THE ARTIST’S NOTEBOOK: DOCUMENTING THE ARTISTIC PROCESS
THROUGH NARRATIVE RESEARCH AND JOURNALING

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THE ARTIST’S NOTEBOOK: DOCUMENTING THE ARTISTIC PROCESS
THROUGH NARRATIVE RESEARCH AND JOURNALING

A Project

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Abstract

of

THE ARTIST’S NOTEBOOK: DOCUMENTING THE ARTISTIC PROCESS THROUGH NARRATIVE RESEARCH AND JOURNALING

by

Jinne Horger

This Project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway I: Artist as Educator. The focus emerged from the teacher/researcher/artist’s need to develop her artistic energy through a disciplined artistic process. The goals of the project were: to learn how to use journaling as a tool to develop aesthetic experiences, to qualitatively assess the experiences, and to integrate her own experience with research in the theory and practice of arts education. Her goal was to create an artistic process for herself that would result in an increase in aesthetic art experiences for herself and her future students. The transitory first year teacher investigated the artistic process: researching past artists’ processes, investigating the theory and practice of the arts in education, and planning the transference of narrative research findings into the classroom setting. Looking for inspiration in her own work, she simultaneously worked to organize time and a studio space in her home. The outcomes included: ongoing work in peer collaboration, journaling, developing studio time, and an outdoor painting class art show. Finally, through narrative inquiry, photographic evidence, the culminating experience of Sacramento’s Second Saturday Art’s Cohort Show, and her journals the artist carried her research forward for application in her classroom and other classrooms.

____________________, Committee Chair
Lorie Hammond, Ph.D.

___________________________

Date
DEDICATION

To my husband, Jon, and our son, Christian. As soon as Christian started using the restroom at three years old, I was back in college. This project represents the end of seven years of full-time college. My patient husband has supported me through four graduations, quitting my job to pursue college, and late night writing sessions. Thank you, Honey.

To the rest of my family and friends-thank you for your support and understanding when you got your Christmas cards in March, when you would did not hear from me for months, and when we could not get together because I had something due.

Lastly, to my advisors and teacher/research group- thank you for your patience and encouragement. Because of you I continue to, “do it with enthusiasm!”
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

Challenge Addressed

This Project is an Alternative Culminating Experience for a Master of Arts in Education: Curriculum and Instruction with an Elective Emphasis on Arts in Education. It follows Pathway I: Artist as Educator. By planning and implementing a personal pursuit of aesthetics in the arts, can a transitory first year teacher develop herself artistically? Can her research answer the question of qualitative versus quantitative aesthetics in the arts? How will she use her gained experience to create an artistic journaling experience for her students?

Rationale

Students who have limited or no aesthetic experiences in the arts are deprived of opportunities to be planners, doers, and assessors. These skills translate to all fields of work and study. Lack of teacher training, time, and resources have been to blame it the past. Creating an aesthetic experience that requires little teacher training and few supplies would allow more students to have an artistic encounter. Understanding educational research in the arts and the importance of aesthetic experiences drove the narrative inquiry of author/first year teacher/artist, Jinne Horger. The resulting documentation helped her create structures for aesthetic experiences, modeled after her own, and to become aware of prior artists’ experiences. This process not only improved her teaching, but made her a resource to other teachers seeking to reproduce similar results.

Setting

The project took place over the period of nine months: June 2009 to February 2010. After researching Theory and Practice of Arts in Education at Sacramento State, the project started in the summer, within the teacher’s home. It involved creating a studio space and beginning research on journaling. Then, the project continued into summer and fall with relevant historical and procedural research, journaling, and creating art. An outdoor painting class in the fall of 2009 resulted in an art show in December of 2009. Finally, the project ended with the completion of narrative research, reflection, and the planned July 2010 art show at Sacramento’s Second Saturday.
Procedures

The teacher began her research in June of 2009 by attempting to support her intuition that narrative research can transform education in the arts. Through revisiting research by Dewey, Eisner and others in the field of educational research she sought to understand the benefits of aesthetic art experiences. This research became content for her literature review (Chapter 2). Other content included historical research done in the summer of 2009: studying Da Vinci’s biography and the process of creating his notebooks. Da Vinci’s work inspired her to set up a structured studio in her home, and to begin journaling, generating artwork, and spending time reflecting on the process. Continuing to journal the process and working in her new art studio, she decided on painting as the medium she would further develop for the July 2010 show. She looked to her teacher/research team for support and feedback: Jennifer Wolfe, Jenny Ray, Daryl Markwick, and Linda Johnson.

In the fall of 2009, she took outdoor painting at Sacramento State with art professor Thomas Monteith. The new style of plein air painting was challenging. The artist continued her study of pedagogy and the journaling process in the fall. She read contemporary research on classroom environments and qualitative assessments in education. Finally, when preparing her work for submission to the whole group show, the artist was reminded of the quantitative vs. qualitative argument. She had to use her own aesthetic experiences to guide her choices and her rationale for selection of artwork. Research was completed by the end of fall 2009 and the author completed her literature review and most of her project.

While finishing her first three chapters, she continued her journaling process, anticipating the final cohort art show in the summer of 2010. She included her journal as further evidence of the narrative inquiry process in her culminating experience. Chapter Four includes recommendations for instruction and assessment based on the narrative process and her educational research.

During the research period of June 2009 to February 2010, the teacher continued to build artist networks, collaborate with peers, protect her structured studio time, triangulate the narrative inquiry and action research, and finally, create the documentation to be used later in reproducing meaningful arts involvement for students. This documentation included: an artist’s sketchbook, pictures of the artist’s studio, a journal of outcomes, and dialogue of the artist reflecting on her aesthetic experiences.
Research for Implementation

Determining how to organize the project, complete the narrative inquiry, and utilize the results of this project required research in the areas of: theory and practice of arts in education, art methods and artist biographies, and finally, relevant research to classroom environments and contemporary journaling. The artist began research in the summer of 2009 by investigating the theory and practice of arts in education, thus providing the justification, or “why,” for including aesthetic experiences in the classroom. This research also provided the framework for how this study could be used in the classroom setting. Her readings included: Dewey, Eisner, Berger, and several pedagogical approaches to student learning.

Research on Journaling in the Arts

Her research into creating artists’ journals involved reading more about art methods and artist biographies. These readings directed her documentation to include: planning, journaling, sketching, and thought processes. The artist chose a prolific artist/notetaker, Leonardo Da Vinci, for her research. By understanding Da Vinci’s methods, she sought to avoid pitfalls and document her artistic thought process through journaling. During the reading of the Da Vinci biography, Leonardo Da Vinci: Revised Edition, by Kenneth Clark she learned more about Da Vinci’s background, notetaking, and ideology. Seeking to create elaborate journaling similar to Da Vinci, she also studied Leonardo’s Notebooks, excerpts from Da Vinci’s artist journals, edited by H. Anna Suh.

Modern Methods for Journaling in Education and Personal Discovery

Interested in developing varied methods of journaling in education, she studied journals of contemporary teachers including: The Reggio Emilio teachers of Italy, and University of Sacramento State professor, Karen Benson. These newer approaches to journaling included a teacher collected triangulation approach, interactive notebooks, and interactive writings. “Interactive” journals are notebooks in which a teacher responds to students work in a journal and creates a dialogue between herself and the student journaler.

Studying journaling as a form of personal discovery or reawakening, the author followed Julia Cameron’s 12 step program for reviving the artistic spirit. Cameron’s program is outlined in The Artist’s Way.
Another journaling program designed to open different pathways of thought was Michael J Gelb’s *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci: Seven Steps to Genius Everyday*. The artist/researcher wanted to understand how learning is made visible through the journaling process. The research from this book brought the project full circle, relating the artistic process to increased learning. Da Vinci’s constant journaling furthered his artistic process.

**Method of Research and Documentation**

The goals of the project were: to investigate the journaling process, to learn how to use the process as a tool to develop aesthetic experiences, and to support its use within classrooms with research in the theory and practice of arts. Reading and recording pertinent elements of the artistic process from the Da Vinci readings was included in Chapter Two. Continued reading on the journaling process used by Da Vinci was incorporated into the narrative inquiry process outlined in Chapter Three. Finally, using the documentation of the narrative inquiry, photographic evidence, culminating experience of Sacramento’s Second Saturday Art Show, and her journals, the artist carried her research forward for duplication in her classroom and others. This planned duplication of informed instruction was outlined in Chapter Four.

**Significance of the Project**

Given the transitory nature of the teacher’s first year in teaching, this project helped ground her as an artist through a passionate journaling process. Journaling provided a release from the frustrations of being a new teacher. The constraints of time, resources and space were no longer hindrances to instruction in the arts. The process of journaling had no deadlines and was based more on qualitative work than on quantitative. The teacher/artist was able to create informed instruction with connections to cultural and historical materials. Using her own exploration of the journaling process, the teacher was able to use her work as samples for students, and a template for instruction. Students began a journaling process and experienced the aesthetics of art. They became planners, doers, and assessors.

**Leadership in the Arts**

Students who attended the Second Saturday Show were inspired to organize their own show. They were encouraged to use their journals as a tool to plan and chronicle the process. Fellow teachers observed
artists’ research and refinement of the journaling process, culminating in the show. Peer reviewing other masters’ program students’ writing further developed the artists’ collaborative role in the development of leaders in the Arts. The teacher/researcher became an advocate for the arts in classroom setting.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this project.

_Aesthetics_: According to John Dewey, this is the experience of creating art, not just the valuing of this experience.

_Disposition_: Participant’s required attitude of readiness to fully experience an event, or project.

_Interactive Journaling_: Students make entries into journals or notebooks. Teachers write responses to students’ work into the notebook. It becomes a dialogue.

_Journaling_: A personal process of recording planning, project notes, materials, successes, failures, texture samples, sketches

_Pedagogy_: An approach to teaching methodology, the research based method used to get desired results

_Qualitative_: Relating to qualities: sensory, experiential, or emotional. Example: the play was emotionally elevating.

_Self Talk_: The internal thought process: messages about one’s self to one’s self.

_Triangulating_: From the Reggio Emilio method and other writings on qualitative research: to make learning visible through a balance of dialogue, observation, and documentation.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Argument for Qualitative Education, Curriculum, and Research

Elliot W. Eisner, currently alive and a philosopher of Education at Stanford University discusses qualitative reasoning in a series of essays titled *The Kind of Schools We Need: Personal Essays*. Eisner’s overall intention was the defense of using qualitative evidence for assessment in the fields of education, curriculum, and research. The 16 essays from the book are divided into four parts: Cognition and Representation, the Arts and Their Role in Education, Rethinking Educational Research, and the Practice and Reform of Schools. The writer will summarize the first three parts in relation to qualitative methods.

As a philosopher, Eisner examined the juxtaposition between Platonic and Aristolian views, while including modern researchers in the field of education. In order for the reader to understand why qualitative evidence is of worth to the field of education, Eisner used Part I of the book, Cognition and Representation, to explain what “qualitative” means and how life itself is qualitative, thus assessment of life experiences should be also be qualitative.

Eisner connected the readers’ universal observations of newborn babes interacting with the natural world to describe what qualitative means. His approach was to detail the sensory examples most readers would recognize: sight, smells, and sounds. Eisner began, “The newborn child entering the qualitative world we inhabit comes equipped to experience the world’s qualities through all of his or her sensory modalities,” (p.13). By “modalities,” he meant newborns are programmed to take in the sensory cues around themselves in a variety of ways: hence, various modalities. Their eyes will register light. Their skin will sense touch, and their ears sound. Later, when we assign values to these sensory experiences, we are labeling qualities: bright, dim, soft, rough, loud, and quiet. From an early age comparisons are made by qualities, not quantities. The rabbit is soft. It is softer than the pillow. To the young mind the world is qualitative.
Eisner extended this view of the world as qualitative to the elementary school years. “As children mature, their ability to read qualities grows,” Eisner continued (p.13). Limiting expression of the sorting of qualities into literal or verbal symbols does not allow the child to fully enjoy the qualities of their world. Eisner proposed multiple forms of literacy to allow the child to express the qualitative world: propositional, literary, poetic, visual, auditory, and choreographic (p.16). Indeed the memories we take from grade school often involve the “doing” activities. Moving from the doing to the valuing of what others have done transitioned readers into the next idea: the aesthetic.

Valuing an experience through multiple senses is the aesthetic. Stating, “The sky is breathtaking,” is implying a value, or quality, to the visual, emotional, and natural. Through these aesthetic expressions of the world around them, children begin to develop and grow. “Brains are born, and minds are made,” Eisner wrote (p.23). Minds are made from the qualitative experiences we own. “If we care enough and work hard enough we achieve experiences,” Eisner stated (p.24). If we observe the qualitative world and seek to learn how to record it through multiple forms of literacy, we will have an aesthetic experience.

The next part of Eisner’s book, the Arts and Their Role in Education, looked at how the ability to express aesthetic experiences through multiple forms of literacy is being developed in education: namely through the arts. The first essay was autobiographical: What the Arts Taught Me About Education. Eisner did not excel in his class work as a young student, but took a painting class because of his third grade teacher’s prompting. “Art was then, as it is today, a deep source of pleasure,” he revealed (p.58). Much of Eisner’s mission to bring arts to the forefront of education stemmed from his love of art: his salvation from the boredom of traditional education. The writer included his story because the transition from qualitative assessment to quantitative leaves many children feeling unsuccessful. Art let the writer remain engaged in his education; he was engaged in the doing, not the testing.

His passion for art continued through high school and into his later education: working with at-risk youth during college, during the Masters in Art Education, while teaching high school art, and finally in getting a Doctorate from the University of Chicago. The way Eisner chose to express his aesthetic view of
the world was through his art and inevitable mission of increasing the arts in education. He chose to leave the world of quantitative assessment to explore the qualitative.

Continuing to paint, he used words and paintings to express the qualitative world he lived in. For Eisner, the pen proved equal to the brush. While his art provided satisfaction, his cause was the fight for the arts in education. “Making a place for the arts in our schools became for me a kind of cause, a cause in the name of balanced and equitable education,” Eisner explained (p.61). In arguing for the arts, Eisner sought to “reintegrate mind and body,” (p.70). Before we had speech, language, and the written word, we had experiences with sensory input. Art uses our senses to record what our body feels, senses, and sees. Art appeals to our whole body. It was Plato who separated the two and made the body lesser than the mind. Eisner sought to rectify this separation and reconnect our minds and bodies through Art. Extending Eisner’s idea of multiple forms of literacy, we can begin to argue that one form of literacy should not outweigh another because they are interdependent. The last essay, “Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?,” began by questioning if art can affect achievement and if so, how can we measure the effect? It was the perfect segue to Part III: Rethinking Educational Research.

In Part III, Eisner began to describe more fully what quantitative research looked like in the field of Education and why educators should move toward the qualitative approach. These essays described how education could begin to create the types of schools we need, as the title of the book suggests. Eisner moved from theory in the first part of his book to the practice of qualitative methods in assessment, research, and instruction at the end. Traditionally, quantitative methods are thought of as dependable or as “the scientific method” (p.104). This judgment is often applied to research as well as curriculum. If you really want to know something, you test it. Eisner suggests that people think in the testing, you understand it better. Through trying to show the effects of art in education using the scientific method, advocates had to dissect the education process. They had to test the process itself to understand how it works and if it could be applied to the arts.

What educational advocates learned was the traditional paradigm for instruction included an 8-step lesson with an ends-means format and standardized assessment. Teachers were observed by
administrators and reflected on their own teaching practices. Eisner said this apparently exhaustive process did not assess all areas of learning for students and that teaching ends-means did not leave room for student differences. Such methods do not account for the students like Eisner who failed in a qualitative only educational environment. That was why Eisner stated that we must move towards alternative paradigms. “Alternative paradigms engender a pluralistic conception of knowledge.” (p.105). An alternative paradigm is a fancy way of saying, “Go about it in a different way.” Eisner’s paradigm for addressing multiple modalities was similar to the work of Howard Gardner.

Gardner’s idea of multiple intelligences is introduced in Eisner’s book, and then elaborated in the book, *Five Minds for the Future*. In multiple intelligence theory, students learn at different speeds and using multiple forms of literacy. Classrooms are pluralistic, with no two students learning the exact same way. This is precisely what makes learning so hard to measure scientifically. Eisner was careful to contrast himself from Gardner by saying in that while Gardner showed multiple ways people were smart, Eisner showed multiple forms of meaning: meanings shown in different representations. Gardner would say that the child painted the clouds to describe cloud formations. The child chose his/her own type of intelligence to convey meaning. Multiple intelligence theory says the child is intrapersonal/artistic: deeply reflective and artistically intelligent. Conversely, Eisner would say the painting looked moody and atmospheric, and that the child understood clouds and how to convey a feeling through media, not that the child is a specific kind of learner. Both recognized that education needed a new form of assessment. How does the qualitative approach fit into the traditional educational paradigm?

Eisner answered this question in Part III, Rethinking Educational Research, with a new approach to instruction and curriculum. He argued that when 8-step lessons are not meeting the needs of our students, we must reflect and reevaluate our teaching. What happens when the end result of the lesson was supposed to be proficiency on a test and the class fails? Eisner offered alternatives. “Qualitative methods, as they are called, are not restricted to matters of ethnography,” Eisner stated (p.102). Qualitative assessments can be used outside of the field of anthropology. Eisner suggests measuring students with qualitative methods as opposed to quantitative, which can be limiting.
Just as students can be measured using qualitative methods, the qualitative effects of art can be measured throughout history. Propaganda and advertising have influenced good and bad outcomes. Books that have been bestsellers have swayed public opinion and policy. That fact they are bestsellers in quantitative, but their effect is qualitative. The pictures of starving children induced a philanthropist thousands of miles away to contribute. Just as art is powerful, the way of researching, testing, and planning curriculum for it should be equally powerful. Life is qualitative and the recording of the life experience through multiple forms of literacy should help make minds, not measure minds.

**Journaling as Qualitative Research and Assessment in Education**

The question of assessment through qualitative methods is approached several ways in the education community. Italian researchers from the small town of Reggio Emilio are proponents of teacher-generated portfolios for early education students. "Documenting children’s learning processes helps to make learning visible and shapes the learning that takes place." (Reggio Emilio, p. 286) California State University Sacramento professor, Karen Benson, advised her college students to observe their world and learning process through the daily journal writing activity, *Eyes Wide Open*. (2008). This method let students guide their own learning through a process of discovery and through interaction with instructors.

In Reggio Emilio, teachers use observation, documentation, and dialogue with students to guide the students’ instruction. The curriculum is student driven. Learning groups are rewarded for individual accomplishments. (p. 286) This form of learning assessment relies on teacher documentation. “Teachers also serve as the group’s memory.” (p. 287) The school and community guide instruction based on what the children are interested in learning about. For example, one project-based lesson was launched after students showed an interest in yellow flowers that grew in fields. The students wrote about, visited the fields, drew them, and touched the yellow flowers back in the classroom as part of an extended project. The town of Reggio Emilio supported the students’ interest in the flowers by facilitating field trips and collecting flowers to bring to school. The adults in the students’ lives used the interests of the students to inform instruction.
In contrast, the activity *Eyes Wide Open* required the students to record their observations of their present lives. College students were asked to make one entry per day in a writing log. The entry could be long, several pages, or short, a few sentences. The entries did not have to be only about schooling or learning, but could be pulled from observations made anywhere. The objective of the activity was to capture the nuances of daily life. Subjects of high interest constituted most of the entries. The goal of the exercise was to keep the child like wonder of observation: encouraging adults to think as they had when they were children. Both the Reggio Emilio method and *Eyes Wide Open* help students to deepen their appreciation for the observed world.

John Dewey warned against taking the world we see daily for granted, “I am apt to think they have never been properly alive, nor seen with clear vision the world they think so meanly of or anything in it-not even a blade of grass.” (*Art as Experience*, 1934, p. 29) Through these methods of journaling, the qualitative nature of life can be explored, recorded, and appreciated.

**The Use of Notebooks in Personal Discovery and the Artistic Process**

The qualitative is also explored outside of the education field. Writer and advocate of journaling, Julia Cameron, wrote that through journaling, “In times of pain, when the future is too terrifying to contemplate and the past too painful to remember, I have learned to pay attention to right now.” (*The Artist’s Way*, 1992, p. 67) Writer and philosopher, Michael J. Gelb, in his 1998 book, *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci*, suggested the quality of life be captured on paper. “The important thing is to carry it with you everywhere and write in it regularly.” (1998 p. 58) Lastly, the renaissance artist, Leonardo Da Vinci, counseled in his journal to “make a note of these with a few strokes in your little notebook which you must always carry with you.” (1405) Though the qualitative nature of life and the education process can be approached in various ways, in and outside of school, journaling is a strong tool for recording the present.

Cameron and Gelb’s prescriptive journaling formats assigned journaling activities to record the present in different modalities. The individual undertaking the prescribed journaling process was encouraged to follow some exercises routinely and to drop others if they felt the activity fruitless. These
forms of journaling are not relational in nature like the forms of journaling used in education. Educational journaling relied on the interplay with mentor/mentee. In this case, the participant spurred on the learning, instead of completing activities with another individual’s feedback.

Julie Cameron’s method of journaling applies to a 12-step program for artists and writers. Prescriptive steps one-twelve were weekly assignments to help free the creative spirit of the participant. The program could be applied to any situation where more freedom of creativity was desired: writing, acting, and visual arts. The participant was asked to begin with morning pages. “You will do pages daily through all the weeks of the course and, I hope, much longer.” (The Artist’s Way, 1992, p. 26) This ritual required a stream of consciousness three page writing each day. From this beginning ritual the participant then launched into numerous healing activities: artist’s dates, daily affirmations, blurt journaling, and letter writing.

Artist’s dates are a weekly time the participant enjoys simple pleasures. For some it might be through physical labor, like washing the car. For others, it is taking five dollars to the local thrift store to purchase a used board game from their childhood. For each participant the pleasure came from something different. The only caveat is that the date must be observed weekly. It could be different activities on a weekly basis, but must be planned habitually.

Cameron also lists “daily affirmations” as positive statements artists can assert about themselves. The artistic process is too often stymied by negative self talk statements from the participant’s past. By repeating particular personal daily affirmations, the words became a salve to the participant’s previous hurts. Acting as a reverse sound wave as it were, the positive words cancel out the echoes from the past. Affirmations may be needed daily if negative emotions occur more frequently.

Two other activities from the Artist’s Way were “blurt journaling” and “letter writing.” Both rely on the participant identifying “self talk” that is negative. If the self talk can be traced back to a particular time and person, the participant can write a letter to that person. The intent of the letter is to release the offender from guilt by extending forgiveness. The letters are not meant to be sent, just written.
“Blurt journaling” focuses not on the offender, but on the offensive statement. When negative self talk, or blurs, arise, the participant journals the statement. For example, the statement: “Art will never pay as a career,” is commonly heard, a participant might write this statement in his/her journal. Trying to find the source of the negative statement might result in letter writing. Then the participant would find a daily affirmation to cancel out the negative self talk. A daily affirmation to cancel out the above example would be: “Artists can have solvent careers.”

Cameron’s journaling technique focused on the goal of unblocking the creative flow through a healing process. This involved channeling a higher power and seeing the artist as the conduit of this higher power. The participant might name the higher power anything he/she feels comfortable with: higher spirit, God, or the Maker. In contrast, Michael J. Gelb takes a more humanistic approach to the journaling process.

Gelb was fascinated by the potential of humans to exceed physical restrictions: to reach god like status. Gelb’s demi-god was historical Leonardo Da Vinci. Gelb was fascinated by Da Vinci and Da Vinci’s mythical accomplishments. When invited to prepare a leadership seminar about becoming a Renaissance man or woman for a 1994 spring business executives’ conference in Florence, Italy, Gelb chose Da Vinci. Already intrigued by the totality of Da Vinci’s accomplishments, he researched Da Vinci’s life. He used his research to speak to a packed house of discriminating leaders at the conference in Italy. Seminar attendants were encouraged to leave boring seminars. His remained full over the two-day conference.

After the conference, Gelb’s research was then organized into the book, *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci*. Gelb suggested Leonardo used seven principles in his lifetime: Curiosita’, Dimostrazione, Sensazione, Sfumato, Arte/Scienza, Corporalita, and Connessione. More linear than Cameron’s approach to cyclical journaling, Gelb’s approach emboldened the whole self systematically through the journaling process.

The first system, Curiosita’, involved journaling activities centered around capturing the sense of curiosity Da Vinci possessed. Spending time thinking about why clouds change color or how birds fly
awakens the mind to the curiosities of the world. The Curiosita’ chapter of journal activities is similar to “Eyes Wide Open” in that it encourages the participant to observe the world with wonder.

Not elaborating on all seven principles, but drawing similarities to previously discussed journaling strategies, Sfumato also encouraged the participant to look for the temporal nature of life. Journaling activities encouraged the participant to embrace the contradictions and uncertainty of life.

**Leonardo Da Vinci’s Journaling**

When the researcher studied Leonardo Da Vinci’s notebooks, she was struck by the attention to detail. Da Vinci was an inspiring individual. He drew the circular patterns of water splashing, the detailed pattern of flight, and the muscular flanks of many horses. His attention to detail was given in preparation for works of art rarely finished. His true artistic prowess was the process: the process of journaling the seconds in life. He sat for hours to catch the blink of an eye or the flap of a bird’s wing. His journaling captured, through writing and drawings, the quality of life, the essence of observation.

Research into the use of journaling as a qualitative research method and form of assessment, in education and in the arts, informed the writer/researcher throughout her project. She took inspiration from Leonardo Da Vinci’s notebooks and used methodology from all the journaling practices to overcome her own creative blocks and learn to record her own artistic process.
Chapter 3
CONTEXT FOR PROJECT

Artist’s Upbringing

Born in 1972, to two very different individuals, the artist grew up in a home balanced between logic and creativity. Her mother was an idealistic young woman who made all the family’s food organically or homegrown. One could smell homemade bread baking: bread made from freshly ground whole wheat and cultured yeast. Her mother also used her creative talents to supplement the family’s income. One Christmas, the children collected walnut shells from the side of the road and helped their mother make little beds with baby Jesus laying in each half walnut shell. The ornaments were sold at a bazaar to raise money for Christmas presents.

The mother and father had agreed the mother should stay at home to raise the three children, of whom the artist was the oldest. The father worked two, sometimes three jobs to make this happen.

Right before the parents married, the father had found out he was going to be drafted into the service and serve in Vietnam. Doing the logical thing, he enlisted before he was drafted. He left college and after basic training, married the mother and moved to Virginia to complete his duty on riot patrol in Washington, D.C.

Using this same problem solving logic, the artist’s father parlayed his time in the service into college grants, completed his draftsman certificate, and got a job with Placer County. When the job was not paying enough to keep his wife at home with the children, he began side jobs. They would not abandon their strategic family planning!

The artist was fortunate enough to get to help her dad on his side jobs while she was in her teens. While in her youth she did crafts, gardening, and music with her mother, she was a journeyman in training with her father in her teens. One side job was being a handyman at nearby apartments. Her father would make repairs, paint, and clean units to get them ready for renters. She learned how to systematically plan a job, manage time, and use resources. She also acquired handyman skills including: using a drill, hammer, and paintbrush.
It was a well-balanced upbringing. Her mother helped the artist create and problem solve on the domestic front, and her father helped her plan how to succeed in the world, and work with others.

**Her Parents’ Struggle Between Dreams and Dollars**

The artist’s parents also encouraged the artist to share her work with others. The artist never felt limited by her parents’ expectations when she was young. As a youth, the artist participated in the Auburn Fair each summer. The artist would also enter painting and drawing contests in school. One favorite contest was a Christmas window painting contest. Winners got to paint a downtown business window. Her design won and she delighted in seeing her painting as her and her family walked by the window. While she was free to grow artistically, her parents had to balance their own artistic passions with the financial reality of raising three children on one salary.

Her father had sketched as a youth himself and continued the practice into adulthood. He left his county job to start a drafting business. Finally, realizing his dream of drafting home design, he started a drafting business that allowed him to be creative outside of his county job. He would have the three children visit him in his office after hours. The artist remembers the smell of the electric eraser shavings on the vellum paper. She remembers how happy her father was to have a creative outlet. Unfortunately, her father never received payment on one set of plans he had drawn and the business went under. Her father returned to his county job dejected. Following the failure of her father’s creative endeavor, her mother waited almost a decade to pursue her own dreams.

In the artist’s teens, her mother went to college to pursue her passion: fashion merchandising. When her mother earned her degree, jobs were very difficult to find in the fashion field. Fashion had started outsourcing production to other countries, making it hard to compete with companies offering similar products with lower prices. Her mother continued to work in fashion, but not in a creative capacity. Many years later, her mother went back to college again to attempt a creative career in interior design. Her mother’s goal this time was solvency and she adapted her strategy: ADA accessible bathroom design to accommodate the boomer generation. After seeing her mother’s failure the first time, then watching her mother’s second attempt, the artist revisited her own pursuit of her dreams.
The Right Timing

While both of her parents encouraged the artist’s efforts to make and share her artistic endeavors, they had mostly abandoned their dreams. When the artist decided to again follow her dream of becoming a teacher, she was cautious. Hearing her parents being admonished for their choices and feeling the financial consequences, she waited until she could balance dreams with dollars. After more than a decade working in the grocery industry with a steady income, getting her son through infancy, and gaining her husband’s support, she started college again.

Her plan was to pursue a BA, then they earn a Multiple Subjects Credential. This goal seemed safe and her extended family approved. She had a secondary goal. While pursuing the safe route of becoming a teacher, she was planning her development as an artist. She began with art classes at American River College and ended with painting and ceramics classes at CSU Sacramento. Her plan was to graduate: with her teaching credential, an accomplished artist, and also gain an authorization to teach art. Her strategic planning was that she would start teaching in the elementary setting and when there was an opening, she would apply to become an art teacher. It seemed like a safe bet for her. She took extra units each semester. One semester, she took 25 units while she was participating in an arts program teaching art in public schools for a stipend. For all the sacrifices her own family was making, she strove for her goal. She was following the same dream as her parents: to be creative and financially independent.

Thinking About Arts in Education

When the artist completed her BA, she began her student teaching, and saw that instructional practices did not include the arts. Some schools had no music programs and very often, had to choose between physical education, art, and music. No school could have all three without an active fundraising PTA.

When she completed her student teaching and earned her Multiple Subjects Credential in fall 2007, she applied and received a position as an elementary math intervention teacher. It was a short assignment working with second to sixth grade students who needed additional support in math to prepare
for STAR testing. She began in the spring of 2008. She had a small classroom and groups of 6-8 students at a time.

What she learned from this teaching assignment was: students need art, storytelling, and music in every subject area. When she taught a math concept using storytelling, she noticed the students retained the information much longer. Using hand motions and songs helped the kids learn and, in turn, teach concepts to each other. Her first experience with a classroom let her know she was fulfilling her purpose in life. The position was a beautiful balance of logic and creativity.

**Part of the Solution**

That spring, she also decided to join the 5th Cohort of the Masters in Education in Curriculum and Instruction: Emphasis in the Arts. She wanted to pursue her Masters in the area of Arts in Education. She had coursework with Dr. Crystal Olson during her credentialing and sought to spend more time learning from Dr. Olson. Dr. Olson was a professor who integrated music, art, and movement into her teaching of college students. The artist wanted to teach her own students the same way. The cohort did not begin classes until fall, so she had spring and summer to prepare.

During the spring, she took a painting class at night while she was teaching math during the day. It proved to be a lovely dichotomy. She would think about mathematical concepts involving integers and fractions just minutes after having sketched the playground into her sketchbook for her painting class. Her life was balanced between developing herself as an educator and artist, and developing her own students’ abilities and skills. Her artist notebook was the first time she had this quiet life recorded on paper outside of her everyday life. Her professor graded her notebook, but her studies helped inform her paintings, and record her feelings.

The artist/teacher taught summer school in 2008 with another inspiring instructor, Margaret Stroh. Margaret taught the teacher/artist how to integrate music into daily routines. Together they taught 35 third grade English learners. It was a magical summer when the artist/teacher learned that teaching does not have to be boring for the students—or the teacher!
By the fall, and the beginning of the Masters program, the teacher had her first fulltime teaching position. She was going to be teaching seventh grade math and science. Her position also included teaching an elective. It seemed as if her gamble to return to school and pursue teaching had paid off.

**How the Artist Met Her Muse: Leonardo Da Vinci**

I am that artist/teacher, Jinne Horger, and I want to tell you how I met Leonardo Da Vinci. In my first full time, full year teaching position, I was teaching at a wealthy school. Even there decisions about music, physical education, and art had to be made. Art docent programs allowed parents to teach art in the lower grades, but in the middle school program at the K-8 level, art only happened for the students with excellent behavior. Music was 30 minutes every other week. Homeroom teachers supplemented physical education.

I taught art as an elective during our second rotation of electives, but noticed students were not accessing art daily. I saw doodling in class and began looking for more opportunities to include art in my academic instruction. I conferred with my teaching partner, Teres Mugnaini, who taught the other seventh grade core: English and social studies. She mentioned the kids would be learning about Leonardo Da Vinci in her classroom. I knew of and understood what a great artist Da Vinci was, but became intrigued with creating historical connections other areas of study: math and science, namely.

Teres and I continued the dialogue about how we could overlap our subject areas around the study of Leonardo Da Vinci. A lovely moment of “synchronicity”, as writer Julie Cameron would call it, followed. We not only overlapped our curriculum at school but created an opportunity for field learning. We organized a trip to the San Jose Tech Museum. The museum was hosting a Da Vinci exhibit from Italy. The Leonardo Da Vinci exhibit included maquettes of Leonardo Da Vinci designs, hands-on experiences for students, and an IMAX movie about extreme parachuters testing Leonardo Da Vinci’s pyramidal shaped parachute, which worked!

When we returned, students used their field learning in science, math, social studies, and English. The students learned several seventh grade standards around a thematic unit on Leonardo Da Vinci. This great Da Vinci project that we created needed to be duplicated!
**Turn of Events**

I was beginning to feel powerful as a teacher and advocate for arts in education. We prepared a great experience for our students: an experience that could be reproduced the next year, even without the trip to the museum. However, I was a first year teacher. That spring, as I begin to plan my Masters project based on Leonardo Da Vinci, I learned I was going to be laid off, and most likely not be back at my site the next year. I felt side swiped. All the power I had felt was drained from me. I began planning for my layoff notice, teacher hearings, and possibly not having any position for the following year.

I needed my Masters to help me overcome the powerlessness I felt. I was responsible for planning, researching, and implementing the project I created. I knew my project was going to be based on Leonardo Da Vinci, but whatever I created had to be independent of: financing available through my site, subject matter taught, and grade level. I had to think of myself outside of my profession. I was no longer guaranteed a job as a teacher.

I started my project with recreating myself as an artist. I made studio space in my home. I began an artist’s journal in the style of Leonardo Da Vinci. I was reading and researching how to overcome my fears about creating art and devoting time to myself. Journaling helped me record my life and the work I was making. Writing about my feelings while going through the layoff process helped me regain my bearings and gain some power back after being laid off. My life was documented personally, artistically, and professionally through multiple journal formats.

**Other Journals**

When I spoke with others explaining my Masters Project, I realized I had not journaled in my artist’s notebook as much as I had planned. Why did I not journal as much as originally planned? I was still journaling, but in more places than just my artist’s notebook. I stepped back to look at where my time was going. I realized I have multiple forms of journaling: my BTSA binder, personal planner, lesson plan book, and staff journal. The bulkiest and most time consuming of these is my BTSA binder. BTSA stands for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment. The soft black padfolio is hundreds of pages thick. The padfolio is full of evidence to satisfy two teaching standards I must clear in my first two years of teaching.
It is part of a program designed to support new teachers in their best teaching practices. I have meetings with my BTSA mentor once a week. We make a log of what we discuss, exchange new work I have completed, and check items off of our to-do list. See Figure 1 below for sample page from BTSA binder.

![Figure 1 Tool From BTSA](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Assessment Summary</th>
<th>Formative Assessment Tools</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Grade Level/Subject Area: [Subject]</td>
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<td>Grade Level/Subject Area: [Subject]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom: [Classroom]</td>
<td>Grade Level/Subject Area: [Subject]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Areas of Growth**
- Maintaining high standards for student behavior
- Front loading big ideas
- Song books for music
- Pre-reading pages
- Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students

**Elements**
- Using programs and resources
- Project presentations on assessment
- Work on sustainability program at site
- Communicating with parents and community
- Developing as a professional educator
- Assessing student learning
- Using programs and resources
- Pre-reading pages
- Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students

**Strengths**
- Experiential learning group projects
- EL strategies
- Procedures and routines
- Classroom rules
- Participation in curriculum meetings
- Year college assignments
- Class assignments
- Most effective
- Essential study guides

**Needs**
- Formative Assessment System (FAS) tools. These are carbon copy pages used to record my first two years of teaching. Though they are labeled “tools,” but they feel more like requirements. I have a FAS tool for seating arrangement in my class. The FAS tool calls this “Instructional Groups.” Another page asks me to list all of my students and list all of their data: EL, 504, IEP, Health, etc.
It is a worthy exercise, but duplicating work I have already done elsewhere for my classes. Each tool feels like I am exercising my teacher chops.

Of course, exercise is great. However, I would liken it to exercising while I am already in the process of running a marathon. It feels like BTSA is saying, "I see you are busy running your marathon and I know you are exercising, but I need to see you stop and do some pushups here on the sidewalk to make sure you are exercising." So my BTSA binder has become the majority of my journaling over the past two years. It is consistently used and time is allotted for it each week. Whether or not I agree with the BTSA process, my first two years of teaching are recorded within its pages.

Another journal I keep is my personal planner. I started using this planner before I started my artist’s notebook. The practice of using a planner is a practice I developed while at American River College. My colleagues used their planners to balance motherhood with school. Besides these responsibilities, I was working, and needed to get organized. Below, Figure 2, are the pages from April 2009 and Figure 3 is a detail from the week of layoff hearings.
My planner for 2008-2009 included blank journaling pages at the end. In my planner, I would plan out my week, vent a bit in the back, take notes from meetings, and daydream in the pages at the rear of the book. See Figure 4 below. These are notes from a keynote speaker at the Arts Resource Faire in April 2009. My planner and the pages in the back were my journal before there was an artist’s journal.

The planner I am keeping this year is a monthly planner with large daily squares where I write my daily activities. It is truly the one place my whole life is represented. I can see events for school, family, my son’s school, church, and myself. My planner is the integrated me. It keeps me balanced in my home and work life. Entries are made on the fly and are not part of any routine. In Figure 5 below, this is April 2010.
Layoff hearings are a week earlier this year, but still on my husband’s vacation. I also have added my son’s due dates along with my own.

Figure 5 April 2010 Planner Pages

I have a lesson planner that guides me as a teacher. This too began as something that had its own allotted time and structure. Last year, when I taught three subjects, I relied on it heavily to organize my lesson planning and homework. I would stay late Friday night to complete the next week’s plans and add all the homework to my planner and website. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 April 2009 Lesson Plans
This year, I teach one subject, Social Studies, for all five periods. My lesson plan book is far less detailed as you can see in Figure 7 below. I glance at my planner when I get a chance. I do broad planning once every two months. It takes two hours to glance at the big picture and pace chapters within units. The individual particulars of the lessons in each chapter are filled into the scaffold on a weekly basis.

In an interesting instance of synchronicity, my new administrator this year started journaling as a practice used during staff meetings. So, beside my planner and lesson planner, I keep a staff journal. A prompt is given at staff meetings, to which the staff free writes for 10 minutes. The prompts have included, “What does powerful instruction look like?” and “Write about a powerful lesson in your classroom.” See Figure 8 on the next page for an excerpt on a powerful lesson prompt from January 12, 2010. For me, powerful lessons are hands-on and include debriefing with questions.
The Artist’s Notebook

As I started my artist’s journal, I found it difficult to find time and space to create a record of myself. I read the Artist’s Way by Julie Cameron to help me overcome my negative self-talk and destructive habits. I started to clear a space in my home and make it dedicated studio space. Part of this process was organizing all of my reference materials, artwork, and craft supplies. See Figure 9 on next page for finished studio space.
Figure 9 Photo of Studio Space
I bought a thick black artist’s journal suitable for sketching and writing. I even had to buy a new purse to house my notebook/journal. I made sure I had pencils and erasers in my car. I used the journal for my morning pages, recording notes about life (Eyes Wide Open), and tracking what I was doing.

The journaling process has helped me accept my emotions as valid, record them in my notebook, and let them pass. This upcoming summer of 2010, I again will be laid off from my job. I take comfort from the fact I have “been there, done that.” I have my journaling from last summer as a processing tool. I grieved my career on the pages of my journal. I tried to remain optimistic. I did projects for others. I kept busy, all the while worrying. In Figure 10 below, one of the projects was planning a backdrop for our summer vacation Bible school. While designing, I had to communicate my ideas verbally to the other volunteers, but I used my drawings in my artist’s notebook to visually explain the concept.

Figure 10 Backdrop Design
While I was trying to enjoy summer despite being laid off for the second time and uncertainty about a fall teaching position, I entered my feelings into my journal. Figure 11 below, an entry in my artist’s journal from July 20, 2009, used mind mapping, from the Da Vinci book by Gelb, as a tool to organize my thoughts. Job hunt, masters, and home are connected. At the bottom of the figure I wrote, “Gosh, I am not using my time well.” This is the evidence of how debilitating last year’s layoff was during my summer break. I used the notebook as a tool to get my thoughts on paper. Journaling was an effective place to “dump” my problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 11 Mind Mapping</th>
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<td>![Mind Map Image]</td>
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Morning pages, a practice used in Cameron’s process to overcome creative blocks, were helpful for dumping my problems into the notebook. Figure 12 on next page, an entry in my artist’s notebook from July 14, 2009, is an example of morning pages. These entries have to be done in one sitting, three pages long, and a continuous stream of consciousness. In this entry, my pen was running out of ink, but I kept on writing. I am mostly writing about my worries for the day, where I was writing in the house, and what I
needed to do that day. “I am sitting in the chaise lounge in the living room trying to decide how to organize the rest of my day,” I wrote. Not terribly profound, but it was what was on my mind. The idea is when the writer releases the small things onto the morning pages, he/she can focus on the larger things next. It works. Morning pages are very cathartic. It is a solitary meditation and a relaxing practice. I hope to continue morning pages.

Figure 12 Morning Pages

Outdoor Painting

During college, I strategically planned to be as versatile as possible in order to survive the current teaching situation. Part of that had been earning units towards my introductory art authorization. This eventually led to the Masters in Curriculum and Instruction program. I needed to take art classes for my masters program. I decided to continue developing myself as a painter. In fall of 2009, I enrolled in outdoor painting with Tom Monteith. Each Saturday, we painted from 9am to 3pm at various sites in the Sacramento Valley and at CSU Sacramento. During our first class in the art sculpture lab at Sac State, our professor warned us that outdoor painting required us to be prepared for anything: inclement weather, wind,
no water at the site, and sitting on the ground for hours. For our first outdoor class, we were told to meet offsite at Sacramento’s Riverwalk.

The first outdoor painting session was September 10, 2009 at the Sacramento Riverwalk area across the river from Old Town Sacramento. I left my home early enough to arrive on time. We were told tardiness was unacceptable. The day was bleak: rainy and windy. I had brought my oils: canvasses, brushes, turpentine, and tubes of colors. Tom had told us he preferred we work in acrylic, but would allow oils. I had heard he had a very low tolerance for inexperienced painters and wanted to work in the medium I had previously used: oils.

As Tom greeted us on the top on the Riverwalk embankment, the wind blew at us, and we all held tight to our materials wondering if class would be cancelled. To our surprise we were given direction to set up close to one another to allow our professor ease of assessing us during the morning portion of class. Class would not be cancelled. As we were setting up, Tom began to prod us to move faster. “You are already halfway through your first painting,” he said. He was moving about the twenty or so of us making sure we were setting up as quickly as possible.

“You are almost done with your first painting,” he continued. The wind was unaccommodating. My easel helped position my canvas as a sail to catch the wind. The leaves and dirt being stirred by the wind landed in my paints and on my canvas. Starting, sitting in a camping chair painting at an easel, I quickly moved to the ground, sitting on a tarp, painting in my lap.

We began with many thumbnail paintings of scenes near our shore of the river, the far shore, and the buildings above us, by the embankment. Tom was attempting to develop a practice of rigorous production of paintings: a practice of painting a scene as quickly as possible. However, when combined with the physical environment of that day, it was overwhelming.

I was emotionally vulnerable. It was the second Saturday away from my family. Usually, we would travel to Folsom, California to visit with my father-in-law every Saturday. We would enjoy lunch, conversation, and competitive games of Scrabble. I knew my painting class was a requirement, but I was hoping to enjoy the process of developing myself as an artist. That day, the beginning of the first outdoor
painting session was daunting. I had prepared for everything. Still the process of sustained painting was emotionally exhausting.

To make sure we were proficient painters, Tom limited our palettes to black, white, and one primary color. I chose red as my primary color. After two hours of painting in a closely grouped setting, Tom allowed students he had in classes before to move to a location further from our starting site. It was my first class with Tom, so I stayed put.

Still learning about Tom’s procedures and class structure, I was eager to please my professor. Expectations were never really discussed, and Tom is quick to move about from student to student. Luckily, other members of my Masters’ cohort were in the class and filled me in on Tom’s practices.

When we began our first sustained painting, it was based on a previous thumbnail. Tom and I discussed my thumbnails and chose the I street bridge as a subject to paint for thirty minutes. Tom came by to encourage me to add details under the bridge, the far shore. After most of the time had passed, Tom came by again. He stood behind me to see the painting and the scene I was painting from. See Figure 13 on the next page. All he said was, “I want to use this at the end of class, to show everyone what not to do.” He did not elaborate as to why. Due to my stress from the weather and desire to please him, large tears rolled down my face. He was standing behind me and didn’t notice. He walked away. Terez, a student from my masters program, came to explain that he uses time at end of class to discuss everyone’s work. She said, “Don’t take it personally. He gives good advice and I learned a lot from his drawing class.” She was right. Over the course of the 16 weeks, I did learn a lot about myself, and my art.
The second outdoor painting class was the same weekend as our masters’ retreat to the Marin Headlands outside of San Francisco, California. I sketched in my artist’s notebook and enjoyed the activities. We danced, acted, sang, and created a large mandala. It was a great time of celebrating our instructors and each other. We are the last cohort of five cohorts. Figure 14 on the next page is a drawing from September 17, 2009. We were given time on Saturday morning to go out and observe the environment. I sketched the rocky cliffs beside the ocean from several vantages. I enjoyed being away from my responsibilities. I talked with others about my previous weekend and the painting class. Their experiences with Tom helped me better understand how Tom teaches.
While I was at the retreat, I started to process the experiences I was having in my painting class and how I would share the process through narrative research. Figure 15 on the next page is the notes from my notebook. I knew I needed to share how the paintings from each weekend reflected the change I was going through as an artist.
The next Saturday, September 26, 2009, we met in Folsom, California. Our site was Negro Bar. It was an extremely warm day. Tom warned us to bring water. After the difficulties I had painting with oils, I switched my medium to watercolors. We were again painting along the river. There were bluffs to our right and the city of Folsom on the far shore. Isolated picnic tables and sparse shade offered places to paint. Acting in perhaps a reactionary way, I chose to work away from the group, around a bar from the shore. Our painting problem for the day was to show space and illumination. This was a continuing challenge Tom presented to us. I attempted to show the light across the water and a sense of foreground and distant ground. The painting below was my first sustained painting after several thumbnails. I started painting without any input from Tom. This is was my idea. See figure 16 below. It is “pale.” It is underdeveloped
and not pushed enough. I knew I needed Tom’s direction and his observations to help me paint better. After I finished this painting, I moved back to the shore where most of the students were painting. The next paintings show the difference an instructor’s input can make.

The painting on the next page, figure 17, is a sustained painting based on a thumbnail I discussed with Tom before starting the larger format. Notice the intensity of color and composition. The scene includes another painter painting along the shoreline and a BBQ pit in the mid ground. Tom’s input helped me rework the foreground and the shadows cast by the trees. This Saturday, the critique at the end of class was helpful. Even though the critique was set up as a scavenger hunt for strengths and weaknesses in each other’s paintings, I saw how much I had grown from two sessions of painting with Tom. Tom’s voice became the voice in my head, “If you could paint for one more minute, what would you paint?”
Figure 17 More Colorful Negro Bar Painting
The next two Saturdays were at China Bar in Auburn, California. I grew up in Auburn and was very excited about returning. The first Saturday, October 3, 2009, was again very warm. We parked alongside the road and hiked a bit down the hill. We set up to paint in the shade underneath the bridge above. The water level was low on the river and there was plenty of room for us to spread out. I chose to paint with the group, letting Tom come look at my work, and offer input. I was not feeling well and produced eight paintings. During the last half of the day, I moved to another location, but I think I had not prepared for the heat well enough. I began to study the trees and formations. We knew we would be coming back the next weekend. It was almost like a first date. We were getting to know the location. In the next set of paintings, completed on the following Saturday, I developed a familiarity with the location.

The first painting, figure 18 on the next page, I painted the same scene three times: one time the prior weekend and two times this Saturday. I produced thirteen paintings and eight thumbnails on October 10, 2009. I was exhausted when I finished. I was truly painting. Tom did not come by very often. When he did, it was to question two values I had placed beside each other. He was complimentary. Once I overcame the desire to be perfect, I just created. This is called “flow.”
The painting on the next page, Figure 19, was painted near the end of the day. I kept working at it, trying to perfect the water and reflections. Tom said, “I believe most of it. Only this passage here doesn’t look believable.” He found the whitish reflections over the water in the lower left corner of the picture not accurate. At the end of class, he was surprised by how much work I had produced. He put it all out for all the students to see. When I was present, in the moment, I created without any fear.
The next Saturday, October 17, 2009, was my second absence from art class. I was coaching the girls’ volleyball team at Will Rogers Middle School and had only found out two weeks prior. I knew I
could only miss two classes before my grade would be lowered one letter grade. I only missed class for very important reasons. I knew I had eighteen girls counting on me. Below, Figure 20, is an excerpt from my journal describing my feelings during my first year coaching. It was one of our first wins. The tournament ended up being a great growing experience for me. My new principal came and supported me.

Figure 20 Volleyball Notes

The following weekend was a furlough for our professor. He needed to take an unpaid day off. Strangely enough I missed having Tom’s input as I painted. We were to choose our own location, choose a painting problem, and paint at least six paintings. Saturday, October 24, 2009, I took my son Christian with me to paint in Folsom. Our class had painted on the other side of the new bridge in Folsom, but I wanted to paint on the shore closer to the city of Folsom. The painting problem I wanted to address was the reflection across water. More specifically, I wanted to attempt to paint the reflection of the two Folsom bridges across the water.
My son talked with others while I painted from several vantage points. It was in the end an unproductive day. I encountered more problems than just the painting problem. My canvas was not absorbing the paint and I was frustrated.

The next day, October 25, 2009, I dropped my son off at my father-in-law’s house. I started early at the same site. I chose a spot down by the water, working from a little beach. I again attempted to address the painting problem of reflection across water. My first paintings are of the bridge and shoreline. Eventually, I began to focus on water just feet from me. I wanted to really understand how the reflection of the sky played across the water and how the floor of the river showed through the water in the shadows.

Figure 21, on the next page, shows my favorite piece from this day of work. It is a bittersweet painting triumph. I believe it captures reflection across water. After I was done painting, I went to visit with my father-in-law as I did before the Saturday painting class started. I shared my work with him and enjoyed his company. This was the last time I saw my father-in-law. He passed away just before Thanksgiving.
Figure 21 Reflection Across Water
Our next painting class was in the parking structure at Sac State, October 31, 2009. After giving us directions in the art sculpture lab, Tom gave us our painting problem for the day: paint a 180 degree panoramic painting from inside the parking structure, moving in and out of light. It was a frustrating assignment. Even though we were shown examples and given three hours, it was difficult to begin. I sketched several vantage points into my notebook before consulting with Tom. He helped me choose one. It included three cars in varying degrees of sunlight. As I sketched the scene across the 1’ X 4’ paper taped to my masonite board, I watched one hour slip away. I took a break and walked around. I find that when I am frustrated a break helps me attack the problem anew.

I came back and started adding color. I noticed how quickly the shadows were shifting and realized that I needed to get large areas of paper covered with color, then work on shadows. I was again reminded of my first outdoor class with Tom. I needed to work more quickly. Another hour slipped by. I only had one hour left. I talked with another student who had taken Tom’s class before. She said, “Tom wants to see the shift in color in and out of light.” I went back to my painting and changed the color of cars in and out of light. I knew it was not enough, but it was my best.

Tom had us use the same panoramic format of 1’ X 4’ for our next painting class, November 11, 2009. We were back at the Riverwalk. Our painting problem was to again paint a 180-degree painting. We were to paint for the whole six hours. I struggled with finding the “right” location. I wanted to use everything I had learned: reflection on water, urgency, painting color in and out of light, and using the panoramic format. I moved away from Tom and began to sketch in the details. I thought my composition would show foreground and elements of prior paintings. Figure 22 below is the final product in its panoramic format.

Figure 22 Riverwalk Painting
In the left portion, see Figure 23 below, Tom helped me solve the problem of the sunset reflecting on the water. Over the course of the painting session, the light changed so much. By the end of the day, the sky was golden. Tom suggested painting an orange tone over the blue water. It works. In this section, my boughs hanging from the top were too heavy. Tom suggested painting some sky into the boughs to break up the heaviness. Instead I used china white to soften the darkness there. He said, “Even though it is not what I suggested, it works.”

![Figure 23 Left Section of Riverwalk Painting](image)

In the middle section of the painting, Figure 24 on the next page, I painted and repainted the tree and their shadows a multitude of times. When I grew tired around the fifth hour, Tom encouraged me to keep capturing what I saw. Near the end of the day, I added silver accents along the leaves on the floor and the edge of the dark oak tree. The shadows changed to purple from blue. Constantly reworking the painting was tiring. Notice the sky painted into the branches of the tree to the far right. Tom suggested, “Open up the painting by adding some sky to top.”
In the final section of the painting, Figure 25 on the next page, the windows of the building far away reflected the sky and therefore changed many times over the six-hour painting period. This portion of the painting is the least developed. It is strange how a left to right orientation caused me to work the most on the left and middle and the least on the right. The windows of the building mirror the reflections across the water: blue and orange.

From this painting class, Tom helped me identify my greatest weakness as a painter: endurance. I start quickly and work consistently, but have a hard time sustaining my paintings. I do not know if this is a result of the format from my first painting class. We met once a week for three hours. We started a painting during the three hours then continued working at home. I never painted longer than three hours at a time.

Another possibility is that I needed to take more breaks as I worked. Later in my painting, I started taking more frequent breaks. Visiting with other artists or even peeking over their shoulder is a pleasant break from my own painting. Seeing others’ work is an advantage to painting in a class setting.
November 11, 2009 was one of the most difficult classes. It was raining. We were meeting in the art sculpture lab. We were greeted with a still life of various objects lighted to resemble a campfire in the center but with colder lighting around the perimeter of the room. We were all assembled around the scene and Tom was ever present. He was having us paint quickly. After painting a series of large studies of the scene using broad strokes, we were beginning to understand the elements of the lighting on the scene.

Emotionally, I was growing resentful of missing my Saturdays with my family. The setup for the day’s painting was wearing, too. Tom was challenging us to understand lighting and transferring that understanding to a previous setting. Once I saw what others were planning, I understood the assignment better. I chose the painting I had done two weeks before in the garage as the scene I would inform with the still life’s lighting. Even though I understood the assignment, it was very taxing having Tom’s constant monitoring.

On the next page, Figure 26 is the finished product. The colors are so vibrant and addressing the challenge was invigorating. As I painted I enjoyed seeing complementary colors beside each other. The ceiling of the garage mimics the ceiling of the lab that Saturday: the turquoise walls cold and distant, and the ceiling warm and close, reflecting the firelight.
Along with the work we did in the lab that day, we were responsible to bring a homework painting for discussion. Stepping away from the still life to talk with Tom about our homework assignment was a welcomed break. The assignment was to take three previous paintings and create a new painting. I revisited China Bar in Auburn and combined three previous paintings from the site, Figure 27 below. Two elements of this painting can be seen in figures 18 and 19. I realized I had a hard time painting from other paintings and needed to paint from the source. So much of lighting is dependent of the direction and coloring of the sun. Even though I was able to go to the source to get accurate lighting, this problem would be posed again, and I would have to solve it another way.
November 21, 2009, this was the most difficult class I attended. My father-in-law passed away the day before. That Saturday, I wanted to throw myself into painting. My plan was to not talk about his death, just paint. I knew I had a break the next weekend for Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, Tom’s assignment that day was the most challenging: a 4’ X 5’ painting. Tom also wanted us to use the lighting from the still life he had arranged this Saturday to paint a previous painting in this larger format.

I was at a loss. I could not concentrate. The lighting was cool and warm as it had been the previous weekend, but even after painting thumbnails, larger studies, and sketches, I could not begin. I chose one painting from my work at the Folsom bridges. It was of a shoreline and trees, with rocks in the distance. I was going to paint elements of the still life into a landscape: the chairs covered in black tarps took on the form of mountains in the foreground, the chair covered in yellow fabric starts a stream of yellow, the wall becomes mountains in the distance, and the ground becomes water. See figure 28 on the next page.

I had a plan for my painting, but could not please Tom when he came by to check on me. When we had our critique at the end of class, he talked about mine first. He held up my previous work next to the large painting. “I don’t see the level of commitment in this painting. Look at the artist’s previous paintings.”

He was right. I had a hard time with the larger format and painting without a source. The still life had to be taken down before the end of class. Even though I had more time to paint, I could not do it
without the source. I had learned another lesson about myself as an artist: I need to paint from a source or push myself to overcome this painting problem.

Figure 28 Large Scale Painting
Two weeks later, we were to bring the large painting and our portfolio of work back to have our final critique with Tom. I added a few more touches to the painting, but was not invested in the outcome. From the pieces we showed Tom he pulled work to add to our show in December. We also discussed what we thought our final grade should be. I told Tom, “I deserve an A, but was absent twice. I think a B would be fair.” Tom agreed. Terez was nice enough to stay with me for the critique because it was my first one with Tom. In the end, he was very complementary.

I believe Tom poses painting problems that are challenging. In these problems, we must use existing or new skills to overcome the challenge. He offers guidance, or input, as needed. I learned that being away from everything is necessary to get into the flow. I enjoy painting outdoors. My work is colorful and vibrant. I seek approval from others too much.

Our class culminated in an art show, December 12, 2009, see figure 29 on the next page. We each put in six hours of work getting the show ready. I painted floors gray and walls white until midnight the day before. We arrived early to help hang all the artwork. It was an interesting process. Tom would choose from all the artwork laid on the ground. The picture he picked was hung at eye level. From there, the pictures around it follow in the same theme, either in color or subject. The most interesting work was hung at eye level.

My whole family came. My niece, nephew, and son enjoyed the work. My parents were impressed. My mother talked with the artists. It was so gratifying to see all the work from four months on the walls. It was a celebration.
My work in the painting class will be continued independently. I intend to produce work for a July 2010 art show at the VOX gallery in Sacramento. The name of the show is Permission. We have already had several meetings. I have made notes in my artist’s notebook. See figure 30 below. I believe the name says so much about what it means to be a female artist. We, as women, sometimes feel a need for permission to develop ourselves. The only person we need permission from is ourselves.
Figure 30 VOX Show

- VOX
- 18th L
- Judy
- jill@voxsite.com
- June 11th
- 8th March
- April/May photos
- June 26th
- Kristy
- Jeanne Weir
- Permission to unlock myself
- to create
- Silent Auction
Chapter 4  
REFLECTION OVER PROJECT  

Conclusions  

Journaling helped me record a rough time in my life and career. I had just completed college, my credential, and my first year of teaching when I lost all my guarantees. I was looking at not returning to the classroom and my calling: teaching. I turned to art as a way to develop myself in a new direction. I knew that through this new direction I could gain back some of the power I had lost during the layoff process. Eventually, I was hired back, but I have not fully healed from the experience. I am vulnerable and unsure about my career. Journaling will continue to help me through another summer of layoffs.

Though I had been using many form of journaling I had been using in my life, none of them fully captured who I was. My most integrated journaling was in my planner. In my planner, I was a mom, teacher, wife, sister, daughter, and student. Each of my other journals was only one facet of me. My artist’s notebook became another place I could be more integrated. It holds my thoughts, plans, sketches, and notes.

Through journaling in my artist’s notebook, I put time aside for myself. The time I put aside is extremely valuable. Outside of family time, all my other time is spent reflecting on how to make my teaching passionate and engaging. I am learning a new curriculum, planning events, and meeting with parents often. My journaling time has to be fruitful.

My morning pages and reading about the journaling process were very fruitful. Through Cameron’s methods I learned that I am disposed to becoming a “crazymaker.” “Crazymakers” thrive on stress and dysfunctional relationships. I learned to put my health first. My son and I are in bed early, eating well, and enjoying our time together more.

In contrast to the school year, during the summers I have limitless time. Still it was difficult for me to sit down with myself in the quiet. The first summer of layoffs, I could not stand to write about how I was feeling. I look back over my journal and read entries about the projects I started for others to keep myself
busy. Through the artist’s notebook, I did gain a better understanding of how I spend my time when it is unstructured.

I do better with a healthy balance between “crazymaker” scheduling and downtime. It was not until fall, when I was teaching again, that I was back in a structured period of art creation. My painting class was rigorous and time consuming, but when I was painting, it was for no one but myself. I enjoyed solving painting problems. I was able to finish my work for school, but I missed my family time. I have very few journal entries for this time period. Each painting is its own journal entry. I found the less I wrote about my painting frustrations, the more time smoothed my memory. I enjoyed the challenge the painting class provided.

I used my research time to learn more about Da Vinci’s journaling. I believed that the lessons Leonardo Da Vinci’s life teaches us are applicable to any grade level or subject matter. Da Vinci’s life was about connections: between seen and unseen, science and art, the permanent and temporary. I did get a teaching position in the fall of 2009. It was at a different site in my district. Ironically, it was 7th grade Social Studies, the subject my teaching partner was teaching when we developed our Da Vinci unit. I was ecstatic as I looked forward to teaching about Leonardo Da Vinci.

I wanted to use my Master’s project, the artist’s notebook, as a way to ground myself as an artist, record the process I was going through in creating artwork, and finally to be used for a Leonardo Da Vinci based journal project: Leonardo and Me. Stfmato, the practice of appreciating the temporary, has taught me that teaching positions will come and go, but I can continue to be an artist, and create.

**Recommendations**

I used my research time to learn more about Da Vinci’s journaling. I believed that the lessons Leonardo Da Vinci’s life teaches us are applicable to any grade level or subject matter. Da Vinci’s life was about connections: between seen and unseen, science and art, the permanent and temporary. This spring, as I face another year of being laid off, I reflect back on my project and how it can inform future instruction. I want the lesson that comes from this project to be universal: ageless, cross-curricular, and independent of funding.
Because I am a doer, I am attempting to use the artist’s notebook process with my seventh grade classes this spring. I teach about the Renaissance in April. I wrote a grant to fund the project and it was funded in April 2010. The grant is for $300 and pays for: music to accompany students writing time, colored pencils for entries, materials for science exploration, and materials for binding recycled paper journals. The project is titled Leonardo and Me: Creating a Renaissance Journal.

The goals of the writing journal are: students will understand how Leonardo Da Vinci recorded his thoughts, understand their own thinking processes, and make connections between areas of instruction. Beyond how this project is going to help my students, it has also helped me as an artist.

I will continue to meet with my artist/educator group monthly. One of my cohort, Jennifer Wolfe, says, “What is the universe trying to tell you?” I knew the universe wanted me to be in this program, take the art classes I took, and work with the people I met. Because of these experiences, I am planning to continue painting outdoors. From my painting class, I will use a painting problem to challenge myself as a painter. I will continue to journal as a tool to help me overcome obstacles and process my life.

Like one of my students said, “Journaling makes my thoughts and feelings come out.” This Masters process has made my thoughts and feelings come out, too. Because of my research and developing process as an artist, I know that my thoughts and feelings are valid and worth exploring. Just like Da Vinci used notebooks to explore an idea and fully understand the idea using a multitude of studies, I used a multitude of ways to fully understand myself.
REFERENCES


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