EXPANDING THE MEANING OF ART AS A META-DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This thesis argues that art should not be siloed, but instead, fully integrated into classroom curricula through practices of art-thinking and art-making across subject matter. By thinking like an artist in the classroom, students organize and acquire knowledge in ways that allow them to more easily identify connections between disciplines. Beyond art as a means of self-expression, students develop inquiry-based learning skills, practice creative experimentation, self-reflection and idea generation by engaging in processes of art-thinking and art-making. If educators and schools can more fully support the artistic development of their students, I believe there is a very solid case for art to be taken more seriously as a meta-discipline within our general education classrooms.
Acknowledgements

First I want to thank everyone who believes that the arts should be valued as highly as all other subject areas in schools. These are the people who are doing the work in classrooms, encouraging children to think critically, problem solve creatively and express their visions fearlessly.

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Annotated Outline

Thesis Statement: I argue that art should not be siloed, but rather fully integrated into classroom curricula through practices of art-thinking and art-making across subject matter. By thinking like an artist in the classroom, students organize and acquire knowledge in ways that allow them to more easily identify connections between disciplines.

1. Introduction: What does art mean to you?
   a. My interpretation of the word “art”. My version encompasses both what Luis Camnitzer has termed “art-thinking” as well as art-making. Meta-discipline refers to the belief that art shouldn’t be siloed or relegated, but rather embedded and somewhat prioritized in all content areas of the classroom.
   b. Invitation to viewers to reflect on the meaning of art in their lives
   c. The role of art in my life and how it has shaped my teaching philosophy
      - My childhood experiences
      - “The things we think we know, and on which we build, and from which we imagine—that’s science. The imagining, the building, the seeing beyond the given—that’s art.” (Jessica Hoffmann Davis, 2008)

2. Transdisciplinary thinking
   a. Define transdisciplinary thinking
      - “Transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all disciplines.” (Basarab Nicolescu, 2019)
   b. Thinking deeply about these ideas while simultaneously spending time with students in classrooms was a key part of the process for me
c. Transition to my work with students in general education classrooms

3. Art as integral to general education classrooms

In this part of the presentation I share several projects that I developed in general education classrooms. One that merges art with science, meditation and literacy and the other two, blends of art, literacy and social studies.

a. Winter Scenes

- Read aloud of Kate Messner’s *Over and Under the Snow“*
- Encouraging the students to collect natural materials during outdoor time
- Guided meditation on winter and sharing artwork from *Winter*, published by the Tate Modern
- “*By engaging in an exploration of looking at and creating art, children and teachers alike explore their own way of viewing the world.*” (Dr. Christine Mulcahey, 2008)
- Selected images and analysis of children’s process and final works

b. Abolitionists in the Art of Faith Ringgold

- Read aloud of *Faith Ringgold: Narrating the World in Pattern and Color* by Sharna Jackson
- “*Hearing about the motivations and intentions of the artist, as well as seeing how the work comes into existence offers a very different way of inspiring students. Artists can serve as creative role models who address larger contextual frameworks such as ideas about beauty, nature, personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality through their work and working methods.*” (Jessica Hamlin, 2014)
- Exploration of Faith Ringgold’s process through video interview and close study of her works portraying abolitionists

- Selected images and analysis of children’s process and final works

c. Environmentalist Statement Collages

- Read aloud of Our House is on Fire: Greta Thunberg’s Call to Save the Planet, by Jeanette Winter

- Developing a lesson that drew on Barbara Kruger’s artist process combined with Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya’s Raise Your Voice mural which the children and I saw at the Museum of the City of New York

- Selected images and analysis of children’s process and final works

- Close analysis of Daniel (a fourth grader’s work and process)

- “Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive... We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility.” (Maxine Greene, 1995)

4. Thinking like an artist

- Introduce this concept brought up by Cindy Foley in her Ted Talk, “Teaching Art or Teaching to Think Like an Artist?” and her realization that there are traits children display that are the same traits that many artists embody.

- Explanation of how I have made similar connections in how I have seen children thinking like artists throughout my placements and how I have seen their teachers supporting this way of thinking
a. Artists are curious
   - “The more we help children to have their wonderful ideas and to feel good about themselves for having them, the more likely it is that they will someday happen upon wonderful ideas that no one else has happened upon before.” (Eleanor Duckworth, 1987)

b. Artists are tenacious
   - “The young can be empowered to view themselves as conscious, reflective namers and speakers if their particular standpoints are acknowledged, if interpretive dialogues are encouraged, if interrogation is kept alive.” (Maxine Greene, 1995)

c. Artists are collaborative
   - “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.” (bell hooks, 1994)

d. Artists are playful
   - “What do play experiences do for child growth? If a child can have a really full wholesome experience with play, he will be having the most wholesome kind of fun that a child can have. For a child to have fun is basic to his future happiness. His early childhood play may become the basic substance out of which he lays down one of his life patterns, namely, not only that one can have fun but that one can create fun.” (Barbara Biber, 1951)
e. Artists are inventive

- “The voraciously analytical eyes of child sign-makers assess the semiotic possibilities of the world around them: ‘reading’, in the sense of detailed analytical scrutiny of all aspects of their world for their potential use in representation. What may at times seem like preposterous collages are no less deliberate than the modernist collages and constructions of a Picasso and a Duchamp: and as deliberate, usually, in their design.” (Gunther Kress, 2005)

5. Challenges and obstacles

- My statement on what I believe we need to push back against in order to make space for more art-thinking and art-making in general education classrooms
- “School is set up to transmit what is known; it is an institution rooted in the past. Art is precisely what allows you to work with the future; therefore, it is absurd to exclude it from the general educational process.” (Luis Camnitzer, 2020)

6. Conclusion

- If we can begin to seriously consider art as not only a means of self-expression but also value its reliance on inquiry-based learning skills, creative experimentation, self-reflection, idea generation and aesthetic response, I believe there is a very solid case for it to be taken more seriously as a meta-discipline within general education classrooms and throughout our schools.
Process Paper

The role of art in education is something that has been on my mind for a very long time and it is a concept that I was able to fully explore during my time in the Art of Teaching Program at Sarah Lawrence. I have come away from each course I have taken here with so much new knowledge about child development and have been so incredibly grateful to have found a community here that truly values group discussion, led by inspirational faculty. Emergent Curriculum Core I and II with Patricia Virella in my first year of the program, was where I began to make interesting connections between the artists and art education theorists that I had been reading about prior to the program and the philosophers and educators we were learning about in class. These connections affirmed my belief that art and education are inextricably linked.

Through my work on my conference paper in Emergent Curriculum, I was able to develop a foundation that eventually led to my thesis topic. In my conference paper, I reimagined a more progressive curriculum that emphasized not only student-centeredness but also the emotional and intellectual dimension of experience in art through the writings of John Dewey and Maxine Greene in particular. Central to my paper was an examination of the role of art in education, which helped me to build my argument for why I believe our general education classrooms need more arts-based learning. Through my lens as an art school graduate, I addressed the importance of incorporating a more global art history that is inclusive of contemporary art in the curriculum, and I also addressed the role of exposure to and participation in public art and the value of developing inquiry-based lesson plans. I noted the challenges that might arise from opposing forces working within the educational system and how to address them and concluded with a statement of intent for my future curriculum goals.
My main goal upon entering the Art of Teaching program was to explore the artistic development of children within a holistic childhood education program and this goal came to fruition throughout my time spent with children in my field work and student teaching placements. I began the program at the beginning of the pandemic, in the summer of 2020 and I experienced what it was like to work with children and host teachers and parents on zoom first. Concurrently, I was taking Observation and Documentation with Rue Beckerman and exploring the work of Patricia Carini and learning about the Prospect School and I was particularly inspired by the ideas set forth in the Vermont Design for Education. The value that comes from educators knowing their students, specifically through descriptive review processes is not only inspiring, but vital to supporting each child’s individual intellectual journey. Even though everything was happening across zoom screens at that time, I was so impressed by how my professors and the elementary school educators I was working with found such creative ways to engage with children, exhibiting such empathy in a time of crisis.

When we transitioned to in-person learning, I was given the opportunity to spend six semesters conducting field work and student teaching at three very special places, the Ella Baker School, the Earth School and the Early Childhood Center at Sarah Lawrence. I worked within classrooms that ranged from pre-k to kindergarten to k/1 to 4th/5th grade. It has been such a gift to be able to work with children in the classroom, studying their development through descriptive review inspired child study projects. During my time spent in my placements, I developed my teaching skills, leading whole class projects, recurrent small group literacy groups and working with children individually. I was able to incorporate all that I had learned in my Art of Teaching classes in these classrooms as I worked with my students. Something that continues to be a motivating force for me as a prospective educator is the fact that children are so open to
exploring, thinking and creating, much like artists. Throughout my various placements, I gained invaluable knowledge and experience from generous host teachers who supported my development as an educator.

If we can begin to seriously consider art as not only a means of self-expression but also value its reliance on inquiry-based learning skills, creative experimentation, self-reflection, idea generation and aesthetic response, I believe there is a very solid case for it to be taken more seriously as a meta-discipline within general education classrooms and throughout our schools. Children learn through experience and the arts provide them with opportunities to think flexibly, improvise, persevere and develop relationships with others. According to Elanor Duckworth, “learning is about constructing understanding and making sense of the world.” As a prospective educator, I intend to provide my students with a foundation for lifelong learning through the arts, while ensuring that each child is nurtured, feels valued and empowered to make good decisions.
Bibliography and References


TEDx Talks. (2014, November 26). Teaching Art or Teaching to Think Like an Artist? | Cindy Foley [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeFRfJb2ONk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeFRfJb2ONk)

Expanding the Meaning of Art as a Meta-Discipline in the Classroom

Kate Colabella

Thank you all for being here today for my masters oral presentation. I’m really looking forward to sharing with you a topic I have been thinking about for a very long time, and one that I was able to explore deeply during my time here at Sarah Lawrence in the Art of Teaching Program.
I’d like to begin by introducing my interpretation of the word “art”. My version encompasses both what Luis Camnitzer has termed “art-thinking” as well as art-making. “Art-thinking” is identifying a sort of freedom of connections that allows one to understand things better. It is through art-thinking that we can organize and acquire knowledge, which can then be combined with practices of art-making…
Expanding the Meaning of Art as a Meta-Discipline in the Classroom

Kate Colabella

Meta-discipline refers to the belief that art shouldn’t be siloed or relegated, but rather
embedded and somewhat prioritized in all content areas of the classroom.
What does art mean to you?

So first, I invite you all to take a moment to think about what art means to you in your life. You might think about a recent experience, like a dance performance you’ve seen or an interesting mural you pass by each day. You might think about something you worked really hard on as a child or as an adult. Think about how this made you feel.
Art, as a way of both thinking and making, has been a part of my life, for all of it. I was incredibly fortunate to grow up with a mom who not only valued my creative pursuits, and those of other children, but encouraged them. Simultaneously my aunt who is an artist and graphic designer, inspired me to think about my ideas and portray them in unconventional ways as she introduced me to the breadth of creative art-making techniques. In addition, my Kindergarten through 5th grade education took place at a school that I am forever indebted to: Daniel Webster Magnet School in New Rochelle—An incredibly diverse, public, magnet school with a humanities focus built into its mission.

At a young age I also realized that many children do not have access to the arts—such as mentors, art supplies, classes, and art experiences that are valued by their support systems. Oftentimes art is seen as an “extra” thing. Something less important than the other disciplines. There are people who steer children away from it because they think it might lead to “less lucrative career paths.” Even in schools that value the arts, art is often still “othered.” But the arts are essential. And not only in art class, but throughout our general education classrooms.

One project that I still think about today took place in my fourth grade science class. You might not equate science with poetry but this experience, early in my life, did just that. We were asked to consider the way a scientist eats an apple versus the way an artist eats an apple. I can remember dissecting the apple in science class but I think what excited me most was the part about reflecting on the experience through poetry. And I think I still come back to this because I am captivated by this idea that you can
approach any topic through a variety of different lenses, thereby expanding your view.
“The things we think we know, and on which we build, and from which we imagine—that’s science. The imagining, the building, the seeing beyond the given—that’s art.”

—Jessica Hoffmann Davis

In her book “Why Our Schools Need the Arts,” Jessica Hoffmann Davis, founding director of the Arts in Education program at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education writes “The things we think we know, and on which we build, and from which we imagine—that’s science. The imagining, the building, the seeing beyond the given—that’s art. It is so interesting to me that in this quote science is the noun and art becomes the verb. Art as a way of thinking, art as a lens through which we think critically about the world around us, art as an active learning process and perhaps a meta-discipline.”
Transdisciplinary Thinking

I am not sure if I realized it at the time, but that particular activity in school was a very important exercise for me. The richest educational experiences in my view are the ones that prioritize making transdisciplinary connections.
Theoretical physicist Basarab Nicolescu defines transdisciplinarity as “that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all disciplines.” I often think about how interesting it would be if more students were introduced to this concept by being presented with more opportunities in the classroom to explore their ideas in transdisciplinary ways.

In this next part of my presentation I will share with you some projects I worked on with two different classes. One that merges art with science, meditation and literacy and the other two, blends of art, literacy and social studies.
Winter Scenes

I would like to first introduce you to the Winter Scenes project. Each year the five/sixes class at the ECC is commissioned to create “winter scenes” which once produced, are prominently displayed in a Sarah Lawrence building. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to lead this project as I was student teaching in the 5/6s classroom at the time. With winter as our chosen theme, I wanted the children to have access to a wide-variety of entry points from which to explore.
So we began with some science. I did a class read-aloud of Kate Messner’s “Over and Under the Snow.” In this book, a young girl and her father embark on a cross-country skiing trip. Together, they observe clues that support the existence of a “secret kingdom under the snow.” Through this read-aloud, the 5/6s engaged with concepts like winter habitats, biodiversity, and predator-prey relationships that all take place over and under the snow. During outdoor time I encouraged them to collect natural materials like twigs and leaves that they could later incorporate into their pieces if they wanted to.
Then I led the class through a guided meditation on winter. It wasn’t a typical winter this past year, so I really wanted the students to explore their conceptions of and memories of the season. I also shared with the five/six’s this book called Winter, published by the Tate Modern and we flipped through the pages that included works of art, individually selected for the particular ways in which the artists captured the season. Introducing them to the idea that there are a variety of ways you can portray winter was a very important part of the process for me. The works in this book include pieces that range from realistic landscape scenes to abstract representations. Some children were particularly captivated by the more abstract works, commenting on the beauty of the colors chosen by the artists. Like Wilhelmina Barns-Graham’s “Glacier Crystal, Grindelwald” and Cy Twombly’s “Quattro Stagioni: Inverno.”
“By engaging in an exploration of looking at and creating art, children and teachers alike explore their own way of viewing the world.”

—Dr. Christine Mulcahey

Dr. Christine Mulcahey explains that “by engaging in an exploration of looking at and creating art, children and teachers alike explore their own way of viewing the world.” She says that “exploring the arts departs from an assembly-line approach to learning and resists efforts to get away from the holistic nature of things. Children who react to challenges when presented with new information by asking why and by exploring many possible answers learn far more than those who simply accept facts figures, and other teacher directed activities.”
After our winter meditation and looking at some works of art in the book, the students got right to work, exploring their materials.
Thinking carefully about light and dark and blending all different shades of blues and greys.
And experimenting with different techniques.
The final works blew me away. Each one was so unique and poetic. From a single snowflake in the night
To the use of natural materials
To the layering of paint and twigs and natural fibers
Each piece portrayed a conception of winter
Like godzilla in the snow
Or the way the snow falls
To explorations of natural landscapes and depictions of abstract snowpeople
“Snow falling  
Frost where the water used to be  
Trees where the frost is”  
—Kelsie

“Snowflakes winter wonderland  
full of children that all come to play. When they leave they say bye bye to the winter wonderland.”  
—Grace

Some students even titled their works without any prompting at all, naturally bringing forth a literacy component. Here are two examples: Snow falling. Frost where the water used to be. Trees where the frost is. And Snowflakes winter wonderland full of children that all come to play. When they leave they say bye bye to the winter wonderland.
And here is the final installation of all fourteen pieces. Each one an incredibly expressive unique take on the season.
Next I would like to introduce you a project called “Abolitionists in the Art of Faith Ringgold.”
To complement the Earth School’s Fourth and Fifth Grade class’ core social studies abolitionist research project, I developed a lesson plan centered around the life and work of Faith Ringgold. I did a read-aloud of a children’s book about Faith’s life, followed by an exploration of Faith’s works that portray abolitionists.
“Hearing about the motivations and intentions of the artist, as well as seeing how the work comes into existence offers a very different way of inspiring students. Artists can serve as creative role models who address larger contextual frameworks such as ideas about beauty, nature, personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality through their work and working methods.”

— Jessica Hamlin

Art educator Jessica Hamlin writes that “Hearing about the motivations and intentions of the artist, as well as seeing how the work comes into existence offers a very different way of inspiring students. Artists can serve as creative role models who address larger contextual frameworks such as ideas about beauty, nature, personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality through their work and working methods.”
Some of the abolitionists Faith Ringgold has portrayed in her work were abolitionists that my students were doing close studies of, like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass. As is the case with most subjects, I see many students struggling to understand not only how the disciplines are connected but also how what they are learning relates to their lives. Introducing students to contemporary artists by sharing their life stories and work is a wonderful way to help them make these connections.
Following our observations of Faith’s art we watched a video clip in which Faith explains her process, sharing what inspired her and the importance of storytelling through her process of blending of text and imagery.

For the art-making part of the lesson, I sent them back to their tables in their abolitionist groups to work on a creative project and I told them to bring their research materials on the abolitionist they were studying. I gave them three options: 1. Create a portrait of your abolitionist. 2. Considering how text is integral to Faith’s work, find a quote from your abolitionist and produce a piece that emphasizes the words. 3. Develop a piece that is evocative of their abolitionist’s legacy.
Similar to the Winter Scenes project, the fourth and fifth graders got right to work and I was truly blown away. Most chose option one, producing incredibly detailed drawings of their abolitionists.
It was incredible to see their interpretations
A few students gravitated to option two, focusing on text which I was thrilled to see as well.
I saw the students “thinking like artists”
John Brown was a male abolitionist who fought many famous battles against groups of slave owners mostly during the 1850s.

as they utilized their research materials and creative thinking skills
To celebrate their abolitionist's legacies through their illustrations.
So next I would like to share a very recent project, Environmentalist Statement Collages. I worked on with this same group of fourth fifth graders at the Earth School.
The children have been learning about activism in their core social studies class so I began with a read-aloud of “Our House is on Fire: Greta Thunberg’s Call to Save the Planet” by Jeanette Winter. Following the read-aloud, we discussed what activism is and the ways in which kids really can make a difference.
Our class has been going on class trips to museums and learning about activism through the works of various artists. Most recently we visited the Museum of the City of New York to see the show “Activist New York” and spent time as a class in this room with this incredible mural by Amanda PING-bodee-bak-ee-ah. Another artist who came to mind
Barbara Kruger- known for her distinct style of work that incorporates imagery and bold text to convey powerful messages. I thought how cool would it be if my students utilized text and image to produce statement collages about the earth and calls to action similar to the signs the children made in Greta’s climate strike. I gathered a large stack of newspapers and had some used illustrated atlases on hand which I brought to the classroom.
The students produced incredible works. I encouraged them to focus on their statement first and they all mapped out their ideas and then excitedly participated in a kind of artistic scavenger hunt taking on the exciting challenge of finding the letters they needed to convey their messages.
Running about the room that was filled with newspapers in the meeting area and on all of the tables with the children excited about what they were doing, asking questions, some struggling and then becoming excited by what they found and with children asking me where the atlases were- that scene is how I have always imagined my ideal classroom would look like and sound like and feel like.
And the final works nearly brought me to tears knowing how hard each one of them worked.
I'd like to point your attention to this piece. This was the first completed work in the classroom of over twenty students. Carefully and quietly this piece was produced by a fourth grader who gets into fights with other children, a child who for the most part refuses to read and write and work together with other students within the classroom community. But when he is in the process of making art, I see a completely different side of him. He is focused, he is calm, confident, careful and creative. He is an artist.
Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive... We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility.

—Maxine Greene

Maxine Greene writes “Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive... We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility.”
Thinking like an artist

Something I have always known to be true but that was confirmed during my time student teaching is that all children are creative. Children have a capacity for learning and an openness that as an artist is incredibly inspiring to me and it’s something I don’t see as often in adults. In Cindy Foley’s Ted Talk and CMOA rubric for educators, she makes an interesting connection. She explains that there are traits children display that are the same traits and habits of mind that many artists embody. In the next part of my presentation I will share with you some connections I have made throughout my student teaching experiences and how I have seen their teachers supporting them.
ARTISTS are CURIOUS
Teachers of CURIOUS artists make space to accommodate emergent learning. They include time in their schedules for open-ended play, and encourage idea generation, inspiring their students to make collections, and explore things that intrigue them. By knowing their students, these teachers utilize their student’s interests finding new and interesting ways to include them in classroom content.
As Eleanor Duckworth writes in the “The Having of Wonderful Ideas”: The more we help children to have their wonderful ideas and to feel good about themselves for having them, the more likely it is that they will someday happen upon wonderful ideas that no one else has happened upon before.
ARTISTS are TENACIOUS
Teachers of TENACIOUS ARTISTS encourage their students to be bold when it comes to exploring their ideas. These students become more comfortable with making mistakes and they build the strength to persevere. Challenges become opportunities.
“The young can be empowered to view themselves as conscious, reflective namers and speakers if their particular standpoints are acknowledged, if interpretive dialogues are encouraged, if interrogation is kept alive”

—Maxine Greene

In “Releasing the Imagination” Maxine Greene writes “The young can be empowered to view themselves as conscious, reflective namers and speakers if their particular standpoints are acknowledged, if interpretive dialogues are encouraged, if interrogation is kept alive”
ARTISTS are COLLABORATIVE.
Teachers of collaborative artists make space for their students to work together in ways that give them the ability to incorporate others’ ideas as well as their own. These teachers know how to successfully convey the difference between “copying” that is wrong and the sharing and working collaboration that facilitates growth.
bell hooks reminds us that “as a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.”
ARTISTS are PLAYFUL
Teachers of PLAYFUL artists are able to let go of intended outcomes in order to pursue deep student learning. These teachers truly understand why play is vital, and this is revealed through their documentation of their students’ thinking. Through play students are engaged and focused, and these teachers take their students creative processes and projects seriously.
In “Play as a Growth Process” Barbara Biber writes “What do play experiences do for child growth? If a child can have a really full wholesome experience with play, he will be having the most wholesome kind of fun that a child can have. For a child to have fun is basic to his future happiness. His early childhood play may become the basic substance out of which he lays down one of his life patterns, namely, not only that one can have fun but that one can create fun.”

—Barbara Biber
ARTISTS are INVENTIVE.
Teachers of INVENTIVE artists believe in their students’ ideas. These teachers motivate their students to continue to develop and adapt their creative projects, rather than settling on their first idea.
Gunther Kress writes: The voraciously analytical eyes of child sign-makers assess the semiotic possibilities of the world around them: ‘reading’, in the sense of detailed analytical scrutiny of all aspects of their world for their potential use in representation. What may at times seem like preposterous collages are no less deliberate than the modernist collages and constructions of a Picasso and a Duchamp: and as deliberate, usually, in their design.”

—Gunther Kress
As you can probably tell I have been incredibly lucky to student teach in schools within general education classrooms that value the arts and I have been working with amazing host teachers who have enabled me to enact my pedagogy. But unfortunately most schools are not like this. In most cases it seems as though schools continue to promote a model of conformity that intentionally or unintentionally resist giving power to individual intellectual pursuit at all levels of education. I feel passionately about the need to push back against this problematic obsession with standardized testing and narrow-minded curricula that relegates the arts to the periphery.
“School is set up to transmit what is known; it is an institution rooted in the past. Art is precisely what allows you to work with the future; therefore, it is absurd to exclude it from the general educational process.”

Camnitzer, 2022

Camnitzer reminds us that “School is set up to transmit what is known; it is an institution rooted in the past. Art is precisely what allows you to work with the future; therefore, it is absurd to exclude it from the general educational process.”
If we can begin to seriously consider art as not only a means of self-expression but also value its reliance on inquiry-based learning skills, creative experimentation, self-reflection, idea generation and aesthetic response, I believe there is a very solid case for it to be taken more seriously as a meta-discipline within general education classrooms and throughout our schools.