some students reading while other pantomime the tale. Those with disinterest perk up, Watching their friends and absorbing the story. Some chaos ensues, but all participate.
Finally, the teacher passes out the exit ticket. The students all hunker down to work. Those that were engaged answer with skill Those that weren't stare around in confusion, try to jot something down and pray the teacher's grading is merciful.	Finally, the teacher passes out the exit ticket. The students break out their colored pencils and begin sketching and drawing their responses for number 1 and number 2. They scratch their heads for a moment at number 3, But soon write to explain their work.
That night the teacher sits grading their work. A frown falls across his face when he sees Some clearly understood, But some clearly didn't pay attention at all. The teacher gets frustrated and bored What can he do to make them want to learn?	That night the teacher sits grading their work. A smile crosses his face when he sees that almost all paid attention, Recounting the story with pictures and words. The teacher feels capable and confident as he reads their responses, explaining how the images tell the story. Not everyone gets it right or perfect But everyone tried, everyone learned.

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Teachers experience their choice to use art-based learning in their classroom as an access point for teaching and learning. They put time into this planning process because they experience a classroom in which the incorporation of arts into instruction creates energy, engagement, and purpose for their students. Arts-based learning also paves a path to content mastery and boosts the performance of lower-performing students through engaged pedagogy. As a result of access to core content, students carry the heavier cognitive lift than the teacher in an arts-rich environment, and teachers feel more confidently engaged in their own teaching and learning processes.

Energy and Engagement

As teachers spoke about their experience of arts in their classroom, they mentioned physical changes. Students are out of their seats, speaking with one another, expressing their opinions, and bordering on what many felt was an organized chaos. This contrasts with "traditional lessons" in which students are seated, taking notes, reading silently, or engaging in call and response (Vicks, personal interview, May 17, 2017). Ms. Turquoise feels that students are more excited and energetic about her class because they have a chance to participate in their learning. "Usually what happens is students are excited to come to class because they know they are not just going to sit down and get talked to or talked at and they like to move their bodies and use their minds" (Turquoise, personal interview, April 25, 2017). Students and teachers alike responded with increased energy.

Ms. Vicks, whose classroom is situated next to, and audible from, the principal's office described the slow transformation of her classroom from one in which students were calm and quiet to one in which they were using arts-rich instruction. Ms. Vicks elects to use a great deal of theater and improvisation in her sixth grade classroom, the strategy piloted by the English Language Arts team in her school this year. Not only does the arts-rich approach contribute energy to her classroom, but also to the response of her administration.

It is not just like --oh they are getting up and playing around but they have fun and they learn it. And that is just one thing that I love about arts integration because they are not sitting down. They (students) need to move and I know there are people who want them in their seats; they want to see the kids doing excellent work like, 'Oh that's a good classroom when they are sitting down.' But now it's like, 'Oh, that's a good classroom because they are standing up and having fun!' (Vicks, personal interview, May 17, 2017)

The word fun was used multiple times in interviews and in the focus group. While fun may sound like a fluffy word, there is research to support that it is a fundamental need for both students and teachers to have fun in turnaround schools. **"Working from one's own innate resilience and well-being engages the innate resilience and well-being of one's students, creating a positive self-fulfilling prophecy. Teaching becomes much more effortless, enjoyable, and self-renewing"** (Benard, p.133).

In other words, the fun, or the energy generated by the use of the arts in the core content subjects results in engagement. Teachers warn that it is important to be the one in command of the energy, less the "loud learning" unravel into commotion. But in general, increased energy

brought in by multi-modal arts learning opportunities increases engagement for learners and energy for the teachers as well.

> I notice that they are more excited, more engaged. The couple of kids that usually fall asleep in class, they are awake and I notice a lot more participation like everybody all the time when you call for a response, everybody's hands go up. When it is time for them to come up on the stage or do something arts-integrated related, they're all hands up – everybody wants to participate. (Vicks, personal interview, May 17, 2017)

> As evidenced in his poem, on the days he used arts integration, the engagement was almost always greater. This sense of increased participation, engagement, and energy were repeated multiple time in the interviews, focus group, and artwork. An interesting turn in the teacher experience of student energy and engagement was a self-reflective element of increased energy for the teacher as well, and a greater sense of accomplishment. Ms. Perry discussed her own sense of increased energy that other teachers echoed:

> I notice that I am more energetic and I just want to enjoy while they are learning. It changes me and it changes my personality. I'm typically bubbly anyway but this (using improvisation and theater arts in her classroom) puts me on 100. I am on the edge. I am excited. I want to be silly with them. I want them to feel comfortable with being silly and getting into character. (Perry, personal interview, May 8, 2017)

> Many participants used the word "energy" but others used ideas of relief, confidence, and pride in in their students' work as a source of energy to continue finding the time and fit to use art-based instruction in their classrooms. Mr. Wheeler's artistic contribution to this process compared and contrasted his classroom when he does not use the arts to when he incorporates

them into his seventh and eighth grade English classes. This poem aligned to the field notes from

his classes when he does and does not use the arts revealing opposite experiences. His own

interpretation of these classes was the most salient way of relating his experience. The first part

of his piece, *Comparison of Days,* (May 31, 2017)*,* describes a day in his class. It concludes the

section titled, *A Day Without Arts Integration:*

> That night the teacher sits grading their work.
> A frown falls across his face when he sees
> Some clearly understood,
> But some clearly didn't pay attention at all.
> The teacher gets frustrated and bored
> What can he do to make them want to learn?

His poem elicits the image of a concerned teacher, who is self-reflective, and does not blame the

students for a lack of content mastery, but rather places the onus on himself to figure out how to

"make them want to learn." He contrasts his evening in the second half of his piece, *An Arts-*

Integrated Lesson Day (May 31, 2017).

> That night the teacher sits grading their work.
> A smile crosses his face when he sees that almost all paid attention,
> Recounting the story with pictures and words.
> The teacher feels capable and confident as he reads their responses, explaining
> how the images tell the story.
> Not everyone gets it right or perfect
> But everyone tried, everyone learned.

This contrasting side presents a setting in which the teacher is more confident. Students are

trying and interacting with content, and whether or not it was mastered, in the trying, everyone

learned, the teacher included. Ms. Sanders responded to this poem in the focus group and

appreciated the note that with arts-rich learning the teacher feels successful. The group agreed

and nodded heads with smiles thinking about their own successes in changing the curriculum that

Mr. Wheeler's piece, *Comparison of Days,* brought to light (Focus group, May 30, 2017).

Content Mastery and Cognitive Lift

Engagement in the classroom signaled a perceived increase in content mastery for all students, with a particular benefit to struggling learners. This was not only evident in field observations but in interviews and focus groups. Participants connected an increased cognitive lift to increased mastery because the arts do not have a right or wrong answer, but rather a charge to create and question.

Participants cited multiple examples of mastery attributed to the arts-rich classroom they created. Ms. Hall noticed her students' writing about illustrations, a third grade core standard, increased after she used Visual Thinking Strategies ("Visible Thinking," 2017) for the year. Ms. Turquoise observed that her students could increasingly cite evidence after her arts-integrated unit. Ms. Taylor saw that her kindergarteners learned to collaborate and talk to one another, and Ms. Ly discovered that her students learned how to solve fractions in multiple ways. Field observations matched these noticings. In the classrooms observed, students were working in a groups, raising their hands with frequency, and demonstrating engagement.

> And so we did a lot of arts integration with equivalent fractions and comparing fractions. Now, I just watched my kids take the [high-stakes] test and there were a couple of questions on equivalent fractions and I saw almost every single kid pull out their scratch pads and draw pictures and split it up. What was cool, was that every single kid's picture was completely different. But almost every kid got the right answer. That shows me that they are not just copying what I told them to do, but that they really understand it and can recreate it where it makes sense in their mind. (Ly, personal interview, May 11, 2017)

As Ms. Ly's example indicates, teachers experience their arts-rich lessons as a connection to standards-based mastery and also to the concept of mastering the learning process. The arts provide a structure for the teachers to facilitate questions and wonderings, allowing students to explore and solve problems. This change shifts the role of a teacher from instructor to a guide. Ms. Harper's way of expressing this more abstract concept of a quality classroom was that students "can do it without me" (Personal interview, May 17, 2017). Ms. Taylor exclaimed that she could not directly link her high data to increased use of the arts, but has, "never had a class this high. And I truly believe it has to do with me letting go and letting them be able to figure out and explore. Maybe this will be a case study for them to look at" (Personal interview, May 9, 2017). Ms. Taylor acknowledged the metacognitive lift she witnessed in her class this year, and connects that to content mastery.

Struggling Learners

Participants consciously work to push their students to direct their own learning. Participants recognize their struggling students are afraid to participate because they do not want to be perceived as failures or simply do not know how to answer the question. It is this very lack of participation that hinders teachers from assessing the learning gaps that need to be filled for these students. An arts-rich class was viewed by participants to increase engagement from struggling students. "Kids who may be academically low, they become leaders also because most of the time they're creative in the arts. So it makes them feel very successful and proud of what they are doing" (Hall, personal interview, May 19, 2017).

Offering a moment of success to a student described as complacent with failure catalyzes their interest in learning again. Ms. Ly (Focus group, May 30, 2017) uses the songs she wrote and illustrated for the focus group to bring joy and confidence to her students.

> Kids learned to sing these chants to help them memorize the multiplication facts instead of just doing page after page of multiplication facts. So that is my contribution as a teacher to make the classroom more colorful but then like someone was saying kids walk away just thinking, "I love math, I am so good at it." So from the very bottom line I need to do 900 multiplication facts and you don't even remember because the next layer, I brought some joy into it.

Ly continued to describe the use of song and chants as a means to instill the belief in her struggling students that they are good at the very thing they were afraid of (*Figure 7*). She also mentioned that by choosing the arts for rote purposes such as multiplication facts, she made room for other things in their brains (Personal interview, May 11, 2017). The use of the arts gives these students academic in-roads or a chance to get something right that students do not otherwise experience.

> I've never been that student who was low but I imagine – I can see the fear on their faces sometimes. I can see that they are afraid. Every teacher doesn't create a classroom where the kids are excited and not scared to make mistakes. So I can see that when you are doing arts integration, it changes…. My lowest kids who struggle academically to sit there to follow a regular – I do, we do, you do kind of stuff – they are engaged. They are the first ones with their hands up. They are smiling; they are happy. It's fun and games. It's art. We are joking around so they don't feel like I'm not as smart if I don't get the

answer right. See, Think, Wonder ("Visible Thinking", 2017) Whatever it is you wonder.

(Perry, personal interview, May 8, 2017)

In effect, participants discerned that using the arts in their classrooms changes the

learning paradigm from finding the correct answer to thinking about the question. The arts-rich

classes ask teachers to spend more time on process than product and therefore elicit a learning

process from all students. When the process is highlighted over the product, the answers are

verified as quality thinking. This eliminates fear from struggling students, and illuminates the

way in which a student accesses core content material.

It is less scary to share when it is about a piece of art, or about a performance or

something and then a kid is more likely to take that risk even if it is quietly on paper. And

so I think that has been the biggest change for me. I have spent years banging my head

against the wall being a reading teacher like: I don't know how to reach you. You won't

put anything on the paper so I don't know how you are thinking and you refuse to tell me

because you don't want to be wrong. And this kind of opened that door. (Sanders,

personal interview, April 28, 2017)

The arts allow struggling students to experience what it means to be right, to explore and

ask questions, and thereby open an access point for teachers to assess the points that they were

and were not understanding their content areas. Ms. Taylor contextualized the need for her

kindergarteners as well as herself to make mistakes in order to become lifelong learners:

The ability to speak in front of each other and to not be wrong, you know, or to fail at

something. We've also been really working on it. That was my grad school character

strength that we have been pushing. So knowing that it is OK to do wrong; knowing that

it is okay if you mess up or forget what you are supposed to do. (Personal interview, May 9, 2017)

In this way, participants find their use of arts contributes to facilitation of confidence, freedom to wonder and question, and a resulting student cognitive lift and brought in struggling learners who may have remained quiet in the past for fear of being wrong.

Figure 9. Sanders, *Mirrored Curriculum*

Create, Challenge, Imagine, Grow

Ms. Sander's artwork illustrates the access her students experience to curriculum with her mirror. The ability to look at a reflection is added to the words, "Imagine, Challenge, Reflect, and Grow." In this piece, Sanders included a written standard in erasable marker, signaling that if students master the learning process of imagination, challenge, creation, and growth, they would

be able to solve for the specific learning objective. The objective is then interchangeable because the student is the one in the classrooms with the cognitive lifting skillset to learn the content. The theory of engaged pedagogy emerges in these findings as a means to access material and learning. Teachers and learners work together, question together, and create together. The identity of learning shifts from what to know to how to know. As teachers incorporate the arts, their confidence rises as does their willingness to learn alongside their students despite the obstacles. Ms. Perry felt that [creating an arts-rich classroom]:

> Has taught me to be a different kind of teacher--I want to almost flip a classroom where I am not the sage on the stage ranting but they can be having smaller groups and they can be enjoying this – our classroom, instead of my classroom and it just gave them that sense of not only are you hearing a teacher say something, you are watching your teacher learn while you are learning. So then the kids weren't afraid. I got up there and I messed up in front of them and so if Ms. Perry can mess up, I can mess up. So it gave them that sense of confidence. (Personal interview, May 2, 2017)

When the classroom transitions to a community of learners, both the teacher and learner vulnerabilities emerge. These vulnerabilities expose a mutual fear of failure that transfer to action and a learning community.

> It helps them to build a community when they are working together. Like, I said, you are not looking for a right or wrong answer. You are just being free and creative, so building community or working with someone else you may not just normally work with, that also helps them in class" (Vicks, personal interview, May 17, 2017).

Students have the ability to use one another as resources and support systems when the arts are incorporated into their day, increasing their resources beyond their teacher.

Contagious Practice

All of the participants work in arts-based schools that signal to staff that they believe in an arts-rich environment, but the schools do not require arts-rich classrooms or curriculum. Once participants re-freeze their curricular and instructional practice to an arts-rich classroom finding both fit and correct timing, their practice has a contagious element.

> I do know that the kids will talk more and be more hyped up about lessons that they found interesting and often those are the arts-integrated ones. So your teaching peers will hear about the lessons that you did a lot more often, and they become more a topic of conversation. So they (teachers) are like, 'So, somebody came in talking about acting in your class today' and that starts a conversation among teachers. (Wheeler, personal interview, April 7, 2017)

After Ms. Turquoise created a visual display of student work in the hallway, she began to get questions from her peers. She is a special education teacher in a least restrictive environment. According to Ms. Turquoise, teachers noticed their students were better able to cite evidence after her arts integrated unit. Teachers in the building were surprised by the level of work their students were able to accomplish, made visible in Ms. Turquoise's display. She distinguishes art for arts' sake from art for contents' sake to summons her peers to use similar strategies.

> We are not just sitting here and painting or whatever. These students are working really hard to go back in their texts, to go back in their math problem to figure out what they

have to do. I think I would just really emphasize that point: these are not two separate

things. (Turquoise, personal interview, April 25, 2017)

Instructional practice deepens skillsets ultimately measured on high-stakes tests. Ms.

Taylor spoke about her frustration with a high volume of content in kindergarten interfering with

students learning how to learn. She finds that refreezing her practice to include the arts helps her

class learn how to problem solve, and the time spent doing so is worthwhile.

> It (using the arts) absolutely directly aligns to data. This is how I trigger my brain and I
>
> get my brain to start thinking critically about well how do I fix this problem and thinking
>
> about this 57 question test they are about to take on the computer, right? Being able to
>
> evaluate, OK, I have four different answers, which one is the best or this question is way
>
> too hard for me, let me make my best guess and move on. Like those kind of problem-
>
> solving, test- taking skills are probably coming from their interpersonal interactions made
>
> available by the arts. (Personal interview, May 9, 2017)

Participants believe that their colleagues are attracted to their arts-based approaches because they

notice an increase in metacognition and problem solving, as well as the academic data resulting

from the participant's classrooms. Mr. Wheeler provided an example of this approach:

> If I can get a student up trying to do some improv based on the story we are reading, not
>
> only are they having to listen closely to the story to make sure they understand it, they are
>
> actually having to think about the story so they are knowing what they are going to do
>
> with their body, what they are going to act out, what facial expressions and emotions they
>
> are supposed to get with it. And that is one of the keys. It is getting students actually
>
> thinking about it. The analysis can come later once I know that they understood and

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thought about the story. Then I can start them analyzing the theme and all those types of

things. (Personal interview, April 27, 2017)

The responses in the data suggest once again that finding the intersections of arts and learning is

what makes this approach such a practical one for a fast-paced, test-driven scope and sequence.

"Who took over our teachers?"

Making People, Not Test Scores

The eleven participants in this research are bricoleurs of curriculum. They are able to find

the right fit for an approach to learning that will help all of their students, and in particular their

struggling students, learn how to learn. Their arts-based approaches are slowly transforming not

only an approach to instruction but also the culture and expectations of their turnaround schools.

Ms. Vicks (2017), who uses theater in her English class frequently commented:

Last year – it was like, keep the kids quiet. They are supposed to be in their desks when

they come in, everybody is supposed to be pencils up writing. Honestly, I just had a

conversation with my principal, he was talking about how I became a great teacher…he

told me, 'I know that they are learning great stuff' And I am just like: Yes! If this was last

year, and they were making this much noise, I would be getting fired; I would be getting

into trouble for that. The kids, the other day, were just playing a game and had to do

something very dramatic and they were making like a screech or a scream or something

and nobody came in here, "keep them quiet" – it was more like: oh shoot, let's bring the

potential people into Ms. Vicks' room and see what they are doing in there.

At the conclusion of the research process, Ms. Sanders who teaches in this same school

created a video of the teachers and her administration performing a motivational hip-hop

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arrangement for students to prepare for high-stakes testing and written by Ms. Perry. As Ms.
Vicks mentioned, prior to the decision to use theater and improv based strategies, her turnaround
school was data focused and culture focused. The principal began to realize as he observed the
teachers using arts-based strategies that the students were more engaged and joyful increasing
both data and culture, and he is now highly invested in this approach (personal communication,
June 15, 2017). Ms. Perry reported that when students saw all of the teachers and administration
performing together, one of the students responded by saying, "Who took over our teachers?"
(personal communication, May 28, 2017). This example illuminates the contagious practice of
arts-based learning, and the use of the arts to solve for needs the schools have.

Despite the challenges of turnaround school work, the participants are still working with
their curriculums to create what they feel is best for their students using many creative
approaches. Ms. Taylor reflected:

It [using the arts] gave me the opportunity to see that this was powerful for my kids even
though it might not be directly aligned to their map results or whatever. That really was
like wow, I am making people not test scores. So, it really helped me see that. I don't
have to be "grrrr" all the time I am in my classroom. That's kind of how we are trained to
be. It is urgent, yeah. We don't have time but we still are human and we need to allow for
that. (Personal interview, May 9, 2017)

Participants warn that these approaches might be loud, or active, but take their own time
to incorporate arts into their curriculum. The results of their work have been recognized in a
variety of ways. Of the eleven participants in this study, one stopped using an art-rich approach
at the end of the year. She remarked, "I just realized, I am a systems person, and I didn't take my

time to come up with systems. That's why it fizzled out. I need my systems." Interestingly this conflicted with the field observations in which she was using media arts and theater to help her students debrief their novels.

The majority of the participants received news at the end of the year that they were being promoted into areas of curriculum leadership. One teacher was named teacher of the year. Five of the participants are now arts implementation coordinators for their schools, and four are lead content planners alongside of their teaching responsibilities. Another was promoted to be the director of seventh-grade English curriculum. Three participants have moved on to another school, but all continue in turnaround school work, and continue to use arts in their classroom. When teachers find the right fit for change through the arts in their curriculum, students are better able to access the content, and as a result, teachers grow their repertoire for their work in turnaround schools.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter incorporates both visual and written analysis to the themes identified in Chapter Four. The visual pieces in this chapter are all original works from the researcher, created after the findings were coded and categorized. It is not the intention of the researcher for the visual images to replace the analysis process but rather complement, organize, and deepen the analysis process. The process of looking for codes that combined to categories to generate themes until they reached a saturation point was deepened by the contribution of participant artwork, and synthesized in the analysis process with the artwork of the researcher. The two visuals used in the coding process helped bracket impressions from codes (*Figures 2 and 3),* while the following five images (*Figures 9-14*) were used to synthesize themes.

Researched Benefits of an Arts-Rich Classroom Match Findings

Participants mentioned several benefits from their perspective that match the literature on arts-rich education. Teachers who chose to change curriculum to incorporate the arts do so because they see it as a way for students to access the objectives their core content requires and help students with metacognitive skillsets (Gardner, 1999; Jensen, 2001; Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Greene,1995). They experience the use of the arts in the classroom as a gateway for all learners. As they change their curriculum, they also become vulnerable, both to teacher assessment and to their students, but it is this vulnerability that creates a "space of shared learning where risks can take place" (hooks, 2010, p.19). Teachers developed a method to engage with students using student knowledge and student voice (hooks, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Shor & Freire, 1987) an approach to culturally relevant classrooms.

The experience of teachers in this study noted that their schools were results oriented, regulated, and data-driven as Fullan (2006) and Pappano (2010) wrote of turnaround schools. They refer to the narrowing of the curriculum (Goldstein, 2009), and turbulence of turnaround (Corbett, 2015; Vince & Dunn, 2015) yet still found the capacity to change their curriculum. Participants experienced an increase in participation from their most struggling learners (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Arts Education Partnership, 2008; Bamford, 2009; Catterall, 1998; Catterall, 2009; Heath & Roach, 1999; Ingram & Riedel, 2003; Jensen, 2001), a more joyous classroom environment, an increased metacognitive approach, and ability for their students to problem solve, and increased community building and social emotional learning in their classrooms (Darby & Catterall, 1994; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Ruppert, 2006). In this regard, participant experience very much matches the literature in Chapter Two.

The arts may provide an initial extrinsic motivation for students to learn but are then internalized by participants as an intrinsic motivation to teach in turnaround schools. Even as the curriculum tightened or was increasingly geared towards testing, participants found the place where arts-based change made a difference for their students. They view arts-based learning as a tool for quality instruction as opposed to an add-on or time filler. In fact, when they found the right fit, the arts added time to a lesson. They also found this approach to be contagious. These findings align to the literature of the benefits of arts education (Darby & Catterall, 1994; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 2002, Jensen, 2001), and add to the literature with the perspective of practitioners in turnaround schools.

Participants expressed their profession as a vocational calling. This calling is made visible with the desire to implement a rich, creative curriculum. In order to do this in turnaround

schools, participants navigated several roadblocks yet still found a path to weave change into

their curriculum. As a result, their implementation of curriculum provided multiple pathways to

the core content, and became contagious practice.

Figure 10. Moctezuma. (2017). *Vocational Calling.* Digital Photography

Participants Experience their Work as Vocational Calling

The digital collage in *Figure 10* depicts the type of vocational calling that allows the

teacher to find creative pathways through obstacles. Intentional areas of the school were

photographed to represent both the rewards and challenges of teaching in a turnaround school.

Images signal that time is ticking, the walls are dirty, and a caution sign is present. At the same

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time, an empty band room has a trombone out of its box ready to be played, the word art is graffitied on the wall, and a room number designates a place where students enter the world the teacher creates for them. The teacher is the one who transforms these spaces into one of possibility as opposed to one of obstacles. As Mary Anne Raywid (1995) writes, "The teacher is also the arbiter of meaning within the room, stipulating the designation not only of words but also of gestures and actions. Moreover, it is the teacher who assigns significance and balance to each of the meanings thus established" (p. 82). While the school is very much literally and figuratively under construction, a sense of order and possibility is generated by translucent layers of obstacles and options.

A digital layering collage technique allowed portions of each photograph to overlap one another. In composing one composition with transparent layers, the teacher and viewer are engaged in all layers simultaneously. The stairway, positioned in the middle asks the viewer to imagine entering these doors as the participants do every morning. Each day, teachers climb these steps, remove the chairs from the desks, hang their backpacks on the hooks, and with time ticking, set a high bar for their students, bring joy to their classrooms, and add layer upon layer of work, belief, and creativity.

The participants in this study have a commitment to teaching in turnaround schools and to their students. They speak briefly about the challenges presented by the teaching profession, students, the school environment, testing, and their leadership, and then move quickly to the joy their work brings them and fit to the turnaround environment. Teaching is a demanding profession. As William Ayers (1995) writes, "When things are going well, it can feel personally rewarding; when things go badly, the cut is painful and deeply felt. Teaching then, is highly

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personal" (p. 3). It is notable that several participants spoke about consistent teacher and leader turnover, suggesting that this work is not for everyone. It makes sense to conclude that teachers who take their own time and energy to change their curriculum are invested in doing so because they have a vocational calling to teach. This calling is what allows them to navigate through the challenges into the opportunities and are drawn into their field as passionate teachers. Fried (1996) defines a passionate teacher as:

> Someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class each day--or captivated by all of these. (p. 1)

Participants, viewing their work as vocation, are constantly thinking and re-thinking their curriculum to give their very best selves and opportunities to their students. Their call to teach determines their definition of curriculum that is more than books and trumpets, but rather a way of knowing for teacher and students. As Kanze (1995) writes, "Curriculum must be conceived as a dynamic process that is the sum total of what is taught and learned throughout the school experience. It is more than books and lesson plans- it is relationships, interactions, feelings and attitudes" (p. 173). Participant approach to their profession is not one that can be compartmentalized to school hours but rather is a calling to bring meaningful instruction into classrooms as they navigate the layers of school change and the fabric of school turnaround. This is made evident by participant commitment to teach in turnaround schools and the belief that the system failed students, as opposed to the belief that the students are failing the system. Teachers go outside of their job descriptions to solve for issues beyond their locus of control They hold the belief that with the right scaffolding their students will grow to love learning.

Figure 11. Moctezuma. (2017). *Roadblocks and Pathways.* Marker and Watercolor

Participants Experience Roadblocks to Creating an Arts-Rich Environment

Participants experienced intrinsic and extrinsic roadblocks to creating an arts-rich environment, and to their work in general in turnaround schools. Once they diagnosed the roadblocks however, they were able to navigate their way around them towards their locus of control (Goodwin, 2015).

Roadblocks and Pathways

The image of a thumbprint in *Figure 11* symbolizes both the roadblocks and opportunities for learning in turnaround schools. Teachers feel as though the state tests and overall pressure to turn around a failing school often made it difficult to take the time to find the code that worked for each child. A fingerprint, in the year 2017, has both negative and positive connotations; it nevertheless represents a personalized code. It is used for clearance to work in jobs, and for indictment and processing when one has been arrested. It appears on cell phones and locks as a system to check in and verify the privilege that identity carries with it to enter into a space. It holds the significance of individuality, as no two fingerprints are identical.

Participants in this study experienced all facets of the fingerprint. They were determined to find the code that granted access to content, active learning, and curiosity. The time they needed to access these codes was limited however. This juxtaposition of access and time displays the reality for the participants in this study. The pattern of the fingerprint in this piece extends beyond the black-inked portion into a variety of colors and directions, symbolizing the ability of teachers in this study to creatively search for the codes they needed to bring students into a world

in which they are masters of their own learning, granting them access to the curriculum through the arts.

That being said, it is important to unpack the roadblocks from the experience of participants that presented in the form of extrinsic and intrinsic pressure, and a curriculum that needed a skilled methodology to reach struggling learners.

The Code of Extrinsic Pressure

Teachers noted a great deal of extrinsic pressure that often blocked them from having the time they wished to reinterpret their curricula. Turnaround schools can hire and fire with ease, and operate on a strict timeline for growth goals (Center on Innovation and Improvement, 2008; Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016) implying a sense of urgency experienced by participants. In this climate of urgency, participants recognized the added obstacles of constant change and staff turnover. These obstacles are matched in the literature of turnaround schools (Fullan, 2006; Pappano, 2010) adding that teachers in turnaround schools have little capacity to create their own lessons outside of the provided curriculum. Many teachers come to the profession with creative ideas about the implementation of curriculum. In this sense, not only is the curriculum narrowed, but the skills teachers bring to their trade are minimized (McNeil, 2000).

The Code of Intrinsic Pressure

Participants internalized the obstacles the students face and the needs those obstacles create. They wanted to make sure that their students can apply the curricular content but found themselves needing to address basic needs of social-emotional support and community building before they could address core content lessons. Participants immersed themselves in the lives of

their students, bringing an added layer of internalized pressure to make sure their students did not fall between the cracks.

The Code of Mismatched Curriculum

Participants referred to the mismatch of a fast paced curriculum for students in need of multiple approaches with the analogy of "climbing a tree like a fish." The three participants who used this quote felt the school system as it stood did not honor the skillset their students already possessed to learn and increase metacognitive skills. Akin to a school council in Chicago investigating core values,

> [T]hey discovered the machinery of schools-the bells, the intercom, the rows of desks, the mass migrations to the toilets, the obsession with quiet and order, the endless testing of discrete skills, and on and on--had become a context that resists intelligence. (Ayers, 1995, p. 123)

These discrete skillsets, alongside a fast paced scope and sequence, made it difficult to find the right places to adapt curriculum. Participants experienced pressure, both from their own pedagogies of equity and from administration and school scoring systems, to move students two or more grade levels in one year. Simultaneously, curriculum and instruction become narrowed as a result of an increased focus on state assessments, an issue that appears more prevalent in schools serving high poverty children (Firestone, Monfils, & Schorr, 2004). The curriculum objectives, aligned to benchmarks and testing, were too numerous to accomplish a depth of understanding and thus defined a narrowing of the curriculum (Abrams, Padulla & Madaus, 2003). The combined needs of students and demands for a fast-paced set of objectives made it

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difficult for participants to provide access to deeper ways of understanding content using the traditional approaches.

Access Granted: Arts-Based Classrooms Surpass Obstacles of School Turnaround

The participants in this study are not numb to these obstacles nor are they married to the problems. Rather, they demonstrate the ability to take the time to identify the areas they do have control over and they change the curriculum to incorporate the arts despite the obstacles turnaround schools present. Their passion about the curriculum circumnavigates the obstacles of time and testing. In fact, the participants in this study find intrinsic motivation in their work and create spaces for their students to develop an intrinsic motivation to learn while still meeting or exceeding the growth goals set in their schools. As a result, *both* teachers and learners are more invested in their work, find more joy in their classroom, and encounter more engagement in the lessons. Their work in engaged pedagogy "begins with an assumption that we learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher" (hooks, 2010, p. 7).

Participants moved forward with their students in a solutions-oriented approach. As Ayers (1995) remarks, "The challenge, again, is to find out what students can do, what they enjoy, what engages their imaginations or energies. Seeing children 'at promise' is the antidote for all the talk of children at-risk" (p.7). Sensing that their students needed more than what was prescribed, participants were drawn to change curriculum to include arts-rich elements and deepen the learning without changing scope and sequence. They adopted arts-based instruction to grant their students access to not only content but also learning how to think about the content, in turn, viewing their students in previously failing schools as, "at promise" rather than at-risk.
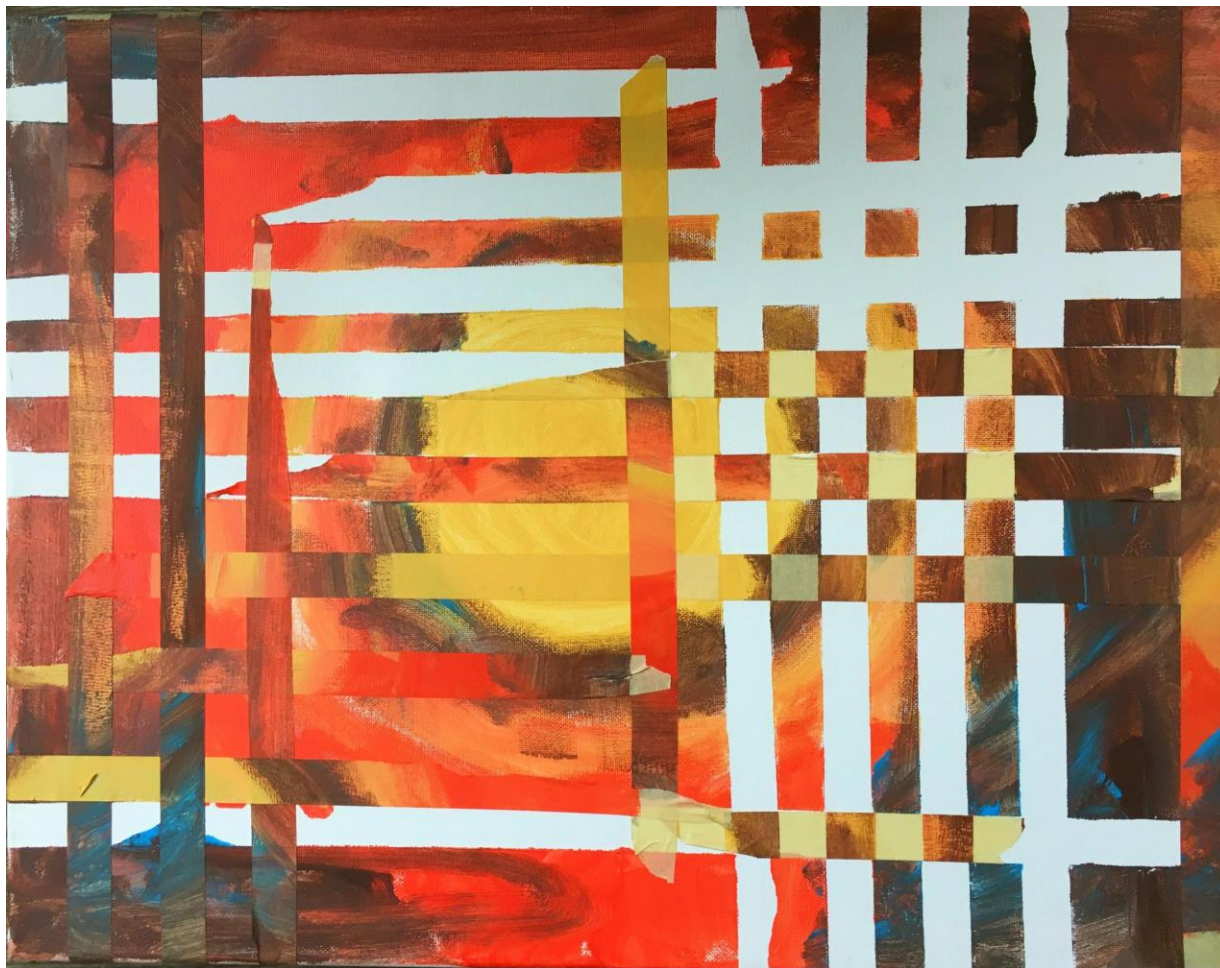
Figure 12. Moctezuma. (2017). *Change.* Acrylic and Collage on Canvas

Weaving Change Within Curriculum

Once participants found their locus of control over teaching and learning, they choose

optimal points in the curriculum to engage students and create learning opportunities through the

arts. The process they used to find these intersections and change their curriculum is illustrated in

Figure 12, Change. Multiple participants spoke towards the number of objectives they were

asked to cover in a school year. They describe this requirement as understandable, but separate

and isolating from the learning process and the needs of their students. The image in *Figure 12,*

Change, depicts Lewin's change theory (Medley & Okan, 2008) through the experience of teachers who change their curriculum. The objectives of the scope and sequence are represented in this piece by white lines, in the stage before they are unfrozen. These lines were created by applying tape to the canvas prior to adding color in a symbolic action of adhering to material prior to changing it. Because changing curriculum to an arts-rich approach does not represent straying from the objectives, but rather changing the way in which the objectives are taught to benefit students, the objectives initially laid down as tape remained a crucial part of the composition.

The colors were chosen from the combination of colors that comprise fire or a flame expressing the desire teachers have to implement and unfreeze curriculum to incorporate elements that help their students engage in learning. It is this desire that precipitated the change process for teachers. When the tape was removed, the canvas was changed, the objectives were clarified in their starkness, and then woven together with the bright colors once layered externally. This connection of content to color symbolizes the intentional use of arts-based instruction to deepen learning and respond to student needs.

The choice to use a weaving in this image is a nod to Ms. Turquoise's volcano painting (See *Figure 4)*. Most students in the United States, whether they have access to the arts or not, have taken construction paper to weave a placemat at some point in their academic career. This weaving represents the change process. It intentionally shows tears in the tape and imperfect alignment. The process of change is not a perfect one, but rather a consistent cycle of trial and error as participants note. As Fried (1996) relates in, *The Passionate Teacher,* "A change has to be shared, fussed over, kicked around, and reshaped until it feels comfortable" (p. 49).

The canvas looks intentionally unfinished as the process of change for participants in this study is forward moving. Changing curriculum indicated a change in approach, the definition of arts-rich learning. Changing curriculum also indicated finding the appropriate fit for arts-rich instruction at the right time. According to participant responses, arts-rich learning opened the door for struggling students to strengths-based learning. Teachers listened deeply to their students, and as Deci (1995) suggests, students will show you how to teach them if you listen. This deep listening and change in curriculum supports teacher autonomy and initiative (Werner & Smith, 1989).

Autonomy with Support Generates Change

The literature on teachers in turnaround schools suggests little room for authorship (Moore, 2012). Yet, participants also have the ability and belief that making a change to include the arts is a viable part of engagement and pedagogy. The cycle of change in an arts-rich classroom and examples are made visible by Ly's example in Table 2-1. Working to bolster the implementation of the curriculum requires time and for some, assistance. Nevertheless, all participants found a way to change the curriculum to incorporate arts-rich strategies. Participants in this study used their personal time to make these changes and many attended professional development or worked with teaching artists at their own discretion. They noted that their classroom environments improved and student metacognitive skills increased as a result of their efforts. Teachers in this study incorporating the arts are engaging in a quality change (Seidel et al., 2009) and have the skillset to do so. As evidenced by the lesson plan chart (Table 3-1) participants found the right fit to author change and include the arts, a viable part of engagement and pedagogy. Belinda Williams (2003) expands on Lisa Delpit's (1995) definition of a good

teacher as a teacher who, "holds visions of us [students] we could not imagine for ourselves" to a consistent definition of turnaround teachers. The participants in this study consistently alter their curriculum to bring forward the strengths of their students when they decided to make changes. Teachers took action and found access codes. They improved their scores, were granted autonomy, and leveraged tools to help them change curriculum so it did not disrupt the existing school structures. Participants found that the use of the arts in turnaround schools generated a space to adhere to protocol and scope and sequence, while opening the learning to engage their students.

Figure 13. Moctezuma. (2017). *Access Granted.* Digital Collage.

Arts-Rich Classrooms as a Path to Core Content

In this digitally photographed assemblage, multiple hands are raised, representing engagement and questioning. In the theory of engaged pedagogy, teacher and learner work together and learn from one another. The digital collage in *Figure 13, Access Granted,* combines references to two seminal works by M.C. Escher. The first, *Hand with Reflecting Sphere* (1935) is a self-portrait in which the artist is holding a reflective ball with his face in the center. The second, *Drawing Hands (1948),* is an image in which the hands are drawing one another into existence. *Figure 13* combines these ideas together and appropriates a cellphone as a modern day version of a pencil in *Drawing Hands*. The cellphone, intentionally chosen for its ability to turn on the subject matter itself as *Drawing Hands* did, would not appear in the image if the other hand were not holding it. In this way, photographer and photographed are working together as the teacher and learner do, and are actually one and the same through engaged pedagogy.

The use of the sphere was chosen as a way to illustrate the access that teachers create for their students using an arts-rich approach. The reflection in a sphere allows us to see beyond our peripheral vision. Many participants noted an increase of hands up when they were using arts strategies in their classrooms as the question sets shifted from right and wrong answers to thinking about thinking. In *Figure 13,* Multiple hands are shown raised in the air, examining the environment around them. The student ability to wonder and question was facilitated by the use of arts in their classroom. In this way, the student world of learning transitioned from flat to three dimensional, and extended beyond the peripheral vision of the curriculum. When students raise their hand in this context, they are able to see what is around the objective, and not just the objective itself, similar to concept of the mirror created by Ms. Sanders *(Figure 9).*

The data collection and coding process revealed that participants see an arts-rich classroom as a path to their core content areas. Teachers willingly took the time to determine how to help the curriculum fit the needs of their students. Participants cited higher energy, more participation, willingness to question, increased problem-solving skills and metacognition as a result of their work, they also cited higher energy and engagement themselves. "Teachers may feel posed with a binary choice, rich, traditional focus on content, or a commitment to in-depth student engagement in critical issues, but for a passionate teacher, it's got to be both!" (Fried, 1996, p. 49). In addition to meeting the objectives set forward by their scope and sequence, the use of an arts-rich classroom facilitates a classroom of engaged pedagogy.

Figure 14. Moctezuma. (2017). *Contagious Practice.* Digital Photographs

Participants Experience the Use of an Arts-Rich Curriculum as Contagious Practice

The grouping of photos in *Figure 14, Contagious Practice,* depicts trees reflected in water accumulated after a summer rain. As colleagues began to see reflections of their work in student performance, classroom culture, administrative approval, and metacognition, they felt the contagion of arts-rich classrooms, as water continues to move to the next open space. The reflection in these images suggests that the choices made by participants flow into the practices of their colleagues. Multiple reflections are shown as this contagious practice requires malleable

practice, meaning that what works for one classroom may not work for another. It is the idea of bringing the arts into core content, not the lesson plan that spreads like water after a storm.

Teachers are the Change Drivers

In this study, teachers are the change drivers (Fullan, 2012). They find the right fit for arts-based learning and become intimate with their curriculum in such a way that their administration responds with accolades or promotions. Per Fullan's concept of the right drivers, teachers using an arts-rich approach are able to take fragmented strategies and "bind them into a cohesive forward moving approach" (Fullan, 2012). When students respond to the work and learning style presented by their teachers, curriculum changes as does the perspective of colleagues and administration. This positions teachers as the change agents.

Collaborative Practice

Many participants cited at least one example of a time when a colleague began to try a variety of approaches as a result of their own work. Participants also mentioned that their confidence level in applying these approaches came from trial and error, and from working with teaching artists collaboratively in their classrooms, accessing the teacher as an intellectual in a combination of push and support (Gulamhussein, 2013). In this regard, contagious practice occurred both within and outside of the classroom. Teachers felt empowered to change their curriculum once they had a chance to "try on" those changes with a teaching artist in the room, or to work collaboratively. This supports the concept that the most successful professional developments, "do not rely on university people, curriculum specialists, gurus or outsiders of any kind. Rather, they are teacher-run, small, informal and personal" (Ayers, 1995, p. 63).

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Since teachers are boots on the ground, mobilizing and activating student learning, their successes are a naturally contagious practice for both their peers and their administrators. Their collaboration with students is a lever likely to produce change in turnaround schools. In one of the three schools, the initiative of arts-rich curriculum was contagious to an administration that previously mandated quiet classes where students took notes. The teacher next to his office tells us that he now sees arts-rich approaches as an "opportunity for kids to develop a deeper understanding of content and critically think in less traditional ways. It also infuses joy into the classrooms" (Personal communication, June 20, 2017). This arts-rich environment generates learning among and between students and teachers such that all are growing.

Analysis of Arts-Based Research

This research sought to look deeply into the experience of teachers who chose to implement an arts-rich curriculum in turnaround schools using the same approach for research that teachers use in their classrooms. This approach added a layer to the research, and merits reflection for its fit into the phenomenological processes. While not all arts-based data was visual, the contributions of artwork were a "tool for the production of data. The visual has reached a new dimension. It has become *generative"* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p. 99) meaning that it creates new ideas and makes room for depth of analysis. From the perspective of this research, the arts allowed both access to concepts and ideas that otherwise would have been omitted from participants and deepened the analysis process for the researcher.

Participant Artwork

Participant artwork framed the conversation that took place in the focus group, and honed in on the results teachers and students experience as a result of this change in curriculum. The process of making the artwork proved helpful to participants as well. Ms. Sanders speaks about what it meant to her to create her piece, *The Mirrored Curriculum* (*Figure 9).*

> I have been figuring this [creating an arts rich classroom] out as I went and trying to support other people doing it for the first time too. The mirror *(Figure 9)* was my first anchor... That really just came to me when I was thinking about it because I feel like reflection has been one of the biggest parts of my experience with this [arts-based instruction] having never done it before. Having no concept of what arts integration meant or looked like or sounded like and just having to kind of try it on my own and reflect back and change it as I go. So that was like the anchor for me for this piece. (Focus Group, May 30, 2017).

The artwork helped Ms. Sanders synthesize the purpose behind her choice to use the arts in her curriculum. Mr. Wheeler commented similarly, but added that writing his piece, *Comparison of Days* (See Appendix H) gave him the opportunity to reflect more so than the traditional interview process.

> I guess doing the art piece on it [using arts in his classroom] just gave me some time to sit and go through my feelings rather than just having the questions asked to me and trying to think on the spot. In both, I got points across, but I felt that I got a lot more personal reflection out of the art. (Focus Group, May 30, 2017).

After Ms. Taylor shared her piece, she commented on the process of looking at one another's artwork.

> Just hearing the other, the connections that we are all kind of in this together and we might feel like certain thing speak to who is in the room ... this is the foundation- here is how we can throw ourselves in it and change and grow. So thank you for sharing your reactions with me. (Focus Group, May 30, 2017)

The process of creating, sharing, and reflecting on the art pieces in the focus group deepened the participant experience and the content made available in a way that the traditional approaches would not have.

Visual Analysis

From the researcher's perspective, the ability to use visual artwork to synthesize themes enabled a deeper and more articulate analysis, just as using arts in the classroom enabled a deeper entry into curriculum. Irwin and Springgay (2008) speak to this merge of art and education in research identity:

> Both artists and educators are concerned with learning, change, understanding, and interpretations. It is in this complex space of the in-between that the disposition of inquiry brings us to a researcher identity through an implicit and explicit commitment to ongoing living inquiry across the domains of art and education. (p. 110)

The use of the arts brought forward both data and analysis structures that would not have otherwise emerged, adding an additional layer to the researcher and increasing awareness and understanding of the topic. Art was not created for art's sake, but rather used as a tool to achieve a deeper understanding of the subject of teachers who chose to use arts-rich approaches in their

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classrooms. Eisner (1997) charges educational researchers to "create opportunities for heightened states of awareness" (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2007, p. 239). In this way, arts-based research provided the ideal overlay for a phenomenological study. The use of the arts in the research process allowed heightened understanding of themes, participants, and the research process.

Implications for the Field

The data gathered leads to several implications of this study listed and explicated below. The incorporation of the arts through engaged pedagogy suggests a potential shift in lesson plan structures from the gradual release model known as, I do-we do-you do (Fisher & Frey, 2008) to You do-we do-you do. In addition, working to find the right fit for arts-based instruction develops a teacher into a curriculum bricoleur (Marshall, 2014). An arts-rich classroom benefits from the partnership of teaching artists and professional development. It is a feasible way to continue with scope and sequence while deepening the learning process. Finally, because of the malleability of application, the use of arts in core content classrooms is a scalable model for turnaround schools.

Changing the Rhythm of a Lesson

Teachers who chose to incorporate arts into their classrooms find energy, joy, and community with their students. This increased positivity has the potential to contribute to a classroom that fosters active and engaged learners regardless of their academic level. Their classrooms follow the traditional curriculum but often change the order or manner of instruction. Ms. Harper asks students to act out what they know about a subject in social studies prior to "teaching it." Mr. Piper requires students to interpret text using soundscapes and tableaus before

he announced the objective. Ms. Ly used the same reversal of gradual release when she began with See Think Wonder ("Visible Thinking," 2017) and omitted direct instruction for her unit on perimeter and area. This change in cognitive lift and teacher approach resulted in low-performing students performing higher than their peers in classrooms that followed the traditional format on benchmark exams. This shifts the instructional framework from a gradual release of responsibility, (I-do, we-do, you-do), (Fisher & Frey, 2008) to an initial task for responsibility via engaged pedagogical practices (You do-we do-you do), suggesting the arts can be leveraged to help students engage in core content.

Strategic Implementation of Curriculum

An arts-rich environment needs to be scaffolded and put into place by teachers who can find the suitable places in their curriculum. Moving the needle to creative instruction does not mean replacing curriculum or operating outside of the system. It does however, require an investigation into the curriculum and an intentional search for pliable areas for the arts to deepen core content learning. Teachers in this study worked collaboratively with students to find the right approach to teaching for the learner and teacher. The participants worked with a teaching artist in their classrooms who helped them identify the areas of curriculum and strategies that fit their scope and sequence. In addition, they have all attended a great deal of professional development in arts integration. The combination of instructional prowess, one-on-one support from teaching artists, professional development, and the process of engaged pedagogy appears to help a teacher grow from a content expert to what Julia Marshall terms a curriculum bricoleur, (2014). Using arts-based instruction develops teachers who can both deconstruct and reconstruct curriculum to the benefit of their students at minimal time and financial cost to the school.

Teachers Engage in Their Own Learning

Not only do teachers in this study feel called to teaching as a vocation, but they are afforded the space to grow in creativity with the implementation of their curriculum. Many were supported by teaching artists or professional development that helped them to sculpt out the right fit of arts-rich instruction to scope and sequence. Participants who choose to incorporate the arts into their curriculum become more invested in their work and find more joy in their own careers, leading them to stay in the classroom and into leadership roles. A study by The New Teacher Project (2012) suggests that a replacement for a high-quality teacher in a low-performing school has a one in eleven chance of being of similar quality. The participants in this study meet the qualifications of "irreplaceables" (teachers who get academic results and have engaging classrooms) and stay in the teaching profession (The New Teacher Project, 2012).

Several examples of longevity and growth opportunities were reported at the end of the year by participants and their school leaders. Over the course of this study, Ms. Perry was named teacher of the year in her city, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Turquoise, Ms. Howard, Ms. Vicks, Ms. Sanders, and Mr. Piper were moved into lead curriculum positions and/or their leadership teams alongside of their classroom instruction. Seven out of eleven participants moved into teacher leader and curriculum leader positions despite their varying years of experience, suggesting that their approach is effective not only in their eyes, but in the eyes of the administration in their turnaround schools.

That being said, teachers engaging the arts follow jobs that fill their needs. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year (the year that data was collected for this study) Ms. Hall moved to a school she felt would give her more responsibility in curriculum, Ms. Dime moved to a school

where she felt she would have more freedom with her curriculum. Ms. Perry moved to a school where she felt she could have more autonomy. These three teachers are committed to the work of school turnaround, and feel the need to do so on their own terms. When teachers choosing to infuse arts into their classroom are granted academic freedom and a community of support, they flourish and stay in a difficult school landscape.

Arts-Rich Instruction is a Scalable Model for Turnaround Schools

The participants in this study invest in existing assets and therefore experience success in turnaround schools. They are not purchasing additional curriculum, expensive materials and supplies or complicated strategies, but rather leveraging the arts into what can be simply defined as good teaching. Investing in professional development or teaching artists to help teachers learn the right fit for these strategies presents the opportunity to develop teachers who are hungry to grow, and therefore retain them in turnaround schools. The findings also revealed that this work is contagious. When colleagues notice the results in the participant classrooms, they begin to try strategies and ask questions. Staff develop staff. These positive returns on investment make arts-rich instruction a scalable model for turnaround schools.

Future Studies

The research conducted for this study presented several additional questions for future studies.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Critical Race Theory Applications

Emergent in participant answers were ideas about culturally relevant pedagogy and critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This study used engaged pedagogy as a theoretical lens and did not go into depth about the implications of race, ethnicity, and background as it relates to arts-rich instruction. The content included in this approach to

curriculum merits a study aligning content choice to student successes through the lens of critical race theory or culturally relevant pedagogy.

Administrative Approach to Creative Instruction in Turnaround Schools

Without the authorization of the school leader and/or school district to change the delivery of core content, creative instruction cannot take place in turnaround schools. Many participants spoke about their experience of supportive and non-supportive leadership in their efforts to incorporate the arts. The experience and perspective of the leaders in turnaround schools is not included in this study. Looking at the incorporation of an arts-rich approach in turnaround schools through the eyes of school leaders may bring additional benefits, concerns, and needs to the surface. Ms. Sanders shared a quotation from her school leader that she used when giving a professional development on her use of improv in the classroom:

> I used to think arts integration was going to be something extra that was going to be put on the plate of teachers. I was worried that given how busy our staff members already are that this would be something additional that could be perceived as overwhelming or another thing to have to do. Now I think that arts integration is not only a great strategy for students, but it's a great professional development opportunity for our teachers. Our teachers are working with teaching artists, attending and leading arts integrated professional development, collaborating and sharing strategies and incorporating tools into their teaching repertoire. Arts integration has been an awesome learning opportunity for our staff and it's had a big value add for our teachers. (Professional Development, June 27, 2017)

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Unearthing more ideas from a leadership perspective may also contribute to contagious practice in a turnaround school.

Student Response to Creative Instruction in Turnaround Schools

One of the objectives of an arts-rich approach in school turnaround is to create a style of implementing curriculum that pays attention to unique learning needs of struggling learners. Student voice and opinion about their teacher's approaches comes forward in this research through the opinion of the teachers but not from the voices of the students. Asking students about their experience of arts-rich instruction would direct a future study to the clients that schools serve. It holds the potential to reveal targeted learning needs from the voice of the learners themselves.

Conclusion

Ultimately the participants in this study have used the arts as a key for their students to access core content in school turnaround. Through this process, they have created, in their eyes, a more joyful classroom environment, engaged struggling learners who had never raised their hand before, and interested their colleagues in their work. They are staying in the schools that most struggle with teacher retention. They are accomplishing their growth goals. They are passionate teachers with a vocational calling to give their students their absolute best. In return, they ask only for tools that make them better practitioners, high expectations for them on the part of school leaders, and the time for collegial decision making and planning (Benard, 2003).

The participants are also high-quality practitioners, who are able to hone their practice in the implementation of arts-rich curriculum, making room for mystery and magic (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010) in their learning. The use of arts in this research project added the same elements

for participants and researcher alike. The use of the arts in their classrooms became a tool not only for access to content but for the building of community and engagement for struggling learners. These results reach the core of the deficiencies turnaround schools attempting to overturn.

Closing with words of Irwin and Springgay (2008), it seems that "arts-based educational research not only shifts the focus to how we inquire but also models a new vision of curriculum. Arts-based research demonstrates strategies that might inform our thinking about how we allow students to exhibit their coming to know" (p. 244). After gathering the experiences of the eleven participants in this study, it is the hope of the researcher that all teacher and students continue to find their "coming to know" as they work to turn around schools.

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Appendix A: History of Arts Education Policy

1983: *Nation at Risk* (Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education) raises red flag for state of education in the United States as a whole.

1988: The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) highlights especially poor state of art education in United States in *Toward Civilization: A Report on Arts Education.* NEA begins to make moves for arts education to be an educational right in congruence with changing school approaches emerging across the board.

1990: *Building a Case for Arts Education* by John McLaughlin, uses 100 studies to make a case for art education.

1994: Congress approves *The Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, which included art in raising expectations for students. *Improving America's Schools Act* connects arts to deeper learning in core content areas as well as important in and of themselves.

Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future is published by NEA. New York University and University of Illinois established as Arts Education research centers.

1999: *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* demonstrated that students participating in the arts generally surpassed their peers on traditional measures of academic achievement.

2002: *No Child Left Behind* passes into law introducing accountability and high-stakes testing. Arts were included as a core subject under this act as well, but rhetoric and practice did not align. One ramification of this law was a narrowing of the arts curriculum and arts offerings in public schools. (Ruppert, 2006; Sabol, 2010)

2008: President Barack Obama's *Arts Policy Campaign* proposed allocating funding for arts education as a strategy to bolster the American promises of "creativity and innovation." (Center for School Turnaround).

2011: The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) publishes *Reinvesting in Education Repor*t noting significant creativity and achievement increases in low-performing schools with the arts (PCAH, 2011).

2012: *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies* finds a positive relationship between arts integration and improved student learning and engagement from all socio-economic backgrounds. PCAH launches Turnaround Arts in 8 failing schools across the country and reports significant math and ELA gains in relation to comparable neighboring SIG schools as well as decreased behavioral issues. (Catterall, Dumais & Hampden-Thompson)

2014: National Coalition for Core Arts Standards publishes its first revision of *National Arts Standards* in 20 years

2015: President Obama signs the *Every Student Succeeds Act* into law and opens Title One funding to arts via state allocation.

THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW ORLEANS

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Patricia Austin in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of New Orleans. I am conducting a research study to investigate the lived experience of teachers using an arts-rich classroom as a reform methodology in underperforming turnaround schools. I am requesting your participation, which will involve participating in one sixty-minute interview, creating one art piece, and convening for one hour in a focus group, along with the submission of a lesson plan or any student work that best exemplifies your practice. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published, but your name and school will not be used.
Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is an increased understanding in the experience of teachers seeking to use arts as a strategy in their classroom. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me or Dr. Austin (504)280-4824 or Jennie (504)355-7270.

Sincerely,
Jennie Moctezuma

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (The interviews will be recorded for transcription and then deleted after coding. Additionally, if you chose to include yourself in your artwork, it will be coded and returned to you but the image will not be included in the study to maintain confidentiality).

_____ _____ _____

Signature Printed Name Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, please contact Dr. Ann O'Hanlon at the University of New Orleans (504) 280-3990.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

This interview protocol was designed to follow a river and channel approach to a semi-structured interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questions start broad and sequence themselves to more specific topics in regards to the teacher experience of using the arts in the classroom. The questions are intentionally geared towards experience as this is a phenomenological study.

- Let's start with a career/resume walk.
- What brought you to the teaching profession?
- What has your experience been in the teaching profession?
- Tell me about your choice to work in a turnaround school?
- Tell me about the challenges/growth opportunities you experience in a turnaround school if any?
- What is your experience of high-stakes testing in your career/this school?
- Tell me about your experience with the curriculum in a turnaround school?
- What is your definition of an arts-rich classroom?
- Tell me about your choice to incorporate the arts?
- What decisions have you made to make your classroom an arts-rich environment?
- What is your experience of incorporating the arts into your classroom?
- Can you tell me about a time where you chose to incorporate the arts and walk me through that choice?

...Would you do it again for that lesson?

- Have you noticed any differences in your classroom since incorporating the arts?
    - ...your students?
    - ...your teaching style?
    - ...your curriculum?
    - ...the classroom environment?
    - ...your peers?
    - ...administrative approach?
    - ...other outcomes?
- If you were coaching other teachers creating an arts-rich room, what would you tell them?
- Is there anything about your experience incorporating the arts in a turnaround school we have not talked about that you would like to add?

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this study. We have spent the past hour talking about your experience of using art in your core content classroom in a turnaround school. The next phase of data collection will use an arts-based approach.

ART-BASED RESEARCH: Please create a piece of art, in any format you wish (paint a picture, write a song, write a poem, design and execute a performance) etc. that reflects your experience of incorporating the arts into the curriculum of your current classroom.

MATERIALS: If your artwork requires any materials that you need in order to complete the piece, please advise and I will purchase them and deliver them to your school. If you choose a performance, please record it. I am available to film for you should you so wish.

FOCUS GROUP: A doodle poll will be sent out shortly to find a date which works for all six participants to take part in a focus group that will be run in the format of an art critique. Please bring your artwork to this focus group.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your participation in this study will remain confidential, and I will use a copy of your piece/performance in looking for themes in research analysis. If your image is included in your piece, I will then return it to you and it will not be included in the final document to maintain confidentiality.

Appendix E: Art Critique Protocol

Description

Describe the work without using value words such as "beautiful" or "ugly":

- What is the written description on the label or in the program about the work?
- What is the title and who is (are) the artist(s)?
- When and where was the work created?
- Describe the elements of the work (i.e., line movement, light, space).
- Describe the technical qualities of the work (i.e., tools, materials, instruments).
- Describe the subject matter. What is it all about? Are there recognizable images?

Analysis

Describe how the work is organized as a complete composition:

- How is the work constructed or planned (i.e., acts, movements, lines)?
- Identify some of the similarities throughout the work (i.e., repetition of lines, two songs in each act).
- Identify some of the points of emphasis in the work (i.e., specific scene, figure, movement).
- If the work has subjects or characters, what are the relationships between or among them?

Interpretation

Describe how the work makes you think or feel:

- Describe the expressive qualities you find in the work. What expressive language would you use to describe the qualities (i.e., tragic, ugly, funny)?
- Does the work remind you of other things you have experienced (i.e., analogy or metaphor)?
- How does the work relate to other ideas or events in the world and/or in your other studies?

Evaluation

Present your opinion of the work's success:

- What qualities of the work make you feel it is a success?
- Compare it with similar works.
- What criteria can you list to help others think about this work.

Adapted from: ArtsEdge, Kennedy Center. Retrieved from: https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/how-to/tipsheets/student-critique.aspx

University of New Orleans Institutional Review Board
APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Provide an abstract of your project (do not exceed 250 words).

Increased metacognition, social-emotional growth and career viability are all researched benefits of including the arts as part of core content instruction, with even greater impact on struggling students, English Language Learners, and students with special needs (Asbury & Rich, 2008; Catterall, 2009). This approach is distinctly missing from many chronically low achieving schools with this population of students. However, some turnaround schools are beginning to implement an arts-rich method of school reform by teaching core content both through and in the arts (Deasy, 2002). This approach is most often presented as a choice, not a mandate in the high-stakes testing environment of turnaround schools, meaning that teachers are constructing the curriculum, pacing, and strategy of arts in their classroom. Since teachers have the most direct impact on students, yet often the least amount of authorship in the way school reform is approached, their voice and experience is invaluable to the potential to scale this model. By analyzing the teacher experience, this project intends to add to the body of research how teacher initiated change to include the arts has the potential to impact teaching and learning in turnaround schools.

The participants in this study are from three public turnaround charter schools in the South. The researcher will use traditional research methods of field observations, field notes, and semi-structured interviews. The researcher will also use an arts-based research approach, asking participants to create an art piece about their experience and participate in a focus group with their final piece. Arts-based research therefore expands but does not replace traditional research methods in this heuristic, phenomenological research study.

2. Provide a brief description of the background, purpose, and design of your research.

An arts-rich environment is one in that a school uses the arts not only in the arts classrooms, but as a method of whole school reform. In this model, art teachers are hired, arts are used to transform the environment and teachers in core content areas incorporate arts into their approach to lesson plans. This definition in recent years has been applied to 68 underperforming schools across the country through a program funded by Americans for the Arts as a system of whole school reform in the nation's lowest performing schools. These schools have reported decreased issues in behavior and suspensions, increased attendance, and increased reading and math scores on a statistically significant level since starting a whole school reform approach through the arts (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 2011). Nevertheless, implementation of the type of curriculum and instruction required to implement arts in the tested areas in schools labeled as underperforming faces many obstacles. These obstacles can include frequent staff and leadership turnover, high-stakes testing, scripted curriculums, and frequent observations by district and curriculum coaches who are unfamiliar with arts integration strategies

(Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2006).

This phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994) proposes to unearth the lived experiences of up to twelve teachers in underperforming schools using arts as a curricular strategy. These teachers will be selected based on their quantitative use of the arts, participation in arts professional development, and in arts leadership teams. They will participate in one sixty-minute semi-structured interview, one field observation, one art project through arts-based research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and one focus group and include any work or lesson plans that they feel best exemplifies their experience. They will be interviewed and asked to share anecdotal evidence about using arts in their classrooms. All participants will be voluntary and will not be compensated. Both the interviews and focus group transcript will be coded using axial coding, and themes will be identified both through coding and arts-based research. The researcher will create a conceptual portrait of the themes found in the coding process using arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012). This study will serve to assist other teachers in low-performing urban schools consider the arts as a method of curriculum implementation. This is particularly relevant in the era of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* that opens Title One funding to the arts.

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Appendix G: Letter of IRB Approval

**University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans**

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Patricia Austin

Co-Investigator: Jennie Moctezuma

Date: August 22, 2017

Protocol Title: What is the lived experience of teachers choosing to use arts in their curriculum as a mechanism of school reform in turnaround schools?

IRB#: 05Apr17

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101category 2, due to the fact that any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project.
Sincerely,

Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Appendix H: Protecting Human Research Participants

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Jennie Moctezuma** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 05/31/2016.
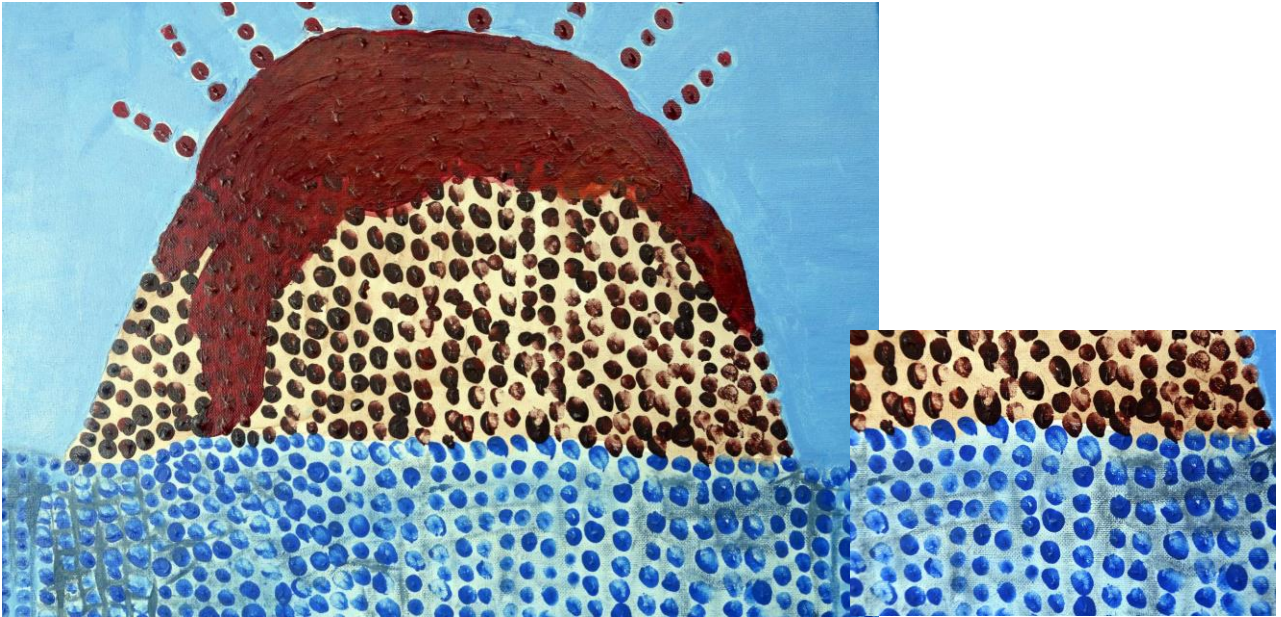
Certification Number: 2085723.

Figure 5. Turquoise. (2017). *Original art integration.* Acrylic on canvas.

So there is actually a few varying thoughts that I tried to encourage with this art piece. The first thing, it is supposed to be a volcano. I chose a volcano because when I think of arts integration the volcano project is the first thing that comes to mind – the original arts integration in science class- even before this was the thing. Every science class had the vinegar, soda volcano. And so I kind of wanted to take that mindset and run with it. Those dots are fingerprints and they are the fingerprints of my students. And so, before they put their fingers on this canvass, they were instructed to think of a time of our class. So I find that each dot represents a time in my class. So not all dots are perfect circles, but some are. And I feel like I conveyed that we had some classes where a perfect circle would not be appropriate to represent that day. But we had

some pretty good ones. And as you get higher you can see on top especially those red dots are pretty gnarly. They are pretty round and painted in which kind of like shows a level of certainty. So starting off, we really didn't know what we were doing but we kept trying so all those dots are still there. And as we get to the solid lava, there is a level of less certainty in the class. Everything on here was painted by someone's hand. So it is kind of like a comment of hands-on approach. And it is not a perfect volcano but for the most part, we knew it was a volcano. It is not a perfect ocean, but we knew it was water. And the sky isn't perfect but we knew it was the sky which I think is what my class is really representing. All my students knew what was happening to some degree and they were all part of my art. The only thing I did was the certainty of the red. So the red sludge – this is solid. This is like the actual content, if you will. That is going to stay the same, but everything else is fluid and fingerings could change and the students had the flexibility about which color they were going to put where. There wasn't an outline. They did this themselves.

Ms. Harper
It's Theater Every Day

"Good morning everyone".
"Good morning Ms. Howard"
"Do we have theater today?"
"It's theater every day!"

Tableau
Freeze
Action
Movement
Up and down
Kids all around

Sing
Dance
Jump
Swing
Eyes on me
Kids working on beat

Smiles
"Yay"
Frowns
"I don't wanna do this today"
1-2-3
Kids out their feet

We the people
Alexander Hamilton
Political parties
Civil and American War
Concepts come alive
Kids begin to thrive

Games
Songs
Voices
Paper
Laughter in the class
Made the year to pass

Once a week hardly seemed like enough

Time
Fly
Live
Learn
Yearn
Good
Art
Create
Kids
Learn
They did it themselves
Process
Believe
Join
History
Art
Create
Kids
Learn

I couldn't have asked for anything more
My year
Their year
Amazing
Beautiful

Tableau
Freeze
Action
Movement
Up and down
Kids all around

"Ms. Howard, do we have theater today?!"
"Oh my dear its theater every day!!!"

Figure 7. Ly. (2017). *Illustrated song*. Crayon and Marker on Paper.

"Ready. Nine, eighteen, twenty-seven, thirty-six, forty-five, fifty-four, sixty-three, seventy-two, eighty-one, ninety, ninety-nine, one-o-eight. Feeling good, feeling great, uh huh. Seven, fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-eight, thirty-five, forty-two (double clap) forty-nine, fifty-six (clap) sixty-three, seventy, (double clap) seventy-seven, eighty-four (double claps). Let me hear you roll some more. Clap your hands and stomp the floor. Now it's time to roll our fours. Four and eight,

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twelve, sixteen, twenty, twenty-four, twenty-eight, thirty-two, thirty-six, forty, forty-four, forty-eight. Watch out, we know how to roll our fours. Dance break. Eight, sixteen, twenty-four, thirty-two, forty. Cut the fours down here, cut the fours up there. Forty-eight (double clap) fifty-six (double clap) sixty-four (double clap) seventy-two (double clap) eighty. Got the eights down here, got the eights up there. Eighty-eight (double clap) ninety-six (double clap)."

Those are times table worksheets. There is a 100x table question on each page so that is 900 math fact questions there. And I think about when I was in school having to memorize multiplication facts, like that is what we did, right? Nine hundred multiplication facts so you just got through your brain. And so when I think about being a math teacher. I wanted to bring joy to the classroom. My contribution is to color it up a bit like I did. I wrote all these songs. Kids learned to sing these chants to help them memorize the multiplication facts instead of just doing page after page of multiplication facts. So that is my contribution as a teacher to make the classroom more colorful but then like someone was saying gets put together as one big thing and kids walk away just thinking: "I love math, I am so good at it." So from the very bottom line I need to do 900 multiplication facts and you don't even remember because the next layer. I brought some joy into it. So you walk away only thinking, I love math and I am so good at it.

Ms. Taylor Performance Piece, *Shout Out*

Shout out to the turkey hats
emboldened by
content objectives
Shout out to lines, curvy
straight, zigged zagged
and dashed
Shout out to the art & sculptures
they helped us
create
Here's to every scene we
froze with tableau
And every time Ms. T.
pushed us with,
"What more do you see?"
Here's to the expression beyond
written or spoken
word
Shout out to our teaching
        artist Ms. G
        who was brave enough to
give
        every kid a turn
        every time no matter how
        slowly
        the clock ticked
Shout out to kindergarteners
        who learned to
        collaborate and share and
        present work
         in a group

Shout out to the newly minted
        actors, dancers and
        singers, directors,
        choreographers and song
        writers who can all look
        back and say
        they made their debut at
        age 5 in room 102
Here's to the audience, the
        next generation of patrons
        to the arts
A moment of silence for
        the casualties
        of our learning:
        dried markers,
        strewn paper clippings
        ALL of the
        glue sticks
Shout out to the adults
        who know kids just
        need the time space
 to show they can do it
Here's to dancing to retell
a story.
Here's to that time Kevin H.
        learned he could freestyle
        and Denim
        learned he could sing
Shout out to harnessing our
        actor's tools to become
        better performers,
        better students,
        better people

Here's to the scissors crayons
feathers yarn
        pipe cleaners glitter
        clay googly eyes
        paint canvas cardstock
    ribbon felt stickers
        and cotton balls that
        brought our vision
        to life
Here's to the glue sticks
        ...because it bears
        Repeating
Shout out to finding a new
Talent
Shout out to the freedom
        of self-expression
Shout out to the kids who
        bask in the spotlight
        to those learning
        to love it
Here's to the performances
        that made me step back
        in awe
And Shout out to those that
        made me step back
        and say, "interesting"
Shout out to the arts
Shout out to the teachers of the
Arts
And Shout out to the kids
the only ones with the power
to keep the arts alive

Ms. Hall Acrostic, *Arts Integration*

Arts Integration in Room 211?

A-rt forms that help make connections

R-igorous learning for all students

T-hinking that goes beyond the surface

S-ee, think, and I wonder what makes you say that.

I-magination strengthens complex thinking

N-ew and improved ways of demonstrating learning

T-eaching that builds connections and retention

E-laborating brings a deeper meaning to learning

G-enerating ideas that will lead to problem solving

R-easoning prompts citing evidence

A-chievements that will bridge the gap

T-eaching that creates a richer learning experience

I-nvestigation sparks observation and engagement

O-ral and written expression that deepen understanding

N-o child left behind because arts integration is the true equalizer!!

Mr. Wheeler, *Comparison of Days*

A Standard Lesson Day	An Arts-Integrated Lesson Day
Students walk and talk into the room.	Students walk and talk into the room
They sit bored, distracted or playing,	Their curious eyes catch an image on the board.
While the teacher tries to begin.	The teacher stands by it and begins.
The questions pop up on the screen.	Questions pop up by the image
Some of the students dredge up the energy or	The students dive into telling a story
caring to work.	Inspired by the image's contents
The teacher introduces the daily topic and	The teacher introduces the daily topic and
describes the activities of the day.	describes how they will act and draw to learn.
Some students engage, others try to sleep, others	Most students engage, though a few still look on
play.	with disinterest.
The lesson goes on with some students reading,	The lesson goes on with some students reading
responding, writing, and learning.	while other pantomime the tale.
While others sleep, play, or just zone out.	Those with disinterest perk up,
	Watching their friends and absorbing the story.
	Some chaos ensues, but all participate.
Finally, the teacher passes out the exit ticket.	Finally, the teacher passes out the exit ticket.
The students all hunker down to work.	The students break out their colored pencils and
Those that were engaged answer with skill	begin sketching and drawing their responses for
Those that weren't stare around in confusion, try	number 1 and number 2.
to jot something down and pray the teacher's	They scratch their heads for a moment at number
grading is merciful.	3,
	But soon write to explain their work.
That night the teacher sits grading their work.	That night the teacher sits grading their work.
A frown falls across his face when he sees	A smile crosses his face when he sees that almost
Some clearly understood,	all paid attention,
But some clearly didn't pay attention at all.	Recounting the story with pictures and words.
The teacher gets frustrated and bored	The teacher feels capable and confident as he
What can he do to make them want to learn?	reads their responses, explaining how the images
	tell the story.
	Not everyone gets it right or perfect
	But everyone tried, everyone learned.

Figure 8. Piper, (2017). *Window Panes.* Glass markers on window.

This piece is like a rehash of some of the things that we went through in a year and that is

what I was trying to remember - some of the highlights of arts integration. I think one of the

social studies projects that we did with our civil rights and our citizenship and Constitution

lessons which we used in an arts event when some of my kids were asked to perform in the

middle of the gym. They had come off of their Constitution lesson and they did a little mini-

protest choreography in the middle of the gym and it was about voting rights and Black Lives

Matter and it was kind of powerful that they spearheaded it. That was the first one I did. And

then I thought about what other elements we did with tableau from the beginning. We talked

about the Northwest Indians and it came to a proper totem that they were able to do with a frozen

statue and it seemed appropriate. And someone noticed a windmill. I re-created the lesson from

professional development. I guess the elements included improv, there was choreography, there

was creative movement, (you were there for that too). It just had to do with the story called, "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind." I did this element – it was kind of a differentiation where students got their "free to go" tab and got to get just a little slip of – they got a passage of this book and then they didn't know what the whole book was and then they had to express this in two to three to four, five sentences and then they all did it in order. They didn't know they were going to go in order and they did it through creative movement, or dance or however it was, and they all came out and we read a book together and they all kind of discovered it at the same time. It was pretty fun.

Figure 9. Sanders, (2017). *Mirrored Curriculum.* Dry erase and permanent markers on mirror.

I am probably one of the least artistic, classically artistic people on staff so they always

tease me about why I am the art person. Uh, so I figured I would embrace that and find

something that already exists and transform it into something that is meaningful. So what this is,

is a mirror. I feel like arts integration, for me, really forced me to take a good long look at myself

as an educator in the mirror and re-evaluate what I was doing and be brave and try new things.

So around the outskirts of the mirror is: image, challenge, grow and create. That is written in

permanent marker so those are the four anchors for anytime I am trying arts integration or trying

something new or also for myself and my kids as a parallel experience both to push myself and

them. Today "we" is also in permanent marker – kind of always trying to integrate on a regular

basis. And then what I did is took a whiteboard marker which is obviously easily erased for

whatever it is we try to do. It can stay there, or it can be erased. It can be fixed or adapted or like

the four verbs, they are always there – just inherently. And then in the middle, where you can

adjust, you can always go and adjust for you and your kids and it is always changing and always

getting better or more effective.

VITA

Jennie Moctezuma was raised in Louisville, KY and Pittsburgh, PA. She received her undergraduate degree in 2000 from Earlham College with a double major in Peace and Global Studies and Art. She earned her Masters of Arts in Art Education from New York University in 2007, and her Masters of Education from Columbia University, Teachers College in 2010. At the time of this publication, she was employed by a public charter school system to implement arts programming in turnaround schools.