Can Art Journaling and Narrative Art Benefit Students Experiencing Crisis or Trauma?

Stacia Kaye McCann

Follow this and additional works at: http://digscholarship.unco.edu/arp

Recommended Citation
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

CAN ART JOURNALING AND NARRATIVE ART BENEFIT STUDENTS EXPERIENCING CRISIS OR TRAUMA?

An Action Research Project in Art Education Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Stacia Kaye McCann

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Art and Design

August 2015
This Action Research Project by: Stacia Kaye McCann

Entitled: Can art journaling and narrative art benefit students experiencing crisis or trauma?

Has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Performing and Visual Arts in the School of Art and Design

Accepted by the Committee:

_______________________________________________________
Connie Stewart, Chair

_______________________________________________________
Kevin Slivka, Co-Chair
ABSTRACT


This action research project was designed to address the prevalent issue of childhood trauma. The research introduces art interventions such as art journaling, narrative art making, art related life skills and famous narrative artists to students who had experienced traumatic situations. The project was implemented with the collaboration of the school counselor and the assistant principal. The project ran for approximately nine weeks in the winter and spring of 2015. Students met once per week to learn a new life skill such as deep breathing, to create a work of art related to that life skill and to journal about their experiences. The students also had the opportunity to create a permanent art mosaic on the school grounds as a culminating project. By studying the data, it becomes clear that art journaling, narrative art making and implementation of art related life skills have had a positive impact on students experiencing trauma. When examining the data, student absenteeism went down. According to the student emotional health questionnaires, the emotional health of these students improved, their art journal entries proved that they were able to connect with their peers better and to make friends, and teacher surveys showed improved social and emotional behavior.

In my observations, there was a significant correlation between students receiving art interventions and confidence gained to try new things. I also observed that
art intervention students became more positive about life in general, seemed better able to become part of a peer group and to cope with everyday life.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
   Rationale
   Research Questions
   Background Context
   Limitations
   Definitions of Terms

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ..................................................... 13
   Divorce Rate and Student Trauma
   Art in Therapy vs Art as Therapy
   The Need for Art as Therapy
     Visual Journaling
   Art in Therapy vs Art as Therapy Revisited
   The Artistic Process
   Resiliency Through Art
The Artistic Process

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES……………………………………… 21

Methods
Procedures
Participants
Design
Data Analysis Procedures
Limitations

IV. ANALYSIS ………………………………………………………… 33

Case Studies
Reporting the Findings
Addressing the Limitations

V. ACTION PLAN ……………………………………………………... 55

What I learned
Recommendations
Extending the Project
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.10</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.11</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.13</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.14</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

I have been teaching art K-8th grade for the past thirteen years at Garden Lakes Elementary School. I am currently teaching eight classes per day and have approximately 32 students per class. My school adopted the “Response to Intervention” model (RTI) a multi-tiered approach to education that includes a high standard of teaching, ongoing student assessments and interventions based on the assessments. No matter what the field of expertise, all teachers at Garden Lakes School were asked to conduct small groups for math and reading interventions, which were built into our schedules. While I saw the need for math and reading interventions at my school, I also saw the need for another kind of intervention. There are many students in my school who have gone through crisis situations. These include parental divorce, the illness or loss of a parent or loved one, parental incarceration, and other difficult situations for a child. When personal support structures are no longer available, it is difficult for these children to focus on everyday tasks. I know from personal experience when belief systems are destroyed, joy and enthusiasm are almost impossible to imagine. Simply smiling and being friendly, while enduring trauma can be too much to ask
of a student. Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris, in stating the effects of childhood trauma, says:

In the mid-'90s, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and Kaiser Permanente discovered an exposure that dramatically increased the risk for seven out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the United States. In high doses, it affects brain development, the immune system, hormonal systems, and even the way our DNA is read and transcribed. Folks who are exposed in very high doses have triple the lifetime risk of heart disease and lung cancer and a 20-year difference in life expectancy. And yet, doctors today are not trained in routine screening or treatment. Now, the exposure I'm talking about is not a pesticide or a packaging chemical. It's childhood trauma. (Burke Harris, 2015. n.p.)

Harris also reports the prevalence of childhood trauma when she quotes Dr. Robert Block, the former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who says “Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.” In addition to dealing with these stresses, the academic system continues to ask students to perform well in school. I began wondering if an extra period of art per week could benefit these students.

In lieu of math and reading interventions, I asked if I could use my art expertise to work with small pull-out groups of students to conduct art interventions. What did this look like? I worked alongside our school counselor to support those students undergoing traumatic experiences. I worked with small groups, between three and fifteen students, in art intervention classes on Wednesday mornings. Classes were 40 minutes long. Within each class period students focused on one new Boys Town Life Skill (Dowd, T. & Tierney, J., 2005) that correlated with creating a narrative work of art.
I wanted to work with students who had suffered trauma or crisis situations in their lives because research shows that following divorce, approximately 20 to 25 percent of children in divorced families experience long-term adjustment problems, compared to roughly 10 percent of children in first-marriage families (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 2000). Divorce rates are high in Arizona, but there are also cases of parental incarceration in Garden Lake’s student’s households.

A recent study by Susan Phillips M.S.W. and her colleagues found the following: Parental incarceration is strongly related to economic strain in children’s households, defined as low-income with an unemployed caregiver and a lower standard of living or inability to meet the child’s needs. Related to economic strain is the possibility that parental incarceration will increase the risk that children’s households will become unstable, including multiple, frequent moves; the introduction of unrelated parental figures into the household; divorce; and non-routine school changes. Any of these can pose risks to children’s healthy development. (Phillips et al., 2006, p.3)

I decided to work specifically with students who have undergone trauma or crisis because, in the past 25 years, I have felt the effects of two crisis situations in my life. I am aware of what it’s like to deal with the stages of grief and the horrors of trauma. In the spring of 1989 I was sexually assaulted by a serial rapist and in 2009 my son and I were abandoned by my husband, whom I’d been married to for 27 years.

Post-divorce, I remember seeing my eyes in pictures and thinking they looked so sad. I only wanted to wear black, a color often associated with
mourning in North America and I remember the counselor poking her head into my classroom and making the gesture of pulling up the corners of her mouth while looking me in the eye. This was her simple reminder that my sadness was affecting students. As I dealt with the repercussions of both of these personally traumatic events, I knew that I didn’t want to remain victimized and I knew I wanted to help others get through similar situations. Once I had been through these crisis situations, it was easy to identify students who were going through similar difficulties. The students could tell I understood. I felt like I was a magnet for students who needed to talk about impending parental divorces. This meant I needed to heal.

As I reflected on the life skills I used to get through these tough times, I found that being creative, being positive, and being thankful were the personal practices that led me to healing. I used art-making and art journaling as a way of coping with tumultuous emotions during the healing process. After the sexual assault, I turned to quilting, which felt like a soft way of piecing my life back together again. After abandonment and subsequent divorce, I smashed tiles and dishes to create a mosaic, which felt like a metaphor for piecing my heart back together again.

I took it upon myself to use art as therapy, rather than art in therapy as an approach to healing. There is a clear distinction between the two. Art in therapy is a psychoanalytic approach that, according to Kivnik and Erickson (1983)
employs the transference process between therapist and the client who makes the art. I did not use this practice when working with my art intervention students. In this practice a student would be seen by a therapist and the therapist would psychoanalyze the child’s art works. I used art as therapy, which also according to Kivnik and Erickson (1983) is defined as an approach that focuses on the art-making process as therapeutic in and of itself. This means that it is in the making of the art that the child will feel therapeutic benefit without seeing a therapist or being psychoanalyzed. It was in the art-making itself that I personally found therapeutic benefits during my healing process.

Instead of seeing a therapist, I turned to art-making as a means of therapy. The artistic process effectuated a deep inner gaze that made it difficult to blame or fault find in others. It kept me present, in the moment and positive. I concentrated on getting out from the darkness that enveloped me, looked for the light and beauty in life, and focused on recreating it.

In the summer of 2014 I took a graduate level class, Introduction to Research Methods, at the University of Northern Colorado and realized I had come to the point in my life that I could apply my experience with art-making as a post-traumatic coping skill to help others. I have accepted that life is full of crisis situations. Lifetime exposure to traumatic events in the general American population ranges from 60-70 percent (Kessler et al.1995; Norris, 1992; Resnick et al, 1993). It is estimated that 21 percent of Americans have experienced a
traumatic stressor in the last year (National Victim Center, 1993). I decided I could help students learn to deal with these experiences in a healthy way, but how?

My experiences and subsequent healing made me wonder what I could do to help my students. I am not an art therapist, so I cannot focus on the trauma or crisis situations, but I am an expert in art and can focus on art making and related healthy life skills. I decided to give these students a way for their stories to be heard through journaling and narrative art making. I worked with small groups within an art intervention class, teaching life skills reinforced with art projects such as art journaling and visual storytelling. Oklahoma Independent Living Program (OKIL) a program for youth ages 16-21 in foster care and foster care alumni, states, “Anyone who plans on navigating life successfully needs life skills...Being able to communicate effectively, make decisions and manage your challenges are life skills that lead to success.” (2004) At Garden Lakes School Boys Town life skills correlating with academics are introduced to all students, kindergarten through eighth grade, on a weekly basis. Some examples of these are: How to Get a Teacher's Attention, How to Disagree Appropriately, and How to Work in a Group. I am a certified art teacher and have taught art for thirteen years. It is this expertise, along with my own experiences in dealing with trauma and crisis, and the advanced Boys Town life skills, that I used when I worked with the art intervention students.
Research Questions

This research project investigated the questions:

- How will students benefit from keeping an art journal?
- Will art journaling and visual storytelling improve student ability to navigate crisis situations?
- Will creating narrative works of art and learning new life skills improve the general wellbeing of the students?

Background & Context

I worked with groups of students on Wednesday mornings for periods of time that varied between 35 and 55 minutes. Groups were held in the art classroom at my school, Garden Lakes Elementary, which is located in a master planned community (a community that was designed to provide housing, educational, recreational and commercial facilities for its residents) located in Avondale, AZ. Eighty-six percent of the students who attend live within the four square miles of Garden Lakes Community. The other 14 percent attend on variances and live outside of the community. Avondale is a suburb of Phoenix and is located on the westernmost outskirts. The current student body population, in Garden Lakes School, is 950. Four hundred and forty-four students are on the free and reduced program. Our student body consists of 29 percent white students, 55 percent Hispanic, eight percent black and three percent Asian. Students in the art intervention classes were split into small sections of three to ten students and were grouped by age. Each student created
an art journal based on narrative stories and life skills that were introduced each session and were used throughout the research period, which consisted of:

- Collaging a narrative about themselves to be used as the cover of their art journal.
- Creating their “happy place,” in a three dimensional work of art.
- Drawing a narrative of a day in the life of the student.
- Creating a feeling container in which one can write down one’s feelings and put them inside until an appropriate time.

Along with these art projects, students were introduced to the following life skills taken from, *Teaching Social Skills to Youth* (D. Dowd & J. Tierney, 2005):

- Trying new tasks.
- Concentrating on a subject or task.
- Expressing feelings appropriately.
- Controlling emotions and using relaxation strategies.

I hoped that students who were experiencing or had experienced trauma learned new life skills that would better enable them to focus in school. I hoped that the art making projects would reduce the stress levels that these students were feeling, thus making them stronger, healthier and less likely, insofar as they were in control of the situation, to miss school. I realized that in some instances absences were due to parental or other uncontrollable issues.

**Limitations**
One foreseeable limitation for this study was that it was limited to a single elementary school. The outcome could be very different if the study was expanded to a broader or different age range, socioeconomic or ethnic background, etc. This work could have been constrained by the normal limitations imposed by an elementary school schedule. For instance, students who are in band and choir were exempt from coming to art interventions, as the time set aside for the two classes clashed. Scheduling around such conflicts is a common occurrence and there are not enough hours in the day to make every student available for art intervention classes within their age groups. Students were given the choice to participate in art intervention or not. The alternative choices they were given during this intervention time may have been more appealing. For example, the Physical Education (P.E.) teachers took all the students who were not in band, choir or art interventions and let them have free play on the playground. Some students may have chosen recess, which has very little educational confines, over art interventions, which was a somewhat structured class with educational expectations.

Art interventions were in the middle of the week and were only one day per week. Teachers occasionally forgot to send students. In these cases, I had to track down the students losing valuable intervention time.

Unfortunately some parents were undergoing the same traumatic situation that their child was. This may have left parents with a wide range of feelings
from insecurity to detachment and a general sense of uncaring. Because of this, parents may have unwittingly denied their children this opportunity.

**Definitions of Terms**

The Boys Town Education Model is a multi-component program designed to assist schools in addressing challenging behavior through healthy relationships and the explicit teaching of social skills, according to Scott Fluke, Reece L. Peterson & Regina M. Oliver (2013). When I refer to Boys Town skills, I am referring to those found in, *Teaching Social Skills to Youth* (2005).

Garden Lakes Elementary has used the Boys Town Model for the past 3 years. Each year we focused on 25 Boys Town skills such as: how to get a teacher’s attention, how to greet others, etc… All of the teachers at Garden Lakes have had at least 16 hours of training, multiple observations using the model and feedback from Boys Town leadership teams. Students attending Garden Lakes are familiar with the introduction of basic level skills on a weekly basis. The Boys Town skills I will use in this research project are advanced skills that pertain to the artistic process such as: expressing oneself appropriately and using relaxation strategies.

I will also use the term healthy life skills, which, according to the World Health Organization (2001), are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. I will specifically talk about skills that are appropriate for student
use, such as: deep breathing, warm up movements, journaling, and narrative art making.

When I speak about narrative works of art, I am talking about those works that tell a story about the student who created it. The stories the child produces could be imaginative or true. For example, if a student is asked to draw his or her happy place, it may be a place that he or she has actually been to or somewhere conjured up in the mind of the child. I interchangeably use the terms art works, art-making and narrative works throughout this project because every art project the students created during art intervention classes was narrative.

I use the above mentioned distinctions, made by Kivnik and Erickson (1983), between art in therapy and art as therapy in which the former deals with patient and therapist but the latter does not. Throughout this research project I use the term art in therapy to mean a work of art created by a client with the intention of psychoanalyzing it and art as therapy deals with anyone using the artistic process as a therapeutic tool.

I also use the terms resilience and steel, which according to Merriam Webster (nd) have the following meanings: resilience is the ability to become strong, healthy or successful again after something bad happens and steel is to fill with resolution or determination i.e. she steeled herself to face the crisis. The terms are used in this way throughout the project. I use the term post-traumatic growth to refer to positive psychological change experienced as a result of a
struggle with highly challenging circumstances as defined by Tedeshi and Calhoun (2004).
“Navigating childhood is a daunting feat for anyone, particularly a child,” Tina Collen, *the storm of the i*

**Divorce Rate and Student Trauma**

A survey conducted by the American Community Survey and the Daily Beast, shows that Arizona has one of the highest divorce rates in the country, with 10.98-12.63 per 1,000 people ending their marriages, (Swift, 2013). The number of students in Arizona schools who are feeling the aftermath of parental divorce is substantial. Divorce is considered to be a major crisis, second only to death of a loved one in the emotional trauma, stress and upheaval it causes, (Zamostny, 2014).

Currently, students at Garden Lakes School (GLS), where I teach, are referred to the counselor or choose to talk to her on their own. She is not a therapist and does not conduct therapy with these students. She holds small group discussions with students and spends minimal time going into classrooms to teach life skills. There are no other interventions to alleviate the stress and upheaval due to parental divorce that the students in my school are experiencing.
Art in Therapy vs Art as Therapy

According to D. Edwards (2004), there are two separate ideas on art therapy. One is art in therapy, which is when art is coupled with psychoanalysis. And the other is art as therapy, which is when the process of art is considered therapy in and of itself. I will lend my expertise in the field of art as therapy to see what the effects of art intervention classes are for students affected by a family divorce, as well as students who are dealing with parental incarceration, or a terminal or serious illness of a parent. I worked with small groups of students excused from other class activities. During these sessions I guided them to create art journals and storytelling works of art.

Writing in Psychology Today, Cathy Malchiodi, supports Art as Therapy processes by saying,

Children show us their suffering and their hopes through art. Words tell our stories, but art makes it possible for us to bear witness to them. While I believe this is true for individuals of all ages, it is particularly so for children. For many youth, art is a vehicle for exposing the atrocities of interpersonal violence... and it is a way of ‘breaking the silence’ through the visual narrative of art expression. (Cathy Malchiodi, December 3, 2014., n.p.)

At the same time, art making introduces students to life skills, such as found in the Boys Town handbook, *Tools for Teaching Social Skills to Youth* (Dowd and Tierney, 2005), that relate to the artistic process. For example, when students create an art journal and fill it with works of art, they experience the life skill
Trying New Tasks. And, when illustrating a safe calm place in a work of art, students learn about the life skill Using Relaxation Strategies.

The use of art as therapy in established intervention programs is supported by the research of Ellen Erickson and Joan Kivnik who made healing (which means healthy, sound or whole) their emphasis, rather than therapy (which means to treat disorders.) They made this shift by treating their patients like artists/creators of art rather than treating them as if they were ill. Adhering to this philosophy, their dialogue was the kind used between artists rather than between patient and therapist. The goal of their programs was to “encourage participants to learn new strengths and skills and to build upon those capacities and strengths they already possessed” (p. 603). Further support for using art as a catalyst for change comes from Ellen Dissanayake (1990), who writes that art as a behavior fulfills a human need. It is a way to reach into the biological memory of the human species, which is why it can so powerfully transform us.

The Need for Art as Therapy

Viktor Lowenfeld (1957) states “Our one-sided education with the emphasis on knowledge has neglected those attributes of growth which are responsible for the development of the individual’s sensibilities, for the spiritual life, as well as for his ability to live cooperatively in a society.” (p.2)

When I looked at students who were navigating trauma and crisis situations in their lives, I didn’t feel they were given the support they needed to succeed in
school. It’s difficult for school systems to deal with matters that concern the heart, rather than solely academic matters. According to Aristotle, “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

There’s a silent expectation for students who have experienced trauma to carry on with studies as if nothing at all has happened, hoping the passage of time erases the pain. As psychologist Ken Moses (1987) states, “I was taught that the way to deal with adversity or pain was to ‘tough it out.’ If you could avoid showing the pain, then you had ‘beaten the rap.’” Then, he goes on to explain that this was bad advice he had been given, and states “experiencing and sharing the pain is the solution.” Some of the painful effects of trauma I have noticed students undergoing are: inability to focus, uncooperative behavior, listlessness, fatigue, and general sadness. Hazrat Inyat Khan, in The Art of Being and Becoming states,

The great drawback of modern civilization is that man today thinks what is balanced and practical is to think with the brain, to reason things out. But he thinks that to feel with the heart is not practical, is not common sense. Therefore today a “normal” and “balanced” person is the one who lives in his brain, and the one whose heart is developed is called a fanatic, or unpractical. (Khan, 1989, p. XVI)

Because it is generally thought to be unpractical to address matters of the heart, we simply choose not to. Kathryn Erskine, in the Author’s note from her book, Mockingbird, a heartfelt story about a community trying to find closure after a traumatic shooting spree at their middle school, states,
We all want to be heard, to be understood. Some of us are better than others at expressing ourselves. Some of us have severe problems that need to be addressed, not ignored, no matter what the cost. Saving society money is a travesty if the cost of that savings is in human lives. *Ignore* and *ignorance* share the same root. (Erskine, January 2010, p. 234)

But, when life skills are developed to allow one to feel with the heart, and the art process is navigated to express what is in the heart, I believe we have an opportunity to truly develop as balanced human beings.

**Visual Journaling**

Visual journaling was one of the coping skills I used when my husband abandoned our family. While reading the art journals of Tina Collen, and Sabrina Ward Harrison I could see their healing stories told through visual art. For example, on a background of smeared paint and geometric shapes, Sabrina Ward Harrison made the following list:

Making Your Life FEEL Better: I think it takes a Bit of A Lot of things.
1. Let the tears roll where they will.
2. Honey on ANYTHING. SARK (a shirt of chemise) in any shape.
3. A VERY SOFT OLD HAND saying “you'll be okay”… (Ward Harrison, 2005, p.64.)

In a compilation of art and relics from her past, Tina Collen writes about her art journal:

A faded quotation, clipped from the pages of my later life, fell arbitrarily next to a series of small paintings. I’d created the colorful images right before I was married and they depicted the developmental stages of an embryo. The quotation that had fallen next to them read “It’s never too late to be what you might have been.” Suddenly, the paintings were no
longer simply about birth – they were also about the forgotten seedling of myself. (Collen, 2009, p.2)

I wanted to share this method of self-exploration, this healing process, art journaling, with my students.

**Art Therapy vs. Art as Therapy Revisited**

I agree with Art Therapist Judith Aron Rubin (2001) in her book *Approaches to Art Therapy*, when she states, “Art therapists themselves don’t agree on approach or theory development, when it comes to art therapy. We can take comfort in the knowledge that both art and human beings are wonderfully rich and complex. Thus, it makes sense that our search (for theory and practice) should be an ongoing and, I suspect, an eternal one.” (p. 12)

However, Rubin goes on to say, “Art therapists are highly involved in psychoanalyzing or analyzing through a variety of practices, the works of art, that their patients have created and thus diagnosing the patient.” In my experience, without any analysis or diagnostic activities, I was able to allow the process of art making be the catalyst for my healing. I intuitively took up doing art projects after having experienced traumatic crisis situations and began feeling the healing properties of the art making process almost immediately.

**The Artistic Process**

Art is an integral part of human history. It is a means of communicating ideas. It fosters visual literacy, perceptual awareness, cognitive processes, aesthetic literacy and life coping skills. (Arlington Schools, 2014). The students
in art intervention classes, at Garden Lakes School, explored art through visual storytelling. Visual storytelling leads children to have a stronger understanding of their selves. As Yvonne Zacharias points out, “Children use the uncoded language of drawing to reflect their thoughts and feelings with a complexity that they can’t put into words, part of the coded literacy learned later in life.” (Zacharias 2014) I want to emphasize the process of art making as a coping skill. I wanted, to simply give these students a voice with which to tell their stories, a process (visual storytelling) in which to tell their stories and then, on my part, to listen.

**Resiliency Through Art**

Self-expression serves as an important adaptive coping function, capitalizes on helping individuals of all ages move from being simply survivors to “thrivers,” and provides a way to tell one’s story when words do not always capture the truth of experience and worldview…It is at least one strategy that has the potential to empower people to share their stories and be witnessed and heard. Equally important, it may hold the possibility to actively transform those stories from ones that once seemed discounted, hopeless and insurmountable into ones of self-efficacy and resilience (Machiodi, 2014, n.p.)

The idea of resiliency as put forth by Heise (2014) “is the ability of a person to cope despite adversity.” While researching resiliency, I came upon the concept of post-traumatic growth. Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun state,

Posttraumatic growth is the experience of positive change that occurs as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life crises. It is manifested in a
variety of ways, including an increased appreciation for life in general, more meaningful interpersonal relationships, an increased sense of personal strength, challenged priorities, and a richer existential and spiritual life. Although the term is new, the idea that great good can come from great suffering is ancient. (Tedeshi and Calhoun, 2007, n.p.)

According to Tedischi, “Posttraumatic growth is not about returning to the same life as was previously experienced before a period of traumatic suffering; but rather it is about undergoing significant 'life-changing' psychological shifts in thinking and relating to the world, that contribute to a personal process of change, that is deeply meaningful.” This forward leaning thinking is what I wished to aid my students in learning so that they could take challenges from their pasts, find ways in which they benefitted from them and use them in future situations. My plan for accomplishing this was to guide students through visual storytelling.
CHAPTER III

Methods and Procedures

Methods

Art is an integral part of human history. It fosters visual literacy, cognitive processes, perceptual, and aesthetic awareness. The students in art intervention explored visual literacy and storytelling as a means to a stronger understanding of themselves.

It was through this quasi-experimental action research project, that I generated an art intervention for students who had undergone trauma or crisis situations, in order to inform and refine my teaching practices. Action research is an approach to investigation that focuses on the professional actions of the primary investigator, who is able to adjust future actions based on his or her findings. The intention of conducting action research is to identify areas in need of improvement and research avenues for refining those areas (Sagor, 2011). I worked with students, who have undergone trauma or crisis, in small pull-out groups on Wednesday mornings throughout the year. The research was conducted for approximately nine weeks during the second half of the school year. Students were guided to create narrative works of art in
conjunction with learning healthy life skills and being introduced to the works of professional narrative artists.

This research project was modeled after the work of Ellen Erickson and Joan Kivnik (1983) who made healing (which means healthy, sound or whole) their emphasis, rather than therapy (which means to treat disorders). They made this shift by treating their patients like artists/creators of art rather than treating them as if they were ill. Adhering to this philosophy, their dialogue was the kind used between artists rather than between patient and therapist. The goal of their programs was to “encourage participants to learn new strengths and skills and to build upon those capacities and strengths they already possessed.” (Kivnick & Erickson, 1983, p. 602.)

I have found that there is a need for art as therapy for most of the students I teach within my classroom on a regular basis, but I chose to implement art as therapy into the early release Wednesdays that my school set aside for interventions so that I could present the practices of healing and resiliency to students who were undergoing or had undergone trauma. The lessons I developed for this research were all centered on these two practices, healing and resiliency. I also felt that students undergoing trauma needed more one-on-one time with a caring adult, which I was able provide in a small group setting.
I realized that creating an art journal and narrative works of art along with art specific life skills is a beneficial practice for all students, but because I focused on the knowledge that I wanted to gain and the changes I wanted to make in my teaching as a result of this research project, I felt it was important for me to have a concentrated group with which to begin.

**Procedures**

There were several steps I took to involve fellow instructors, graduate students, administration and other colleagues, as I began this research project. The first step was to seek out the counselor at my school. Her main contribution to the research project was to provide a list of students who would benefit from art intervention classes. Students were not selected on the basis that they were more frequently given office referrals, or were absent or tardy more than their peers. They were not selected because they had more disciplinary actions than fellow classmates. These are, however, measurable behaviors that I looked at before, during and after the research project. The students the counselor referred to me ranged from age seven to fourteen. They were selected because they had recently undergone or were undergoing trauma and would most likely benefit from art interventions.

The counselor and I discussed the life skills, appropriate for the specific needs of these students, that would promote healing and resiliency. The life skills I chose came from Tom Dowd & Jeff Tierney’s (2005) book, *Teaching*
Social Skills to Youth, which was provided by the counselor. Next, I discussed with a fellow graduate student and my advisor at the University of Northern Colorado a list of art projects that would tie-in with the life skills. At this point I sought approval from my principal, Dr. Harold Waltman, for an art intervention program that would foster visual literacy, cognitive processes, perceptual awareness and aesthetic awareness for students experiencing trauma or crisis. I supported my request with research conducted by Ellen Dissanayake (1990), who writes that art as a behavior fulfills a human need. It is a way to access the biological memory of the human species, which is why it can so powerfully transform us. I revealed that students in art intervention would be exploring visual storytelling as a means to having a stronger understanding of themselves. As Yvonne Zacharias (2014) points out, “Children use the uncoded language of drawing to reflect their thoughts and feelings with a complexity that they can’t put into words, part of the coded literacy learned later in life.” (Is Childhood Art Key to Developing Language Literacy? para. 6)

In order to introduce students to narrative art I showed them works done by famous narrative artists Trenton Doyle Hancock and Faith Ringgold. Along with their personal stories, I shared my own personal experience of using art to heal from traumatic situations.

Dr. Waltman and I then discussed the best possible time for the art intervention classes and I worked with a team of teachers on scheduling. At
Garden Lakes Elementary School Wednesday mornings were set aside for interventions of varying types. There were interventions established for reading, writing, math, and speech. There were students who were pulled out of other classroom activities for enrichment, band and choir. In addition, there were two groups that met with the counselor for anger management and a support group for students with emotional issues. Art interventions were added to this existing schedule.

**Participants**

After these initial preparations I began teaching art interventions in October of 2014. The research project did not begin until the commencement of school following winter break in January of 2015. At this time all technicalities had been dealt with, such as, University of Northern Colorado’s review board process. This process required consent and assent forms to be signed and returned and participants to be randomly chosen. The process of random selection I used was to give every student in art interventions consent and assent forms to fill out and return within a week. The following week all of the girls who returned both forms had their names put into a hat and five names were chosen. The same was done for the boys. It was my intention to use four of the students within the chosen ten, two female and two male, on which to compile case studies from the collected data. A brief description of each student follows:
Student A is a white male age fourteen. His parents divorced when he was ten years old. He lived in Arizona with his father and stepmother. His mother lived in Alaska and he saw her only for a few weeks in the summer. During our time together in art interventions, his mother had another baby in Alaska. Student A seems to take all of this in stride. His attitude was positive toward his parents and stepparents. He wanted to be a veterinarian when he grows up. He was creative and had a great attitude about art interventions. His mannerisms were slightly effeminate and he complained of being bullied by other students and seemed to find it hard to fit in with his peers.

Student B is a white female age thirteen. She was from a home in which her father had severe anger management problems. She was quiet and shy. She had a passion for art and was talented at drawing. She wanted to be an author/animator when she grows up. Her attitude about art interventions seemed tentative. She complained of depression, being bullied and seemed to find it hard to fit in with peers.

Student C is a white female age twelve. She was from a broken home and lived with her mother. She talked bitterly about her father. She had a loud, in-your-face demeanor and tried to be tough. She said things that are socially unacceptable. She seemed happy about being in art interventions. She said she’s been bullied and seemed to find it hard to fit in with peers.
Student D is Iranian. At home his father was paralyzed due to a rare medical condition that incapacitated him almost overnight two years prior to our art intervention classes. Student D said his father told him he was not wanted. He seemed angry and withdrawn but seemed happy to be in art interventions. He complained of being bullied and seemed to find it hard to fit in with peers.

**Design**

Students participating in the research project were given an emotional health survey (see Figure 3.1) at the onset of the project and were given the same survey at the conclusion of the research project. The survey was used to compare student emotional health before and after participation in the project.

This is one form of data I used to measure the students’ feelings. Data was also taken from my observational journal. Along with answering yes or no to the statements in the survey, students were asked to rate the intensity of their feelings about each statement, if a student circled yes for the first question and then gave her/himself a 5, that meant that s/he felt very strongly about that, giving a more in-depth piece of information with which I was able to measure the emotional health of the participants (see Figure 3.1).

**Emotional Health Questionnaire**

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I generally feel happy.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I easily get angry.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I sleep well.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to try new things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is easy for me to stay focused.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have little interest in present circumstances, often daydreaming, wishing I were somewhere else?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am shy and easily frightened by particular circumstances and things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I often don’t feel like eating.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I try to do what I know is right.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I fear something may happen to those close to me.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel sad most of the time.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I sometimes make up things or embellish when telling stories.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I wake up feeling tired.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I fear losing control and hurting myself or others.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel safe and feel my loved ones are safe as well.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I tell the truth most of the time.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I do not like to try new things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I sometimes don’t feel in control of my actions.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,...2,...3,...4,...5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1. Emotional Health Questionnaire

The students participated in small group sessions comprised of the following components:

- Introduction to a healthy life skill.
- Creating a hands-on, narrative work of art.
- Writing/drawing a journal entry in his/her art journal.
- Introduction to famous narrative artists.

The following are the specific weekly life skills and the projects students completed:

i. Make an art journal: Students were introduced to Boys Town Skill 58: Trying new tasks. Students created a journal in which to keep their visual
stories. The typical story prompt used in many art classrooms, “Tell me about a time you learned something,” was used as a prompt in this small group situation, which allowed for more adult attention being given to each student than would have been available in a regular large group art class.

ii. Collage: Students were introduced to Boys Town Skill 81: Concentrating on a subject or task. Students chose words and images from existing materials; magazines, newspapers, calendars, discarded dictionaries, etc..., that pertained to the student and from which the student created a work of art to use as the cover of their journal.

iii. Draw your day: Students were introduced to Boys Town skill 107: Expressing feelings appropriately. Then, students were asked to draw how they were feeling. Students kept these drawings in their art journals.

iv. Safe, calm place: Students were introduced to Boys Town skill 84: Controlling emotions and Skill 141: Using relaxation strategies. Students then visualized a safe calm place and designed it. Students were able to choose media and technique ie: drawing, collaging, sculpting, with mixed-media, colored pencils, markers, watercolors, tempera paints, or pastels.

v. Feeling Container – Students reviewed Boys Town skill 107 – Expressing feelings appropriately. Then they were asked to create a container where one could write down one’s feelings and emotions and put them inside until an appropriate time. Students were allowed to choose from cigar boxes, plastic jars, and small cardboard boxes to create their feeling containers. Art materials included collage materials, paints, markers, and pencils.

The data that I sought to obtain from observing the students’ art-making and their artwork was difficult to translate into numbers. Because this is a value-laden form of enquiry in which I sought to improve my own teaching as well as the experience of my students and the education community, I chose to present the data in the form of case studies. I was interested in knowing if the art
interventions changed student self-perceptions and how they used the art-making processes and life skills acquired during intervention sessions to help them navigate crisis. These questions may best be answered through the observation journal which I kept on a weekly basis, as well as the written portions of the student journals. I looked at the art-making as a process and not as a method of psychoanalyzing artist. Works of art were shown and discussed within each individual case study.

I also investigated the general affects that the interventions had on truancy, tardiness and the number of office referrals for students within the research project. Students were not completely responsible for the number of truancy or tardiness that they accumulated and the rise or fall in this number may have been due to parental authority, illness, or other outside influences. The number of office referrals may have been due to student and teacher relationships, however, I feel they were valid pieces of information to process. I also gave homeroom teachers a three question survey asking if they noticed any changes in the student’s emotional, academic, and social behaviors. LaBosky (2004) explains that the utilization of multiple methods of data collection is integral to gain in-depth understanding in the research process.

Data Analysis Procedures

After the data was collected, I used the questionnaires to see if there was a difference between their answers before and after the research project, and to
see if there was a difference in the depth of the subject’s feelings about each
answer. These numbers were measured quantitatively. The student’s artworks
and journal were compared to measure the feelings and depth of feelings of each
student qualitatively as well. The time frame for this research project was
approximately nine weeks. This did not include the collection of data concerning
incidents of disciplinary actions recorded by homeroom teachers, office referrals,
and attendance records. These were compiled for the entire school year and
were compared to last year’s records. Teacher surveys were used as unbiased
feedback and to gain insight into the behaviors of art intervention students
outside of art intervention classes.

Limitations

This research project was conducted at Garden Lakes School and was
limited to my experience at one school. A small number of students were
recommended by the counselor and assistant principal to participate in this
intervention class. This did not resemble my usual classroom situation, which is
usually made up of thirty or more students, and therefore could not be duplicated
in the regular art classroom in the future. Therefore, while more one-on-one time
with my students was found to be beneficial in the intervention groups of ten or
less students, this technique would not be as available in a group of thirty or
more students. Also, within the recommended group of students I randomly
chose ten students on which to focus. While I felt that ten was a manageable
number at the time, a larger number of students would have provided a larger, more informed database. For example, if the small number of students that were in the project had not had disciplinary actions against them, then there would not have been relevant data from which to study.

The art projects and life skills that I chose could limit this research project. Although I have consulted with fellow art experts and my principal, students might have resisted the projects. This would have limited the data for narrative art projects produced by students.

Finally, the schedule at Garden Lakes School may have affected students’ ability to attend art intervention. Some students were scheduled for band or choir during the time that their grade level was scheduled for art intervention. Students throughout the year were encouraged to make their own choices about attending art intervention and were informed that they could discontinue participation at any time. This could have resulted in fewer students attending, which would have resulted in even less available data.
CHAPTER IV

Data and Analysis

This research project was borne of two personal traumatic ordeals which I experienced twenty years apart from each other. The first was a sexual assault by a serial rapist that occurred in 1989. The second was the abandonment by my husband of twenty-seven years, which occurred in 2009. I used the techniques of art journaling (see Figure 4.1), narrative art making, quilting (see Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) and specific life skills of deep breathing, yoga positions and gratitude to heal from those traumas. Throughout my healing process, helping others to heal from similar situations was a constant goal.

Figure 4.1. Art Journal first entry made in my divorce journal. Mixed media
Figure 4.2. Tile mosaic made after abandonment in 2009.

Figure 4.3-4.4. Quilts made after the sexual assault in 1989
Given my previous experiences in working with traumatic events in my life, I wanted to determine if working with the artistic process and practicing life skills would benefit my students who have also experienced personal traumas. My students were able to create one narrative work of art every other week that correlated with a life skill based on the artistic process. Students also created an art journal in which they wrote or drew on a weekly basis. I kept an observational journal during each art intervention session. At the beginning of the nine weeks I randomly selected ten students to participate in the research project. I also taught students who were involved in art interventions, but were not part of the project. I gave the participating students an emotional health questionnaire (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 3). This same questionnaire was given at the conclusion of the nine weeks of art intervention sessions. I will discuss the results within each individual case study starting with the discrepancies or changes in answers from the questionnaires between the first and second time each student completed it. Students read the numbered statement and chose “Yes” if it applied to them and “No” if it did not. After answering “Yes” or “No” they selected a number one through five to signify the intensity to which the statement applied to them. Circling a one signified a low intensity and circling a five meant a high intensity. I will not list answers that remained the same (see Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.8 & 4.11).
## Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Answers Pre</th>
<th>Answers Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I generally feel happy.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I easily get angry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am shy and easily frightened by particular circumstances and things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel sad most of the time.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I sometimes make up things or embellish when telling stories.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I do not like to try new things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I sometimes don’t feel in control of my actions.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 Comparisons of Results from Pre and Post Questionnaires

When comparing Student A’s pre and post questionnaires, his emotional health seems to have mainly improved in small increments (Figure 4.5). Answers were the same or scored within one or two points on the sliding scale except for item 12, which deals with making things up or embellishing when telling stories.
In this instance there was a significant positive change from a “Yes” with 2 points to a “No” with 3 points.

When comparing Student A’s absence and tardy record from last year to this, he had three absences and one tardy last year and two absences and no tardiness this year. This is not a significant change, but it is positive. Student A had no office referrals either this year or last.

I wrote in my observation journal on September 17th, “Student A is original and true to himself. He has said more than once that he’s thankful for his new friends who are helping him through tough times. I wrote in a second observation journal entry on October 27th, “Today as I went through the cafeteria at lunchtime Student A jumped up from his lunch and hugged me. He has been high-fiving me and hugging me every time he sees me on campus. Joy!” I began to notice these positive changes in student A very early on in this project. In his art journal entry on April 15th he states, “I feel wonderful and honored to be picked for this research project. I loved to do my splatter art. I just threw paint. It was wonderful.” Not only was I noticing changes, but Student A regularly made positive comments that made me confident that he was observing changes in himself due to being a part of this experience. When referring to the final mosaic project, he wrote, “I feel very happy that I can come back to the school and say I did that, that a part of me will be at this school even though I’m leaving I’ll still be at this school.” The benefit that Student A got from being involved in art
interventions was the connections he made to other students while working on art projects. He also seemed to understand that art is therapeutic. Student A, on the last day of art intervention class, stated, “You should get your Master’s from this project (Ms. McCann). If you don’t we will protest because you have shown us how to use art as a way of therapy.” This made me feel elated. I had not used the term ‘therapeutic’ with my art intervention groups on purpose. I did not want students to think we were doing therapy, however, I did want them to reap the therapeutic benefits of art making. Student A’s comment made me feel as if he had made the connection.

In the teacher survey, his homeroom teacher stated that his behavior has become more positive and he has been taking on leadership roles that he did not prior to attending art interventions.

<p>| Student B |
|---|---|---|---|
| <strong>Questionnaire Items</strong> | <strong>Answers Pre</strong> | <strong>Answers Post</strong> |
| 1. I generally feel happy. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |
| 2. I easily get angry. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |
| 3. I sleep well. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |
| 9. I try to do what I know is right. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |
| 11. I feel sad most of the time. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |
| 12. I sometimes make up things or embellish when telling stories. | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 | Yes | No | 1....2....3....4....5 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I wake up feeling tired.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I fear losing control and hurting myself or others.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel safe and feel my loved ones are safe as well.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I tell the truth most of the time.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I do not like to try new things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student B’s emotional health improved slightly in most areas when comparing pre and post questionnaires (Figure 4.6). In question nine, her answer has changed from a positive to a negative. There are two other negative changes, but they are either one or two point differences, which is not a significant change.

Student B went from having thirteen absences and two tardy marks last year to having eleven absences and no tardiness this year. This is not a significant change, but it is positive. Student B had no office referrals last year or this year.

Students were instructed to use a new life skill over an upcoming three-day weekend. When we got back to art interventions the following week, in my observational journal I wrote, “Student B: used a notebook she draws in a lot – she doodled about being happy and her friends making her happy. I note this because Student B already has a habit of using art as a coping tool.” I also want
to note at this time that she is very shy, but has a small established group of
friends that she is comfortable with. I noticed her becoming less shy around our
art intervention group within the first few months of art intervention. She opened
up and told us that she has a problem with depression. I wrote in my observation
journal on October 1st, “Student B told me today that depression helped her
because when she told us about it she didn’t feel alone.” I took this to mean that
she was looking for the good that came out of her depression and found it to be
trust in the art intervention group and making friends.

In her art journal on April 29th Student B wrote:

While making the flower mosaics, I felt proud that this is something I’m
contributing to something that will be there forever, something beautiful.
This year in Art Solutions has been an amazing experience that has
helped me grow as a person. I generally feel happier and I’ve been
getting better nights of sleep. This intervention has really helped me make
new friends and for that I’m glad.

I felt making friends was an important issue for Student B throughout the year as
this was the focal point on her journal cover (see Figure 4.7), in her use of the
quote, “Let us be thankful for the people who make us HAPPY.”
I also felt that art interventions began having a positive effect on Student B and others very early on in the project. I wrote in my observation journal on September 10th:

I am beginning to notice that students from art interventions are gathering on campus rather than standing alone. And within these gatherings I see smiles and hear laughter. As I walked through the cafeteria today at lunch time I saw art intervention students sitting together at a lunch table. Their conversation seemed to be positive and they were smiling and laughing. This was a really nice change as I’m used to seeing these students sitting alone. Could two art intervention classes already be making a change in these students?
The homeroom teacher, when surveyed about Student B’s emotional behavior stated, “She speaks up more.” Which I feel is a positive change for this student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questionnaire Items</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I sleep well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to try new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is easy for me to stay focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am shy and easily frightened by particular circumstances and things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I often don’t feel like eating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I try to do what I know is right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I wake up feeling tired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel safe and feel my loved ones are safe as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I sometimes don’t feel in control of my actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8. Comparisons of Results from Pre and Post Questionnaires

Student C’s emotional health questionnaires show that she made slight positive changes pre and post art intervention classes (Figure 4.8). She seems to have one slight negative change in the area of trying new things. All changes, including this negative one, were within one to two points on the sliding scale,
except for sleeping well. In this case Student C made a positive growth of three points.

When comparing last year’s absenteeism and this year’s for student C, she had six days absent last year and five this year. This is not a significant change, but it is positive. She had no tardy days either year.

Student C comes across as a tough teenager, but when talking about what students did over break to ‘keep themselves happy’ in my observation journal I wrote, “She re-read her favorite childhood book, “Goose on a Bike.” It makes her laugh because it’s so cute. She went to Amazing Jakes for her cousin’s birthday. She was able to climb the wall and hit the button.” I noticed the tough act she puts on coming down as she shares details such as this in class as well as in her art work (see Figure 4.9). There is progress being made for Student C. She would not have had a conversation about thinking a primary picture book, “Goose on a Bike”, as being cute, nor would she have discussed going to a place like Amazing Jakes, a recreational restaurant for kids of all ages to play and have fun, for her cousin’s birthday party prior to being in art interventions. She obviously felt that she could trust her peers and I enough to share these details.
Student C revealed things she has changed about herself because of prior life experiences which on October 1st in my observation journal I noted:

Things that changed her – she’s learned to be more independent and she’s learned to stand up for herself. What she thinks is more important than what others think. Her brother is autistic and has a club foot, so she feels she is his protector. She broke her foot. She was in a cast and didn’t stay off it – she walked on it and it took longer to heal. She had to wait longer to get the cast off. Because of this she learned to be patient.

This also became apparent in her narrative artwork (see Figure 4.10). “C” put together a scattered puzzle piece picture of her life, but shared some of her core beliefs, such as learning to stand up for people and what she believes in and that every story is not true.
In her journal entry on April 29th, Student C states:

While making the flower mosaics, I felt proud that this is something I’m contributing to...something that will be there forever, something beautiful. This year in Art Solutions has been an amazing experience that has helped me grow as a person. I generally feel happier and I’ve been getting better night’s sleep. This intervention has really helped me make new friends and for that I’m glad.

I have known Student C for two years, in which time we had not had many pleasant exchanges. After just a couple art intervention classes we began to have enjoyable, positive conversations. I concur with Student C that she grew positively from the experience of art interventions. She became much less guarded and much more approachable.

When surveyed about emotional behavior changes in Student C her teacher wrote, “She shows a little bit more effort. Better behavior.” On the
subject of academic behavior she wrote, “Grades are improving in math.” Under the topic of social behavior she stated, “Not as sassy, more respectful.” These are all positive changes for Student C.

**Student D**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Items</th>
<th>Answers Pre</th>
<th>Answers Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I generally feel happy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I sleep well</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to try new things</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is easy for me to stay focused</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have little interest in present circumstances, often daydreaming, wishing I were somewhere else.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am shy and easily frightened by particular circumstances and things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I fear something may happen to those close to me.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I fear losing control and hurting myself or others.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel safe and feel my loved ones are safe as well.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I tell the truth most of the time.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I do not like to try new things.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I sometimes don’t feel in control of my actions.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.11. Comparisons of Results from Pre and Post Questionnaires
Student D made more positive gains in more areas than my other three students (Figure 4.11). In most areas on the emotional health questionnaire comparison his numbers only went up one or two points, but in four areas he either chose a different answer or went up three or more points on the sliding scale. The first item that Student D improved on was item six. I have little interest in present circumstances, often daydreaming or wishing I were somewhere else. Student D, pre art interventions chose “yes” and 2 on the sliding scale and post art interventions chose “no” and 4 on the sliding scale. On September 17th in my observation journal I wrote, “Student D said his dad tells him he was unexpected and doesn’t want him. How can this child focus or feel secure?” The second item he made a big positive leap in was item seven. I am shy and easily frightened by particular circumstances and things. He made a positive 3-point leap which was reflected in his increasing ability to share. In my observation journal on October 1st I wrote: “D” talks about the big things that have happened in his life, he said, “It’s hard for me to concentrate since my dad got sick..” He also wrote in his journal on October 1st, “My goal is to have a family. My goal is to learn to crochet, knit or beat destiny a video game.”

The third area that he made positive improvement on emotionally was item ten. I fear something may happen to those close to me. I found this interesting because Student D’s father unexpectedly came down with a
paralyzing medical condition in which he cannot move any of his muscles voluntarily. I wrote On February 18th:

Today we took puzzle pieces and wrote the best things that have happened to us and changed our lives and the worst things...then we put them together with the option of putting the bad things backwards so nobody could read them. If we put them backwards, we needed to write the lesson we learned or the good thing we could take away from that experience.

Student D: His dad is sick and Student D doesn't know what is the matter with him. He has 2 dogs that make him happy... a terrier and a yorkie poo. He has a tablet that his parents gave him. I wonder if art interventions have provided Student D with enough of a web of support that he is feeling secure again?

I noticed that he included his dogs in most of his narrative artwork (see Figure 4.12). His drawings have been placed in chronological order.

![Figure 4.12. Draw your day. Pencil 2015.](image-url)
The fourth area in which Student D made a significant positive leap was item seventeen. I do not like to try new things. On the initial questionnaire he chose “No” and a 5 on the sliding scale, but on the second questionnaire he
chose “No” and a 2. This is a notable positive change. On April 8\textsuperscript{th}, I wrote in my observation journal, “A student was very comfortable using everything including the hot glue gun, but Student D was leery of it. He eventually successfully used it to put a ribbon on his box – making it easier to pull open the lid and was very proud of himself when he did.” I noticed several times when he hesitated to try something new, but pushed through and was successful. I think the unique art experiences that he was exposed to during art interventions allowed him to have these break-through moments. On the same day I wrote in my journal:

Student D asked if he could put a sticky note on the “I am and I am not” poster, today. I read what he put on the poster…I am not Dramatic. I have a feeling that people (his mom) tells him that he is. I smiled to myself that he got that off his chest.”

This poster was a project that upper grades were involved in and I was proud of Student D for asking if he could participate in it.

Student D wrote in his journal on April 29\textsuperscript{th}, “I made a circle out of broken glass. I feel special to make a creation that will be at school for ever and ever.” I noticed this was the common theme on that day as I read through student art journals and saw these or words with similar meanings written over and over again. The students did not have a chance to talk about their feelings before writing them in their art journals on this particular day, so I believe they were authentic summaries for each student. Working on the mosaic project gave students a feeling of specialness. They belonged to an elite group on campus.
and were putting themselves out there in a permanent way while beautifying the school.

Student D missed twenty-eight days of school last year and only seventeen this year. This is a significant positive change for this student. He had one office referral last year and no referrals this year. This is another positive change for Student D.

Student D’s homeroom teacher wrote the following when surveyed about his emotional behavior in class, “Student D definitely seemed much happier after beginning art interventions.” Her comment about his social behavior was, “Yes – “D” seemed to be more social with his classmates. He began to laugh and build relationships. [She starred the next sentence] Student D stated that art interventions helped him forget about all the bad stuff in his life.”

**Reporting the Findings**

Through this small sample of students and the data collected and analyzed on each, I feel I have answered my initial research questions. My data has shown that students have benefitted from keeping an art journal in the following ways:

1. Each student scored higher on their second Emotional Health Questionnaire than they did on their first.

2. Each student had fewer absent days and most had less tardiness.

3. The one student who had an office referral one year did not have one the second year when he was in art interventions.
4. Positive behavior changes were observed by me, the homeroom teachers of the art intervention students and by the students themselves.

Students have shown signs of navigating difficult situations during this school year in the following ways:

1. Students have made positive changes in overcoming their fear of trying new things as noted in the emotional behavior questionnaire comparisons.

2. I observed times when students tried things that they found difficult, for example the time Student D tried using the hot glue gun even though he was afraid of it.

3. I observed students forming connections with each other during art interventions. This led to their overcoming loneliness and in at least one case, overcoming depression.

The general wellbeing of the art intervention students was the most noticeable improvement. Art intervention changed the general wellbeing of the students in the following ways:

1. I noticed a positive change in the way students interacted with each other and with me. Students began hugging and high fiving each other and I on campus throughout the day as noted in my observation journal.

2. Students were seen smiling and talking with each other after only two art intervention classes as noted in my observation journal.

3. Students made positive comments correlating art interventions and their happiness both verbally and in their art journals.

4. Homeroom teachers observed positive changes in art intervention students’ emotional, academic and social behaviors.
Addressing the Limitations

Getting students to arrive at art interventions on time did not pose a problem. There were select students who remembered and would gather the rest of their group and they would all show up on time. Generally students arrived early and wanted to stay late. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the art intervention classes.

Students who were in band or choir and were also selected for art interventions were able to work their schedules around the art interventions. Most of the students in art interventions showed up most of the time. The students seemed to feel empowered by the program and acted as if they were proud to have been selected. There was no need to worry about the interventions conflicting with recess.

I feel that a big part of the success of this program was that I was able to spend more one-on-one time with these students. I was able to have meaningful conversations with each student during which they looked me in the eye. I would say that this was one of the most beneficial aspects of this intervention. This built trust between student and teacher which led to building relationships. Class size an extremely important factor and one about which I could do a whole other research paper!
I am interested in whether or not students will use the tools of steeling and resiliency later in their lives, but this is an area that is difficult to measure at this time. Only time will tell.
CHAPTER V

Action Plan

What I learned

At GLS, Boys Town skills are introduced across the board, meaning that every classroom on campus introduces the same skill during the same week. At the beginning of the year the teaching staff chooses a set of 25 basic skills to be introduced during the school year and we set the order in which they will be introduced. The skills that I chose for this research project were advanced skills. I wanted to introduce a skill set to students that would help them to navigate trauma. I found that many of the students who were recommended to me for art interventions were quiet. I would have never known that they were in pain if the school counselor had not recommended them to me.

Recommendations

If teachers are educated on whom these students, the ones who are experiencing trauma, are and briefed on their situations, we can introduce life skills that are helpful to their specific needs. If not, we can still introduce life skills that are beneficial to all students, those going through trauma and those who
may have to face it at some point in their lives. For example, deep breathing is a technique that anyone can use to calm themselves down at any time. Grechen Cuda, freelance writer and producer for National Public Radio, states:

> There are plenty of ways to relieve stress — exercise, a long soak in a hot bath, or even a massage. But believe it or not, something you're doing right now, probably without even thinking about it, is a proven stress reliever: breathing. As it turns out, deep breathing is not only relaxing, it's been scientifically proven to affect the heart, the brain, digestion, the immune system — and maybe even the expression of genes. (Cuda, December 6, 2010, n.p.)

This was one of the life skills I felt my students integrated into their lives very easily. On many occasions students told me that they used this technique at home or in school. I will continue to teach this beneficial life skill in the future. I noticed that students were eager to do every project presented to them no matter what level they were at artistically and also, no matter what the project was, during our yearlong art intervention. This surprised me over and over again because I thought some of the projects, though well thought out and planned, would be rejected by students or that they would complain about them. I felt a sense of dread introducing the lesson on creating a happy place, but they loved it (see Figure 5.1).
Figure 5.1. Happy Places created by art intervention participants. Paper and colored pencils 2015.
I had the same ominous feeling when it came to creating a feeling box, but they were even more enthusiastic (see Figure 5.2). They mixed paint colors and brushed them on one week while talking about the glitter and gems they were going to use the next week. The big take-away I experienced while teaching the art journaling and narrative art lessons was that students were eager to create art projects that told their stories. I will not hesitate to introduce any of the lessons I used in this project in the future and continue to encourage students’ voices through narrative artworks.

![Feeling boxes decorated by art intervention students. Mixed-media.](image)

**Extending the Project**

One lesson I did with art intervention students that was not included in my research due to time constraints was a lesson on giving a gift for no reason. I sat and listened to excited little voices the week they made these gifts (see Figure 5.3). I wanted students to include giving to others as part of their life skill set
because it is a very uplifting experience. They posted in their journals after giving their gifts using words to describe how they felt, words such as: wonderful, amazing, and nice.

Figure 5.3. Gifts made to give made by art intervention participants. Glazed ceramics 2015.

A culminating art piece was requested by my students and was later implemented as the “Mosaic Flower Project.” The art intervention students developed the idea based upon my personal story about smashing tiles to create a mosaic. On the first day of art intervention classes, I told the students the story of my husband abandoning my 15-year-old son and me. I told them that I smashed dishes and hammered tiles to work out my frustrations and then I put those broken pieces together again to create a beautiful mosaic. In doing so, I felt my heart starting to heal. As my students listened to this truthful story, I could tell that they connected with me on a deep level. They instantly seemed to trust me because I had shared and entrusted them with my painful experience. They also latched on to the idea of smashing tiles and asked on a weekly basis if they could do this. This project was not part of my initial research project, so, I let it
percolate and eventually I realized that I had colored tiles in storage that were not earmarked for any project. I hauled them out and prepared a space for students to smash them one Wednesday morning. I reminded them to think of something they wanted to smash and to think of that while hammering the tiles. This was a particularly exciting day in art interventions. There was electricity in the air. Three students at a time were able to choose a color of tile, fold it into a towel and pound away. At this time, I would like to mention that eye protection was a requirement for each student. No one was allowed in the smashing area without standard protective eyewear. Students then separated colored tiles into ice cream buckets, which sat for many months because I had not asked administration if a mosaic project was even an option. In hindsight, I recommend getting the appropriate permission before starting this type of project. After receiving permissions, students selected to create the mosaic, on the patio outside the art room. “People would then know that it was the art room if we made it all arty out there,” a student suggested. Thus, the “Where?” of the project was decided. The next piece that students had to create was a design simple enough for them to mosaic. They brainstormed ideas about growth and beauty and based on these themes, students were instructed to create a design on their own and bring it back to class the next week to share. When all of the designs were laid out, students chose one that they liked and from this, they created a simple flower mosaic design (see Figure 5.4).
The mosaic experience once again taught me how powerful and therapeutic art can be. This group of shy, lonely students came together to plan and execute a really lovely art project of which they were extremely proud to be a part. Every student wrote about the experience in a positive way in their art journals when asked to summarize their year in art interventions as noted in each of the case studies in Chapter 4.

**Plan of Action**

Ideally I would like to see an art intervention program implemented in every school just the way I was able to, fostering small groups of students and teaching them the life skills needed to heal from trauma while also educating them about the therapeutic properties of art. Realistically I think art teachers can educate themselves on the emotional situations that students are going through by having discussions with their school’s counselor and administration. Art
teachers can and should tailor lessons to the needs of their students assisting them through difficult times with the therapeutic value of art. I strongly recommend art journaling and narrative art making be embedded within every art curriculum. When my art intervention students created art about themselves I felt they gave me a peek into their inner lives and supported their voices. Once they opened up, they were more confident about trying new skills and building strength; the strength it takes to be resilient in life.
References:


1Lowenfeld, V. (1957). The meaning of art for education. In Creative and mental


Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY of
Northern Colorado

Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 20, 2015
TO: Stacia McCann, Art and Design
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB
PROJECT TITLE: [679213-5] VISUAL JOURNALING/ VISUAL STORYTELLING ARE THEY BENEFICIAL TO STUDENTS?
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: January 20, 2015
EXPIRATION DATE: January 20, 2016
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 20, 2016.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.
Hello Stacia,

Thank you for the modifications. You are approved and I wish you the best for this important research.

Sincerely,

Nancy White, PhD, IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNC) IRB's records.
APPENDIX B

Parent Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Visual Journaling/Visual Storytelling, are they beneficial to students ages 8-14
Researcher: Stacia McCann, Art & Design Master’s Program, UNCO
Phone Number: (623) 414-7823 E-mail: SMccann@pesd92.org

The purpose of this research project is to learn if students attending Garden Lakes Elementary School, kindergarten through 8th grade will benefit from creating art journals and visual storytelling art works during weekly art intervention classes. Within the 18 month time period that your student is a participant, s/he will be given a questionnaire that deals with everyday feelings and behaviors such as, “Do you sleep well? Do you wake up feeling tired?” S/he will also be making an art journal and storytelling art works. The subject matter for these art works will be coping skills, strengths and resiliency. All time commitments for this research project will fall within the art intervention time, in which your student is already participating.

I foresee no risks to students beyond those that are normally encountered during a regular art class. The art works and journaling are simple and the only feedback to your
child about his/her art work and journaling will be positive. Students will benefit by learning new coping skills which, once learned and explored, can be applied to a variety of situations. His/her art making skills may improve from spending more time in the art room, as well. This project will in no way affect your child’s grade in art.

To further help maintain confidentiality, computer files of children’s performance will be created and children’s names will be replaced by pseudonyms. The computer in which the information is logged will be password locked and only I will have the password.

The names of subjects will not appear in any professional report of this research. Student art work and journals will be retained for research purposes for a period of three years.

Please feel free to phone me if you have any questions or concerns about this research and please retain one copy of this letter for your records.

Thank you for assisting me with my research.

Sincerely,

Stacia McCann

Graduate Student, University of Northern Colorado Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to allow your child to participate in this study and if (s)he begins participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in any negative consequences for your child. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like for your child to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.
Child’s Full Name (please print)       Child’s Birth Date (month/day/year)

Parent/Guardian’s Signature       Date

Researcher’s Signature       Date

Page 2 of 2
Hi!

My name is Ms. McCann and I’m the art teacher at Garden Lakes Elementary School. I am also a graduate student at the University of Northern Colorado. I am researching art journaling and visual storytelling as they relate to coping skills. I would like to talk to you about coping skills that have worked for you. Then I would like to have you try new coping skills and have you draw and write in your art journal about your experiences. If you want, you can be one of the kids I talk with.

I will ask you a series of questions about your feelings. For each question I will want you to also tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how strongly you feel about things. I will ask you these questions at the beginning of my research and then again at the end. But, this isn’t a test or anything like that. There are no right or wrong answers and there won’t be any score or grade for your answers. I will write down what you answer, but I won’t even write down your name. It will take less than 15 minutes for you to answer my questions about your feelings. You can answer these questions during our Wednesday morning Art Intervention class.

Talking with me probably won’t help you or hurt you. Your parents have said it’s okay for you to talk with me, but you don’t have to. It’s up to you. Also, if you say “yes” but then change your mind, you can stop any time you want to. Do you have any questions for me about my research?
If you want to be in my research and talk with me about your feelings, sign your name below and write today’s date next to it. Thanks!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Permission to Conduct Research in Schools

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

College of Performing and Visual Arts • School of Art & Design • Guggenheim 103 • Campus Box 30 • University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639 • Phone: 970-351-2143 • Fax: 970-351-2299

Stacia McCann
Graduate Researcher at the University of Northern Colorado
623-414-7823
SMccann@pesd92.org
For attention: Dr. Waltman

Oct. 2, 2014

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear Dr. Waltman,

My name is Stacia McCann, and I am a graduate student in the School of Art and Design at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. The research I wish to conduct for my Master’s thesis involves art journaling and storytelling art as they relate to coping skills children use. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Connie Stewart (University of Northern Colorado, Greeley).

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview Garden Lakes Elementary Art students about their feelings on two occasions. The first occasion would be before students learn coping skills in art, the second would be at the end of the quarter.

I have provided you with a copy of my IRB Research Proposal, which includes the interview questions to be used on each occasion. I have also provided copies of the consent and assent forms to be used in the research process.
Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide Garden Lakes School with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at mcca2974@bears.ursa.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Stacia McCann
University of Northern Colorado

Permission Signature [Signature]
APPENDIX E

Teacher Survey

This is a research survey for the homeroom teacher of Art Intervention student/s: ______________. Please answer the 3 questions and return to my mail box. Thank you! Stacia McCann

1. Have you noticed any changes in the student/students’ emotional behavior in class that you would attribute to the students participation in Art Interventions?

2. Were there any notable changes in the student academically?

3. Did you notice any social behavior changes in the student?