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We love art. Art urges us to think and feel. It shows us what it is to be human. Art provides a record of our shared history and offers a way to process the beauty and chaos of the cosmos and come to grips with the world as it is today. Combining the cultural and the natural with the personal, art empowers and enlarges our experiences of living, of understanding, of communicating, of caring, and of fully realizing ourselves and our potentialities. These are reasons why quality arts education should be in our schools.

Because art is a necessary component of a comprehensive education, we must think critically about what makes quality arts programing.

Currently, one school of thought suggests we judge instruction by the product, by the work created by students in art classrooms. The world we live in overwhelmingly tells us that appearance gives art value, that art should be "pretty," beautifying the hallways at school and winning contests. For teachers, this means: If the work coming out of your classroom doesn't look good, you are not doing your job. This mindset is remarkably pervasive, and it trickles down from the society at large to the school leadership, the art teacher, and eventually to the student.

We feel quite the opposite. We believe this view of the value of art and the nature of quality can cause enormous damage. The pressure to produce visually stunning work compels teachers to plan lessons that will consistently produce a "good" outcome. Art teachers are experts at this. They formulate each step with the final product in mind and guide students through the creative process like a mother holding her toddler by the hand. The work looks good, but the problem with this kind of spoon-feeding is that the students don't really get the chance to *create*. They miss the opportunity to experience the power and significance of true self-expression. They may

even be left with a misconception of what art-making is all about. To teach authentic art-making we have to take a fully holistic view.

Art is so much more than the final product—it is a process. The planning, designing, revising, and reflecting that art-making requires, skills that we call "artistic behaviors," are activities that have enormous value in the art classroom and in the real world. If we want our students to learn how to engage with their own creativity and make art in a way that is authentic, it is essential that we offer them pathways to independence and help them practice artistic behaviors as foundational skills.

The facilitation of self-expression has to be a pervasive goal, not merely something that students will be exposed to later, when they are deemed "skilled" enough. These artistic behaviors can be directly taught as learnable skills, as part of every project, K-12. We ought to take the expectation for "pretty" out of art education and instead instill expectations for meaning and for creative thinking. The intent of this book is to help teachers accomplish these goals by providing a framework for teaching students to think like artists.

What Makes the Open Art Room Different?

The Open Art Room looks and operates in a unique way, incorporating different levels of choice to match the content being taught. There are three main levels of student choice used in the Open Art Room:

Teacher Directed: The teacher makes the decision or sets specific limitations.

Modified Choice: Students are given a limited range of options from which to choose.

Full Choice: Limitations are minimal. The student is responsible for making all important choices.

To explain the difference between traditional art instruction and full or modified choice in practice, we'll use as an example a skills-based painting lesson that might be taught in a high school introductory art course.

Teacher-Directed

A painting lesson might be centered around specific skills, like mixing colors and understanding tints and shades. The teacher explains these terms, then leads the class in guided practice, possibly mixing value scales with acrylic. Next, each student further practices new learning by completing a similar work grouped around a central subject, such as a monochromatic

Timmy experiments with spray paint on the art patio.

Students show off their hard work on Portfolio Day.

Tori with part of her Portfolio Day collection.

portrait or work in a specific artist's style. The teacher selects the process from planning to completion, including the subject matter, the media, and often the dimensions of the final artwork. The student's task is to mix paint correctly and make limited choices about color or subject matter within closely set parameters.

Modified Choice

A painting lesson might include similar elements, like value scales, but cover more material to provide a range of choices. One way to accomplish this is to take students through a painting "Bootcamp," a short and focused period of skill development. In the Bootcamp, tints and shades are covered

in watercolor and acrylic, as are basic color theory, color mixing, and various paint application techniques. New learning is supported by reference materials found in the room and online. This intense period of learning is followed by an open-ended project in which students create paintings of their choice, further exploring the medium of paint in ways that speak to them. For this project students are responsible for choosing the type of paint, the subject, the style, and the size of the work. Asking students to make these decisions requires them to apply new learning and creates an authentic assessment of skill development.

Full Choice

The lesson begins with an assigned theme or the student's own ideas. It is up to the individual student to decide how to respond to the prompt through use of media and the content. New learning varies on a student-by-student basis and based on what information the student needs in order to realize his or her vision. In this context, teacher input related to paint might range from reviewing the basics to the demonstration of an advanced technique—it depends on the specific needs of the students at that point in time.

Who's Responsible?

Another way to think about the differences between traditional teaching methods and full or modified choice is through the lens of responsibility. In a traditional setting the teacher is responsible for almost every component of the lesson, from selecting the materials to the subject of the work. The decisions left to students often are few in number and small in importance. The student is asked to reproduce, emulate, or copy.

Choice-based instruction shifts responsibility from teacher to student. In a modified choice instructional model, responsibility is more equally shared. The teacher takes responsibility for providing a limited range of choices, resource material, and thematic guidelines. Students are responsible for applying new learning by selecting materials and deciding how best to use them. In the Open Art Room, the teacher operates as a guide or sounding board for the students' ideas and vision. The student takes on the majority of responsibility and decision making. The student is asked to create, not to copy or reproduce the teacher's example.

Each approach to instruction has strengths and weaknesses. Art teachers are often judged on the visual appeal of student artwork. Traditional methods give the instructor the most control over the aesthetics of the final product. An experienced art teacher is a master at orchestrating artwork that has consistent visual appeal. However, such control comes at a cost. The planning and problem solving of an artwork involves valuable concep-

tual learning experiences. When students don't have a chance to take on this responsibility, the learning experience is less than what it could be. Conversely, giving the role of planning to students extends the potential for learning. Ultimately, teaching creativity means letting students make decisions.

Goals of the Open Art Room

When implementing a new program, whether it's as simple as adding a new unit or as complex as changing an entire curriculum, setting the intended goals is a necessary step. The goals become the outline for implementation. Everything that goes into the program should lead to achieving one or more of the goals. Anything that does not point toward the goals is extraneous and should be removed.

Interactive chalk mural.

There are four main goals of the Open Art Room. Each of these goals is designed to increase student self-sufficiency in all aspects of the art-making process, from ideation through design, to creation and reflection. These goals include: Making Artists, Teaching for Artistic Behavior, Focusing on Conceptual and Creative Thinking, and Creating an Inclusive Art-Making Experience.

Making Artists

Art teachers have long embraced the "Make Art" mantra. It is emblazoned on bumper stickers, T-shirts, posters, and even coffee mugs. There is good reason for the wide-ranging popularity of this slogan. Making art is what art teachers want their students to do. It's what art teachers do. The responsibility of the art teacher is to teach students to make art. However, for the Open Art Room model to be truly successful, a paradigm shift in thinking is required. The Open Art Room teacher stops focusing on "making art" and concentrates on "making artists."

This difference in thinking can be understood by comparing the product versus the process. Art teachers who are focused on making art incorporate a product-based mentality into their teaching. Inherent in this way of thinking is the desire for a predetermined outcome, for what the student's project will look like when it is completed.

By contrast, the Open Art Room teacher is interested in making artists. The teacher's focus is on the knowledge and attitude that the students acquire by creating art. While the product may be an outcome, the focus of the teacher's lessons is on what takes place during the process of making.

Our phrase "making artists" should not be misunderstood. It should not be interpreted that we expect our students to become artists in the future, or that we wish to lead all students into art careers. Rather, it should be understood that we consider the students in our classrooms to be artists whose ideas deserve respect. In response to fostering their autonomy, our students develop the composure to solve problems on their own terms, and thereby experience insights applicable not only in the art room, but also in their everyday lives.

Teaching for Artistic Behavior

There are several different ways in which art education is delivered to students. Many teachers begin with a media-based curriculum, teaching units based on paint, clay, printing, and textiles. Another method involves presenting units based on skills such as drawing, shading, painting, or throwing techniques. Yet another way is to develop units around the elements and principles of art, teaching lessons on color theory, composition, and

perspective. The Open Art Room refrains from these methods and instead replaces them with the goal of acquiring artistic behaviors.

As we will discuss later in the book, many units can be created by starting with the question, "What do artists do?" For example, artists often observe the world around them. This concept of observation could be fashioned into a unit titled "Artists Observe." This unit might be dedicated to helping students understand the various ways in which artists observe the world around them.

However, the art teacher does not necessarily need to develop units in this way when building a curriculum around the concept of teaching artistic behaviors. Still, a necessary objective of the Open Art Room is to cultivate and expand the student's understanding of artistic practices. This works in tandem with the first goal of Making Artists.

Focusing on Conceptual and Creative Thinking

When reviewing the first two goals, Making Artists and Teaching for Artistic Behavior, it becomes clear that the focus of the Open Art Room is on the process of creating art. While teaching skills and techniques necessary to design and produce an art product are still part of the curriculum, these elements are gained by moving through the process. The foundation of this process is conceptual and creative thinking.

Whether the level of choice is beginner, intermediate, or advanced, the objective of each lesson starts with a conceptual idea. These ideas may come from straightforward models such as prompts or themes, or they may be derived from more complex methods, challenging students to explore procedures artists use when creating art. In all cases, students are asked to think critically about the topic and to use a systematic approach to idea generation in order to formulate a visual response. Once a response has been designed, students need to consider the media, skills, and techniques required to accomplish their chosen solution. The emphasis throughout, however, remains clearly on conceptual and critical thinking.

Creating an Inclusive Art-Making Experience

The strength of using student choice in teaching is that it gives the teacher the power to facilitate a successful experience for every student. This is important in any class, but especially important in introductory classes that are made up of students with a wide variety of skills. This approach is inclusive and based on the idea that art is for everyone, not just the talented few. Creating an environment where every student experiences success involves a shift in mindset from art as skill-based to concept-based. When instruction starts with the goal of developing students' abilities to

Students designed and painted this mural in the Apex High School Library after creating several smaller ones on canvas.

communicate their own concepts, the tasks of selecting the processes and materials that will work best for their individual skills, preferences, and experiences are also best placed in the hands of the students. Theme-based projects work well for concept-based teaching because they allow room for the development of individual ideas.

Another major key to making art class inclusive is getting rid of any teacher examples that students are asked to replicate with minimal changes and replacing such assignments with challenges that allow a free range of responses. When the one right answer that the teacher example creates is removed, more than one path to "good" work emerges.

This is not to say that teachers shouldn't show examples of artwork. When introducing a project, try to show a range of responses from master artists. Use examples from current working artists, who students tend to find easier to relate to, as well as work from artists of the past. It's important to consider diversity when selecting work to show students. Showing work created by artists of different genders and ethnicities makes your classroom welcoming to all of your students and exposes them to different points of view.

Making a truly inclusive classroom means creating a variety of pathways to success. Teaching a variety of skills around a central concept provides alternatives and choices for students, who can then pick what will work best
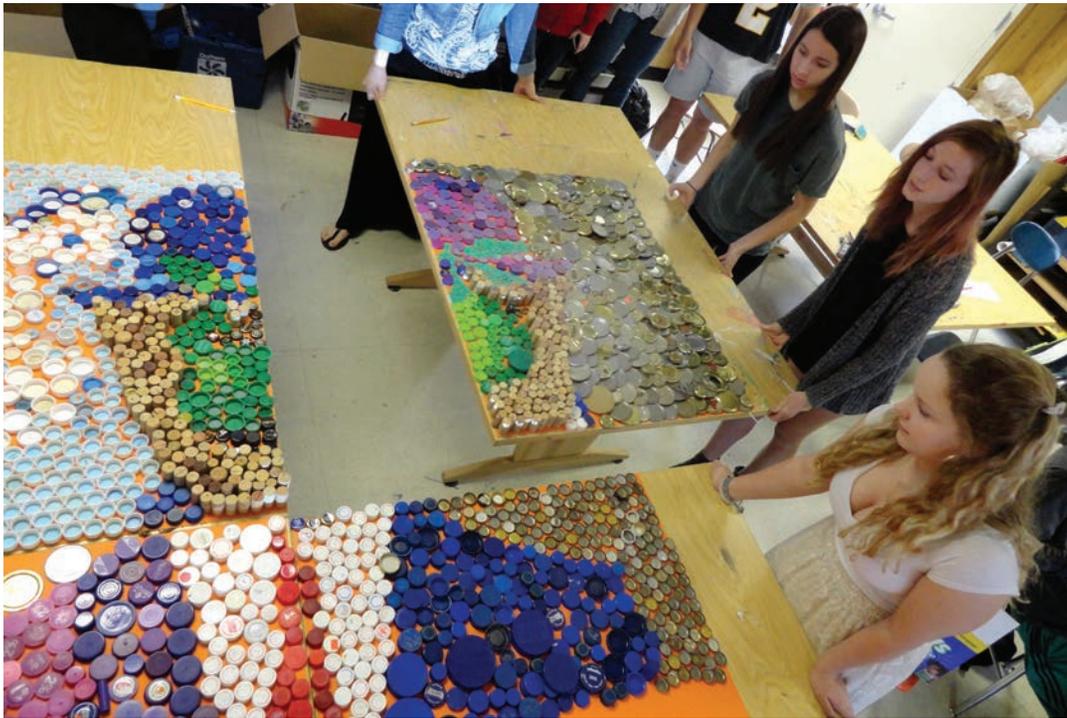
Students combining their sections of a bottlecap mural inspired by Magritte's *The Son of Man*.

for them from what they've learned. One way to teach a variety of new skills and techniques is through a short, intensive new learning period at the beginning of a lesson. For more information, see Bootcamps on page 50 and Chapter 7: Introduction to Art Bootcamp.

How the Open Art Room Benefits the Student

Before embracing any pedagogy, a teacher needs to first understand the benefits that philosophy will offer students. Naturally this goes for the Open Art Room as well. Why should this method of teaching be considered a good alternative to media or skills-based teaching? After all, curricula based on techniques or the elements and principles of art have been successfully implemented throughout the art education community. What advantages does the Open Art Room offer over other methods, and in particular, how will it benefit the students?

The primary difference between a teacher-based curriculum and the Open Art Room is in the ability of the latter to match the media and technique goals of the former, and then surpass it in five other categories. These categories include students engaging in the process, engaging in the work, going beyond the expectations of the teacher, exceeding the expectations of the rubrics, and learning to think for themselves. Let's examine these one by one.

Engaging in the Process

When we review the recurring issues that need to be addressed in education today, student engagement is always high on the list. The art room is no exception to this issue. There always seem to be one or more students who aren't engaged in what the art teacher is presenting, who do not want to work. A student-led art program does not eliminate this problem, but it does help alleviate it in certain circumstances. When students are empowered to design their own outcomes, they are more likely to take ownership of the process.

When students have ownership of their art-making process, they are likely to be more engaged in the class. They are making decisions, and these decisions will affect the outcome of their projects. It is easy for a student to dismiss a teacher-led assignment. Since they have no stake in the game, they don't see a reason to pursue any results, especially if these results appear predetermined by the teacher. When the student is in control, the stakes are higher. Their success is literally in their own hands.

Engaging in Work

Once students have taken ownership of the process, they are more likely to become invested in the project. Evidence of such investments can manifest in both physical and monetary ways. To define this evidence, we must once again compare the Open Art Room to the teacher-directed model.

Though students can become invested in a teacher-directed project, students naturally play a more passive role, waiting for materials to be distributed and directions to be given. In the Open Art Room, we find students will actively seek out desired materials. If the exact material isn't available, they will inquire about alternatives. When alternative materials do not suit their needs, it is not uncommon for students to literally invest in their project. They will spend their own money, time, and energy to shop, either in stores or online, to purchase the materials they deem necessary to create their artwork.

Going Beyond Teacher Expectations

Another benefit of student-led projects is that students will often set higher expectations than the teacher. When a teacher prescribes a project, it must necessarily be formulated to be achievable by all students in the entire class. In some ways, teachers must root their expectations to the lowest common denominator in order for their assignments to be accomplished by all students in the class, regardless of the individual students' prior experiences, skills, or passions.

Students who design their own projects naturally take into consideration their previous experiences as well as their passions. They set expectations for themselves that are often higher than those of their classmates or their teacher.

Going Beyond the Rubrics

We find in the Open Art Room that students will often advance learning objectives, surpassing even the teacher's expectations.

The rubric is a common measurement wielded by art teachers for assessments and grading. It allows the teacher to categorize educational attainments so that they can be systematically evaluated. In order to mea-

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Robbie's Interest in Perspective

Robbie was interested in creating a linear perspective drawing as one of his projects. Robbie had had some experience with one- and two-point linear perspective in Art One, and now he wanted to expand his knowledge. We sat down to discuss the project and he asked me what the next level of perspective would be. I explained three-point linear perspective and drew a quick example. He was impressed. "What about four-point perspective?" he blurted. Before I could explain that, although it did exist, I wasn't very familiar with it, he added, "Or five-point perspective!" I stopped him before he could go any further and explained, "I'm no expert in five-point perspective, but you should look it up."

He took my advice and found a YouTube video that explained the process in detail. Robbie was soon on his way, creating the first five-point perspective drawing to ever come out of my classroom.

Robbie creating a five-point perspective image.

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sure the level of success, the teacher must first determine the highest outcome a student will complete. Though rubrics are a commonly used method in assessing, they can sometimes limit the student's ability to make further progress than the teacher expects. In the Open Art Room, we often see a keen student's engagement exceed the rubric we might have reasonably set for a given assignment. For an example, read Ian's account of Robbie's interest in perspective.

Learning to Think Independently

Critical thinking has everything to do with making decisions, and one of the core principles of the Open Art Room is allowing for student choice. When students are in charge of the design process, they make decisions about all aspects of their project. They become active learners, discovering links between ideas, identifying errors, solving problems, and justifying their responses.

Experimenting with melted crayons on a hot plate.

Exploring ways to create with hot glue and wire.

Still life created using cut paint color samples.

When students are developing ideas, they are making connections between themes and concepts. When they are considering which media would work best with their solution, they are recognizing strengths and weaknesses of different materials. When they are identifying techniques that they need to improve in order to produce their desired outcome, they are determining each technique's importance and relevance.

Growth in the ability to think for oneself is the hallmark of true education, and fostering such growth is the preeminent practical value of art education in the Open Art Room.

The Open Art Room: Choice and Individual Voice

When it comes to making authentic art, choice and individual voice are synonymous. Each decision a student makes adds another layer of individuality to his or her work. The more layers of decisions that are selected when creating a work of art, the more the piece will express the student's style, emotion, or opinion.

What Is Voice?

Taken together, a student's style, emotion, and opinion form that student's voice.

Consequently, when students are stripped of their ability to make decisions, the art they create will lose personality and tend to look similar to the art created by other students working on the same project. When this is

taken to extremes, classroom projects can look so similar that it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell which student created which work of art.

The issue of diminished voice is magnified when teachers have predetermined the outcomes they expect the students to produce. Teachers often display an example of what the upcoming project will look like when completed. This sample, either designed by the teacher or created by a student in a previous class, is presented to the students before they begin the project. These samples represent the voice of the teacher, not the student.

On the other hand, when students are free from predetermined outcomes, their voices become unlocked. Their voices will be expressed as personal statements, apparent in individual works. These might be expressions of emotion, or opinion, or reaction for or against the assignment. In the history of art, many an art movement arose in direct reaction to its predecessor. In the same way, a student may elect to express support or disappointment in an assignment's topic through the choices he or she makes when creating the work.

A student's voice can also manifest gradually through a selection of creative decisions made over the course of several projects. In this manner, the student may develop a visual voice by repeating a set of unique steps that culminate in recognizable similarities, or a personal style. When we think of the artist Piet Mondrian, images of black lines and primary color shapes come to mind. When we consider Edgar Degas, we visualize ballerinas standing in snapshot-like compositions drawn in chalk pastel. Each of these artists' bodies of work are instantly recognizable because of their unique style, their artistic voice. When students are allowed the freedom to make decisions about the art-making process, their artistic voices will, naturally and of necessity, begin to emerge.

How Do We Develop Student Voice?

Developing student voice can be achieved by empowering our students to make their own decisions, allowing them to realize the value of their own ideas, and encouraging them to express their own ideas and opinions through the subject matter of their art. The student who is given this level of choice will almost inevitably produce art in his or her own voice. Their visual style will be reflected in the decisions they make regarding techniques and media. Their stories will be expressed through their ideas and the solutions they find to artistic problems. It may begin with small steps, but the more the student is provided opportunities to choose, the more the student voice will emerge and develop. In the Open Art Room, we begin the journey of voice discovery with three key areas of choice: choice in projects, choice in media, and choice in technique selection.

Students Make Decisions about Projects.

Artists who create for the sake of making art, naturally make all the decisions about the projects they have chosen to complete. They impose limitations on themselves, decide what they wish to communicate, and determine in what manner to proceed. The choice-based classroom encourages students to work like artists. In this regard, the expectation for students in a choice program is that they will at least select their own assignment, if not design one entirely.

To promote project ideation, the teacher may provide students with suggestions, such as themes, big ideas, or artistic behaviors. Some of these prompts are more restrictive and perhaps more appropriate for the student who has either not been introduced to a choice-based program or simply needs more structure. Other prompts are less restrictive, leaving more leeway for student interpretation and initiative. In either case, the goal is to move the student toward less and less restrictive project prompts until the student is confident working independently.

Students Make Decisions about Media.

In a choice-based classroom, students make decisions about the media they will use when creating a work of art. The range of choices students may select from can vary depending on the experience or the level of choice the teacher has made available, but ultimately the direction of the work is determined by the student.

This sculpture was damaged in the kiln and reassembled by the student.

Acrylic painting inspired by an African basket.

Students have several different reasons for determining which medium they will use. They may select a medium after an assignment has been introduced because they believe it will best express the idea or concept they are exploring. Other times, a student might make a selection before responding to an assignment because he or she is simply inclined to explore that particular medium. Whatever the reasoning may be, the student who makes the decisions about medium, color, shape, and size is working as a true artist.

Students Make Decisions about Techniques.

In the Open Art Room, technique is not the main objective of units, though it might be the focus of short lessons. The objectives of units are based on artistic behaviors. Since the technique is not the objective, students are free to decide if they wish to pursue a technique or not, based on the desired outcome they envision for their project.

In choice-based teaching, the need for a particular technique is often realized on the back end of the project. For example, a student chooses a project that demonstrates scale. Her idea is to illustrate a scene in which miniature construction workers are applying cosmetics to a billboard-sized portrait. In order to obtain the results she desires, she needs to understand figure proportions to make the miniature men look realistic, and facial proportions in order to draw the portrait realistically. Rather than responding to a teacher directive to study proportion, she had decided what she wanted to create and how she wanted the outcome to look. It wasn't until she began rendering her artwork that the need to learn a new technique became apparent.

Voice Evolves Over Time

The process of creating art is evolutionary. Early Jackson Pollock paintings, though abstract, were still filled with recognizable imagery. It took years of experimentation for him to develop those familiar paint splats and drips—his signature voice and style. In the same way, our students are taking part in an artistic evolution. Each time they make and apply a personal decision, their art develops stylistically and their voice evolves.

When choices are not offered, as is often the case in the teacher-directed classroom, the student's voice goes missing. The end product might have aesthetic appeal, but the student's artistic evolution is stifled. Our goal should be for students to become independent artists. To accomplish this, they need to experiment with new and unfamiliar methods, techniques, and materials. We must recognize that students are at the beginning of their artistic evolution. We can think of them as little artist tadpoles. Rather than seeking preconceived outcomes, our units and assignments should make room for unexpected growth and the evolution of new abilities and powers.

Developing Style

Cara wasn't at all satisfied with how the portrait she had started earlier in the period was coming along. As the end of the day approached, she took her palette knife and swept paint across the image. Something about the color and the texture of that swipe caught her attention. Again, she dabbed the palette knife into the paint and swept it across the canvas from the opposite direction. A pattern emerged. With consideration, Cara repeated the process. It wasn't long before the small canvas was entirely covered with small, horizontal marks. It was at this point that I addressed Cara's work.

"I'm just messing around," was her response, but it was clear to me that she was fully engaged in the process.

"I think the pattern and texture is interesting," I said. With those words she immediately lit up. This indicated to me that she did value the work but didn't want to admit it. It wasn't a serious image like the originally intended portrait work. It was just play. However, play has value, and in this case it was producing results. I asked, "Why don't you make nine or ten more just like it?"

The next day, Cara brought in three small canvases she purchased after she left school the previous day. She started working right away, dabbing paint with her palette knife and systematically applying it to her canvas. When she finished one, she immediately started another. At the end of the day, we talked about her work, what she found satisfying about it, and where she might go from here. I gave her another piece of advice: "You need a bigger canvas."

The third day, Cara and I worked together to stretch canvas on a large frame, approximately three by four feet. Once it was stretched, Cara placed it on the floor and immediately started painting. She worked diligently and soon had an original abstract work that was all her own. She was extremely satisfied with the final results.

She had developed a technique which was becoming her style. In the following weeks she produced several more abstract works, each with a unique style that had become easily recognizable as Cara's.

Cara working on her large, abstract painting.

Speaking Visually

As students evolve, they begin to develop a visual vocabulary. This vocabulary is unique to each student. Each choice a student makes assists in this development, and the more decisions students make, the more sophisticated their language becomes.

Early on, students might make random choices or selections based on simple criteria such as personal preferences. As students continue to grow, the explanations for their choices may become mature in nature. They will also repeat certain preferences. The combination of this repetition with the growing sophistication of their vocabulary leads to a sophisticated and authentic artistic voice.

Students who are given freedom to make choices in their art use their developing voices and vocabularies to tell their stories; they become more

Studying proportion became important as the student worked on this project.

expressive. Many popular lesson plans found online today encourage students to learn techniques or experience a medium but leave out the personal connection. Though the technique being taught might be solid, the focus is on learning the "how to." Simplistic themes that might produce aesthetically pleasing results given the technique or medium run the risk of being shallow in meaning. Lesson plans that deny students the opportunity to present or represent a deeper, personal connection—to tell their own story—miss out on the richness and depth that a student can reveal in a work of art.

Morgan and the Butterfly

Artists often create art in order to express how they feel, explore thoughts they are having, or relate experiences they are going through. High school students are at a time in their lives when they could benefit from the opportunity to express their emotions, concerns, and even fears, through art. When given the chance, students will create works of art with remarkably deep personal meaning. Often, the stories released through their art have not been otherwise shared with classmates, let alone the teacher. One such story was revealed in an artwork titled Morgan and the Butterfly.

As Morgan relayed it to me, the face and use of color in her work reminded her of how she felt when she was diagnosed with Graves' disease the previous summer. This was news that she hadn't yet shared with the class or with me. Through her art, Morgan revealed that she felt awful and constantly sick. Morgan's plan for this picture was to have a faceless portrait in black and white with a blue butterfly on its neck. The butterfly represented the thyroid gland, which is called a butterfly because of its shape. Her use of light blue related to the support ribbon for Graves' disease. Morgan's artwork opened a dialogue about her disease within the class. Her ability to express herself through her work allowed her to finally feel comfortable sharing the challenges she was facing with other people.

The Open Art Room
and Authentic Assessment

Assessment can take place in every art room and for every art project. However, in the Open Art Room assessment may look and work differently than in a traditional teacher-directed class. This is because the criteria for creating the art and design process are much different.

What Is Authentic Assessment?

To begin with, student work designed in the Open Art Room doesn't come with an exemplar. In a teacher-directed class, completed teacher examples replace most of the ideation phase of the design process. Although students can make low-level decisions, for the most part, both teacher and student understand what the finished product is expected to be. In the Open Art Room, assessment is mandatory during the design phase of the Artistic Thinking Process. Decisions about the what, how, and why of the student project must be thoroughly worked out and communicated so that the student and teacher share an understanding of the goals and expectations before the creation phase begins.

The development phase also relies heavily on assessment. Within the teacher-directed model, most of the assessment that occurs during production is intended to keep the student on track. If the student's work is not meeting the expectations of the predetermined outcome, the teacher can assist the student by pointing out ways to accomplish the task. Assessment during production in the Open Art Room is necessary for any number of different reasons, including helping students realize what techniques or skills would be beneficial to the creation of their work, assisting students with problem solving, and recommending a potential medium.

Authentic Assessment vs. Predetermined Reflection

The last phase of the Artistic Thinking Process, reflection, also works differently in the Open Art Room. In a teacher-directed lesson, the student's work will usually be assessed based on a rubric containing specific criteria that further enforce the predetermined goals and outcomes of the lesson. Rubrics allow the teacher and student to measure which objectives were met and which were not. In the Open Art Room, where each project is as individual as the student, we do not use a rubric that is specific to each project. We will dig deeper into assessment and reflection in more detail in Chapter Four, but here are two kinds of rubrics that can be used: a high-level rubric that covers the unit topics and goals but is not based on predetermined

criteria for student work; and a rubric that assesses students' application of the Artistic Thinking Process.

The Open Art Room and the National Core Art Standards

The Open Art Room connects to the 2014 National Core Visual Arts Standards in many ways. Both value student voice and the creation of personal meaning. Olivia Gude, a member of the standards writing panel, explains the standards this way: "The Next Generation Visual Arts standards are focused on student choice and on students making personally meaningful works of art and design. The standards set up scaffolding that builds students' capacities to make meaningful choices throughout the creative process." (NAEA *Art Education Journal*, January 2014).

The value hierarchy of these new national standards is shared by TAB philosophy and represents a shift in the nature of art education. It's no longer just about the product. In fact, Gude states, "It's not our job as art teachers to assess student artwork. That sounds shocking, I know, but if you reflect on it for a moment, you'll see that this statement is quite obviously true. It is our job as art teachers to assess student learning."

The basic setup and teaching structure of the Open Art Room meet many standards, since they tend to be ingrained in the teaching and learning process and are frequently present in daily instruction. Students generally meet these standards as they work through the process of making art. Moreover, we can further their learning by gearing formative and summative assessments toward these standards. For example, when thinking about *HS Proficient, VA:Cr1.1.Ia,* which asks students to start the creative process in different ways, we can assess what students know and are able to do by observing their work process and by asking questions like: What are some ways that you've found inspiration? What are some methods of planning that you have found are effective for you?

Generally speaking, all the standards can be readily met by including mini-lessons, Bootcamps, and critiques, or by incorporating them into unit topics.

For example, *HS Accomplished VA:Cr2.2.IIa*, which asks students to exhibit awareness of the ethics involved in creating art, could be addressed by teaching a short lesson on copyright, plagiarism, and fair use, then asking students to create artwork that adds meaning to another artist's work. See the lesson plan section for more examples.

National Standards in Practice

Standards	In Practice
HS Proficient, VA:Cr1.1.Ia	As part of every lesson, students learn and practice Artistic Thinking Process, applying a variety of processes for finding inspiration and designing artwork.
HS Proficient, VA:Cr1.2.Ia	Students select topics for art-making and follow the Artistic Thinking Process to work through their ideas.
HS Accomplished VA:Cr1.2.IIa	Students select materials and methods as well as plan artwork in every lesson.
HS Advanced, VA:Cr1.2.IIIa	Students select materials and methods as well as plan artwork in every lesson. Creating artwork with deeper meaning and working in series are frequent occurrences.
HS Proficient, VA:Cr2.1.Ia	Students learn and practice exploration of media when they work using key concepts of Artistic Thinking Process.
HS Accomplished, VA:Cr2.1.IIa	Students exemplify this standard as part of Open Art Room instruction.
HS Advanced, VA:Cr2.1.IIIa	All Open Art Room units include experimentation and planning. Students select personally meaningful content in every unit.
HS Advanced, VA:Cr3.1.IIIa	Students do this in every lesson as part of the Artistic Thinking Process.
HS Proficient, VA:Cn10.1.Ia	Students document the creative process through blogs, conferences, presentations, or portfolios.
HS Accomplished, VA:Cn10.1.IIa	Students engage in this work process as part of every unit.