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**Reflections on self –**

I conducted my research during my 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching high school Art. Teaching has been a career that reveals new insights the further you dive into the practice. My opinion is that teachers need to be curious, interested in their subject and be life-long learners themselves, so students can see the teacher as a model for what a learner looks like. My research project has absolutely given me a lot to think about, and has changed how I approach my job in the classroom. It is my responsibility to discover the unseen trends with student's learning to better adapt and modify when needed.

The process of being a student again was also very enlightening, and provided me with a fresh sense of how I can better support my students with meaningful assignments, timely feedback, and friendly support within the classroom.

**Reflections on learning –**

The best thing about teaching is working with students that have different backgrounds, and abilities. The analogy that comes to my mind is, facets of a diamond. Reflecting on how learning works in our class I am amazed that students are able to apply their own experiences, and personalities within their solutions for their art projects. My definition of being a good teacher is understanding how to connect students with the content via their experiences. By making learning a process of self-discovery we can free students from feeling like they are just a cog in a wheel working for a grade, or to satisfy their parents expectations. Year after year students reveal

hidden talents that they never knew they had. To see students, comprehend a new piece of knowledge that they did not have when they entered the class, is the reward I receive as a teacher. From my research I have learned that students are affected by so many elements. For example, pacing, clear expectations, overwhelmed by assignments, bored by assignments that are not rigorous, confused by unclear directions, expected to transfer knowledge within a very short amount of time, etc. The unspoken piece that my research did not address was, the social demands that the students are also working with. Learning is more than just learning activities, projects and tests. Learning is done in a social setting and will be a factor to some degree for each student.

My research has given me the insight that students need multiple opportunities, with different tasks, and a growth mind set to allow the creative process to begin to develop. Students are also walking the line between grades and creativity. On one side the student wants to get the right answer and thus a good grade. So, students will often follow examples very closely and not invest their own ideas. On the other hand, when teachers support the student's creativity the results are more interesting for the student, and opens the door to transfer their creative process to other tasks or subjects in their lives.

### **Reflections on teaching –**

Prior to my research I did not see value in data driven instruction. To me collecting and analyzing data seemed like an extra chore that never created any long-term change. Now, that I have learned how to actually code information, create spreadsheets to find trends, compare groups, and conduct surveys, I see data driven instruction as a new found magic tool to help me see things that I would have missed before. As a teacher you inherently know things are

happening and you know that your instruction could be better, but without a clear result that is based on data, you would never know what to improve. My data has opened my eyes to adjusting the format for my learning activities, balance my instruction between providing examples to support learning, but not too many examples to block the students' own ideas, and finally, my data has shown me to widen my perspective when looking for the transfer of knowledge.

Teaching takes time. Learning takes time.

In conclusion, to continue to develop into a great teacher I must continue the process of learning for myself. This curiosity will pay off for my students in the form of more effective teaching, more interesting assignments, more powerful strategies to provide access to a variety of different types of learners, and joy in my career. Teaching is not always easy. There are days when things don't go the way we planned, but that is the beauty of reflecting, analyzing the data and coming back tomorrow with a new perspective and trying it again.