

BUILDING AN ART-CLASS COMMUNITY

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Experiments of an art-teacher using the method of art-based Check-ins to help students find their authenticity in the art-classroom.

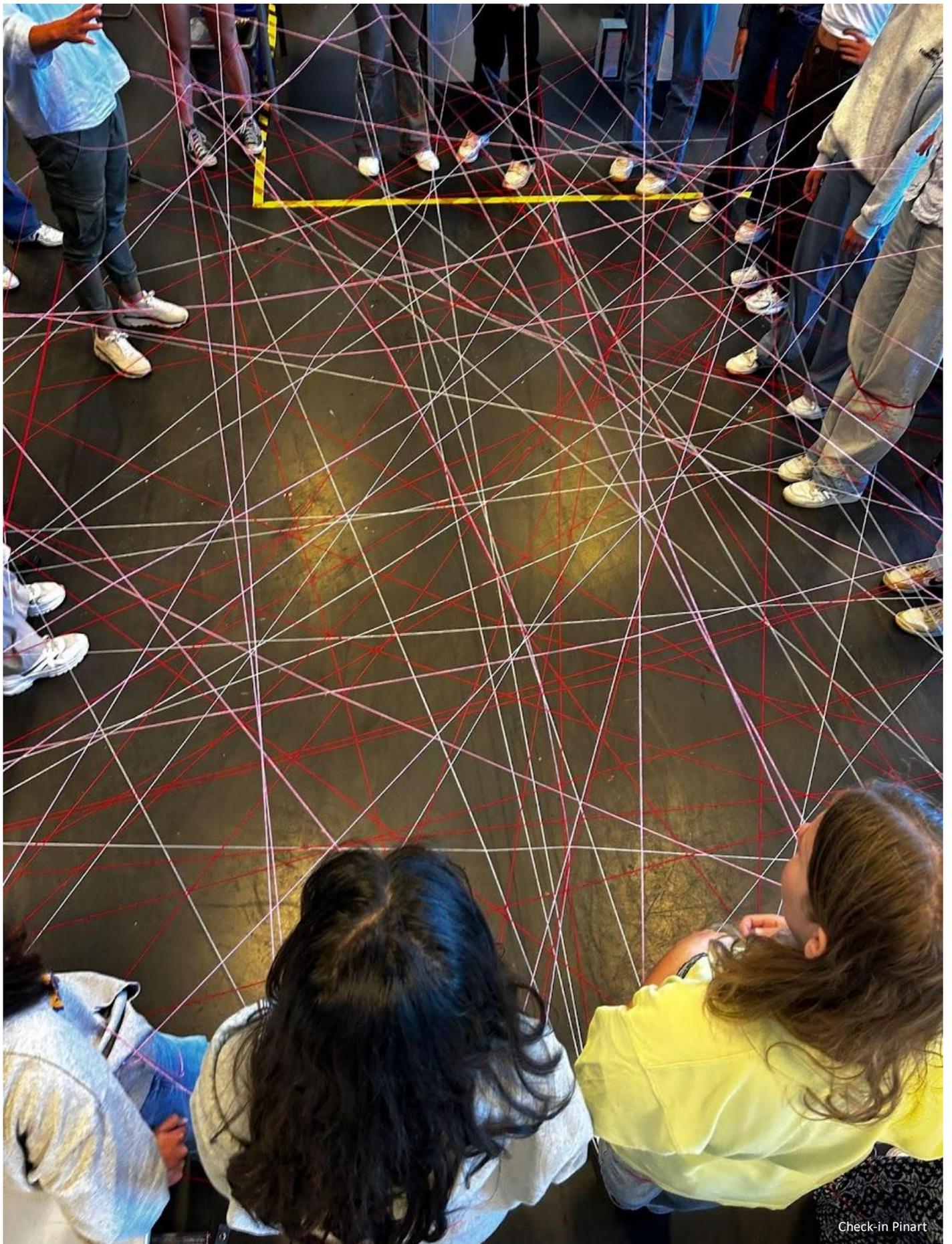
PREFACE

The imaginative power of the Arts

Frequently students, in junior classes pose the question 'what is the use of making school-art?' and even more judgmentally and sarcastically saying 'I don't want to become an artist or an art teacher', mostly because of disliking the practical side of the arts or thinking of the arts as non-conventional or weird. Me bouncing back a simple question, without any aim of convincing them, I point out the architectural landscape next to my art-classroom, 'how do you think our world can look like that?' For senior students, on the contrary, the motivation for choosing the arts as a subject is high. Shown by this year's new art-students drawing out diagrams at the beginning of the year, containing the answers to the question 'what does making art mean to you and give you in relation to your possible needs and desires?' (Appendix D3) Using their common interest and enjoyment in making art as a shared starting point for sharing identities and making new connections in this newly formed group of art students. In making and learning through art, entering the world through others' realities, asks for using our understanding and imaginative ability, to look at things as if they could be otherwise. Experiencing education as a practice of freedom, in opening new perspectives through 'others' eyes', identifying alternatives and in being encouraged in finding one's own voice in the classroom. Through this process of discovery and learning of one self in relationship to others and the world in general, using the arts as a tool to reimagine social borders in the art classroom. By carving out new orders in experience, one might become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet. And one might, at the same time, remain in touch with what presumably is. Using the Imagination to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real (Greene, 1995, p. 19). Art gives us the opportunity of seeing the world from multiple identities and perspectives.

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ABSTRACT

In this Graduation Project me and my senior art class students are collectively exploring what conditions are needed for authentic self-development in making art at a regional Highschool.

As an art teacher I experience, due to the existence of social boundaries, students of my senior art-class do not feel comfortable enough to express themselves in making art. This means their work loses its individuality. I am curious to observe if any visible changes in the creative process of my students will be achieved when reaching their inner self.

Life at a Highschool is often experienced by its students as a place of great social pressure, caused by the pressure to succeed and having to deal with a lot of prejudices and opinions of peers.

Approaching authenticity as expressive authenticity, as identity – on being what one is – (Lindholm, 2025) (based on the view of the 18th century Romantic-Essentialist, Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau ‘being true to oneself’) is a challenging task for students to fulfil at a Highschool, while having to prove yourself to peers, on a daily basis.

Starting off this schoolyear with a newly formed 4VWO senior group I want to introduce a different, more social way of learning and working based on shared learning among students and teacher. Assuming that the birth of an authentic self lies in the Romantic notion that human beings are gifted with a pure self-identity that is located in the deeper layers of the self and is uncontaminated by external society (Aydin & Beerends, 2021). I developed a method of playful, art-based, group Check-ins for creating new spontaneous connections. The concept of this method is based on the reflective power of students, while showing vulnerability in sharing identity through storytelling and dialogue. In this way, students can empathize more with others, which is more likely to lead to connections, thus also generating more authenticity in making art.



Artworks 'Group Chandelier'

1. INTRODUCTION - HERE AND NOW

1.1 TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT IN A HIGHSCHOOL

Next to being an Institution where teenagers are taught in mostly conventional and traditional ways, a Highschool is also an Educational Society with it's different existing and operating social structures, dividing students on grade, class, gender, race, popularity, character and clothing. Recognising these patterns of students' behaviour by myself surveying during lunchbreaks in the school canteen.

Partly my awareness of the existence of these social structures and social boundaries between groups of students within a Highschool came from vividly reimagining being a Highschool teenager myself and falling back on my experience in working as an art teacher for over more than thirty years. Even more awareness came through having conversations about school, friends and relationships with my youngest daughter during her last two years attending classes at the same Highschool I'm working at. It made me more conscious of the unwritten social rules in a Highschool, even in the classroom. Within my own art classroom, at the start of a new schoolyear, I always feel quite excited and curious who's attending my art class, looking for familiar faces. For my students, coming together in newly formed groups, it is even more exciting who to join and to talk to. All these borders, rules, codes or customs together contribute to the feeling of insecurity, unsafeness and alertness, the fear to stand out too much, doing things different or wrong.

In this research project I will introduce a different way of building a community in the classroom between all participants by developing a new art-based method; handing me a tool that will contribute to a pleasant, safe and inclusive environment where we can learn and work together in making art.

1.2 TRANSFORMING THE CLASSROOM-BUILDING AN ART-LEARNING COMMUNITY

The art classroom differs from the standard classroom in our school. It is a very spatial classroom that offers students big tables to sit at with more students than they're used to. They're also organized differently in the classroom than the other subjects in that they are invited to work with a group of their own. Witnessing the following behaviour when students themselves form new table-groups, without any guidance; entering class, students already knowing each other, confidently join together, closing themselves off for others to talk with/to. The feeling of confidence and popularity empowers them in taking over conversation, they are very dominant and loud, while others, more modest students sit alone, feeling unconfident and intimidated. In order to break through these invisible social boundaries, I am exploring possibilities to create new spontaneous connections through the Arts and extend and effect of opening oneself up to others to change habitual patterns or 'invisible' rules, codes or customs that exist among students in a classroom. This schoolyear started off with a very big newly formed senior art class of twenty-eight girls coming from all different classes. This made me question what might contribute to the pursuit of shared good? By envisioning the art classroom as a place of possibilities and imagination, where we, teacher and students, mutually participate in the work of creating a learning community based on shared learning and working. Encouraging everybody to contribute to the pursuit of reaching toward a common world, and in finding ways to make intersubjective sense.

My first senior art-class, a group of twelve girls, graduated two years ago. Because of the small size of that group, my contact with the students was very personal and intense. A big part of the group was already friends with one another, but still very tolerant, open and inviting to other students in my art class. bell hooks notes "When everyone in the classroom, teacher and students, recognizes that they are responsible for creating a learning community together, learning is at its most meaningful and useful. In such community there is no failure." (hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking Practical Wisdom*, 2010, p. 11). My relationship with some grew further because of me also being their mentor. Sharing conversations made me more aware of their lives; their families, friends, hobbies, their troubles, thoughts and fears. I loved our substantive conversations about life, our mutual interest and friendship. For me, still keeping up with a group of students of that senior class, acknowledges the value of our built relationship.

The power and chemistry of a group that free and close is very rare to find. Longing for this energy in the classroom, it is essential to ground a balanced learning and working climate without existing social borders. A classroom where students feel safe and have possibilities to develop themselves into autonomous, creative individuals without being held back by invisible rules and the power of set group dynamics within the art classroom. To get to know people outside their comfort zones requires students to name their comfort zones. As they do, they gain a greater understanding of their own limited awareness of people and become more consciously aware of the ways in which they are uncomfortable to create a space to acknowledge and use discomfort (Dewhurst, 2018, p. 17). Based on this approach I have developed a practice of art-based work and learning methods, the Check-in, as a tool for pursuing personal growth among my students by experiencing fun but also discomfort in collectively practicing a kind of vulnerability and insecurity in the art classroom. All with the aim for students to interact across difference and opening up themselves to make new connections.

For me, as a teacher, wanting to be part of this new social community that practices openness, honesty and respectfulness towards one another requires, next to my personal participation and involvement, major teaching adjustments that emphasise collaboration and participation of my students in a more democratic classroom. Also part of a more democratic classroom is the concept of shared learning, having group assemblies, dialoguing, sharing ideas, naming peers' personal qualities

and receiving peer feedback, fostering a sense of dependence, needing one another for personal growth. During the creative process my role is providing feedback and showing them the use and the possibilities of new, unknown materials and teaching them how to carry out certain techniques applied or adapted on their specific ideas.

Even though the art department at my school is quite progressive in terms of working methods, it is still very conventional content wise and in power dynamics concerning teacher - student relations. Nevertheless it has an open and curious attitude towards my findings and results in researching the possibilities and benefits of a more inclusive and reciprocal, social way of learning.



1.3 CHANGING INERTIA OF HABIT

According to Maxine Greene the difficult task for the teacher is to devise situations in which the young will move from the habitual and the ordinary to consciously undertake a search (Greene, 1995, p. 24). From my observations as a teacher this search must primarily be taken on a social level, in making new connections in the art classroom. Introducing a different teaching approach based on dialogue and collaboration, a more social way of learning and working emerges. I encourage my students to move from the habitual towards the unknown, to the new. Creating the possibility of meeting their peers through the method of Check-ins to share personal stories, creating more consciousness for others presence in the classroom. In opening up unconsciously, through deeper listening and using the power of imagination, they adjust earlier thoughts and opinions based on the intersubjective world. As for the search in overcoming inertia in a practical sense students need to be drawn out of acting on repetitiveness and routine, this asks for encouragement in active learning; a new beginning of initiating their own artistic process based on personal experiences.

CHANGING SOCIAL HABITS OF THINKING

The adoption of new, different ways of thinking and working entails letting go known, familiar thought patterns and habits. This begins with fixed social and habitual behaviours and patterns of students regarding the formation of this new senior art group. Whether intentional or unintentional, friends who sit together tend to exclude themselves from the rest of the group due to their enthusiasm and focus on one another. New students, less extraverted, or with a smaller social circle, consequently feel less at ease. Initiating group tasks with multiple joint discussion moments, peer feedback rounds, and acknowledging one another's' personal qualities in the work promotes greater input from others and consideration for each other. Additionally, a new practice has been introduced: the Check-in, which encourages students to communicate through their own art, sharing aspects of their personal lives, and exchanging identities with one another. This approach utilizes art education as a means for social learning, listening to multiple voices within the classroom.

An example of how I have put this into practice is I asked my art class students, just before the spring break, to make a postcard of the things that stood out during their coming spring break, as a Check-in (Appendix D9) for the first lesson after the break, as a point for starting a group conversation.

The reflective aspect of this exercise is about exchanging personal values, interests and family-customs, what is important to me and what is important to others? I think my students gained more interest, insight in and understanding of each other with this exercise, in listening. Different identities, but showing a lot of common ground and connections in experiencing joy of little things, like being with family, in enjoying hobbies like hiking and baking and other activities of every single student. Intending to bring the group closer together by emphasizing resemblances instead of differences, crossing existing social boundaries.

CHANGING PEDAGOGICAL HABITS OF THINKING

Art class students, from junior class onwards, are accustomed to using fixed structures regarding processing and documenting their visual process in making art. During this research, the familiar, prescribed and structured way of working is exchanged for a different, unclear, and unknown way of working in which students are called to harness their imagination, spirit of inquiry and personal embodied experiences. Often, I observe that students tend to copy existing ideas and artworks. They frequently refer to an example, indicating they want to create something 'like that.' A common pattern is also falling back on existing visual reference sourcing platforms, like Pinterest. They also observe what others are doing. I notice that many students feel the need to prove themselves and justify why they chose art as a subject. Due to their perfectionism, they fear making mistakes or creating something that is not 'good' or, in other words, different, striking, or unconventional. They resort to drawing inspiration from 'beautiful' existing works by artists or classmates.

This new way of working requires an open, explorative attitude from the student themselves, driven by their own motivation. The ability to adapt and be open to change allows the student room for personal growth.

I have put this into practice with offering my students a long workshop (Appendix D11) on a more abstract level of finding inspiration in which they were invited to explore other possibilities than the familiar ones they used to consult. In this workshop I aimed for my students to sense and embody inspiration through music, inviting them to become perceptive and more open minded for other ways of finding inspiration, in becoming more authentic in the process of making art.

The exercise was to only focus on the music, listen to the music intensely, experience the music, feel the emotions within the music; the sadness, the happiness, the peace, the joy, the restlessness, the sphere it breaths out and express this on paper with all the material displayed on the table in little artworks. I asked them to use one paper per song and to be silent during the exercise, not to guide or follow others in using certain materials or artistic choices, not taking any notice of others or the emerging artworks.

Telling a personal story based on their own embodied interpretation of six songs has all to do with the translation they make through their own identity. It values their personal associations and assumptions as a source, not using any already existing material (of others) to make their own authentic art. By putting down all the artworks at the end of my art class and showing them the diversity, the richness and uniqueness, the authenticity of my students in all the 165 little artworks was what values this exercise in a visual, direct way for all of us.



CHECK-IN AS BACKBONE

The idea of using a Check-in in my lessons originated at MEiA, where the use of the Check-in; a simple, casual, sometimes creative activity to gather insights into the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of participants at the beginning of class was a recurring phenomenon. Starting off with briefly pausing for a moment to consider life and share what's occupying us besides MEiA before connecting ourselves to the here and now.

Using my own experiences with the use of Check-ins as student at MEiA as a pleasant, accessible, disarming and light-hearted way of starting the lessons as the principle for developing a method for my students to connect with others in the classroom.

My aim with the method of Check-in is to provide a sense of connection among all members of my new senior art-class. Maxine Greene stresses that democratic community is characterised by interconnectedness and communion, where people are offered the space in which to discover what they recognize together and appreciate in common; they have to find ways to make the inter-subjective sense (Greene, 1995, p. 33).

With introducing Check-ins; weekly small, medium or big art-based assignments, in the art lesson I created the backbone of my Pedagogical framework. In the beginning of this project Check-ins are mainly focused on connecting the group and breaking the ice. Further on in the process the exercises are centred on stepping out of comfort zones, experiencing freedom, having fun. Some Check-ins have a more reflective character like exercises for sharing identities, thoughts and passions for finding out how to relate to the world. Illuminating this from an inside perspective and linking this to their own experiences just by mirroring and relating themselves to classmates through sharing identity, sharing personal stories makes it possible to develop this themselves. Inviting students to look for personal relevance and meaning interpreting an experience, to gain a better understanding of oneself through others and the outside world.

As a result, students will feel more connected and familiar with the group/in the classroom, or feeling more confidence in being a part of a group. Consequently, I hope to see more individuality, authenticity (by which I mean expressive authenticity (Dutton, 2003)), reflected in the students' work.



Workshop 'Music as Inspiration'

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this research I name and use a number of broad terms in my exploration for authenticity among art students in Highschool. To provide more clarity in my interpretation and use of these terms and their relation to one another in my project, I will connect them to related literature in this chapter.

Authenticity

The term authenticity within the arts is usually used in reference to nominal authenticity or historical authenticity, concerning the origins of an artwork based on empirical facts. With the term authenticity within this research I mean another sense of this term, namely expressive authenticity.

Lindholm uses the term expressive authenticity as identity or expressive correspondence – on being what one is, based on the 18th century Romantic-Essentialist Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau's view of being true to one self. He refers to the history or the essence of a person, group or object (Lindholm, 2025). The birth of an authentic self lies in the Romantic notion that human beings are gifted with a pure self-identity that is located in the deeper layers of the self and is uncontaminated by external society (Aydin & Beerends, 2021). The principal of building an art learning community within a traditional Highschool is based on my (personal) romantic or even idealistic view of pursuing (expressive) authenticity among my art students. Interpreting authenticity as an essence or as self-identity of a person, creates possibilities in reaching this goal, because it's already present, but needs exposure.

Dennis Dutton also uses the term of expressive authenticity in the artworks' character as a true expression of an individual's or society's values and beliefs (Dutton, 2003). I connect to this concept of interpreting authenticity as a way to express the authentic values of its maker and as a committed, personal expression.

I also connect to another sense of authenticity. The sense of authentically one's own, emanating from one's own person—authentic, in other words, as opposed to derivative or imitative (Kivy, 2024). In his Philosophical reflections on Musical performance, Peter Kivy calls above, performance authenticity. He believes that historical authenticities are important for instrumental reasons (authenticity as authorial intention, authenticity as contemporary sound and authenticity as contemporary practice) but that they should not compromise the authenticity of performers personal interpretation and in some instances may be compromised for the sake of personal authenticity. I think his concept of authenticity in music performance is applicable to the arts in general, thus also art made by my art students.

With the term authenticity used in this thesis I mean a students' embodied, self-referential and expressive authenticity based on solipsistic experiences (historical, cultural, social, spiritual) and personal interpretations of ideas, feelings, emotions and inspiration.

Identity

Charles Taylor makes a connection between identity and orientation. "To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand" (Taylor, 1989, p. 70). I share this opinion, to me

orienting yourself means morally and spiritually mirroring yourself to others. In this way, you formulate answers to questions about good and evil for yourself by recognizing yourself in the norms, values, behavior and feelings of others, or you don't. Forming your identity is a continuous phase of development in which you discover yourself through others. So when using the method of Check-ins concerning sharing identities I make use of a more reflective and transformative approach, where students think of their moral and spiritual stand through sharing personal stories, feelings, experiences and dreams with their peers.

Gwen Kirk & Margo Okazawa-Rey also see the formation of one's own identity as an ever evolving mix of who we think we are and who others think we are (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey). However, Kirk & Okazawa-Rey argue that the formation of identity is not purely based on personal decisions or choices, but based on three layers of identity, micro,-, meso,- and macro-level. The micro-level concerns our own view, family view and the view of relationships of ourselves. The meso-level concerns communities as my art class, ethnicities and religions. This is where our personal (micro) view intersects with others in a process of comparing ourselves and being compared. In my opinion this layer corresponds with the more philosophical approach of orientation of Taylor. The macro-level is on a societal,- (a Highschool) and world level based on classification of historical, physical and social aspects from the moment we are born, like race, gender, sexual orientation and class. This socially constructing hierarchies of identity by race, physical characteristics, gender, wealth and ability is recognizable behavior among teenagers (Appendix A). "Gaining" ones' position/place within the harsh and often unsafe world of superiority and subordination determines how the power dynamics within a group or community have been or are at a Highschool. Domination, oppression, discrimination and exclusion based on macro-level identity has a deep rooted historical past that even nowadays in our modern and civilized society reveals itself partly due to the influence of a stigmatized upbringing. Passing through ingrained visions and ideas from families into more social communities, such as in a Highschool. I also connect to this, more factual, three layered description of identity. This ties in with my observations concerning set power dynamics based on macro-identity among groups of teenagers during lunchbreak surveillance next to my observations and experiences with group formation during the schoolyear as a teacher. This substantiates my motivation of building a safe art classroom community; combating prejudices, set power dynamics on macro-level by using Check-in exercises on micro,- and meso-level for crossing existing social borders within a Highschool.

I think that reaching authenticity in making art and identity are inextricably linked. With creating an art-based tool, the Check-in, students will be challenged in sharing their identity, their perspective of experiencing the world. Learning, through others, to reflect on their beliefs and biases from who they are and how others see them, reaching their inner self, their authenticity for making their art.

Art learning Community

The word community is explained in many ways. I agree with the somewhat general explanation of the Oxford English Dictionary; a group of people who share the same interests, pursuits, or occupation, esp. when distinct from those of the society in which they live (UP, 2024). My project group is formed by 4VWO students who have chosen the art subject for the coming three years. In my opinion within a Highschool community we form a smaller community of students, making art. Sharing this same interest of the Arts together is the basis and also breeding ground for another explanation, of the word community, I connect with, that is of social cohesion. As bell hooks states "Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion." (hooks, All About Love, 2016, p. 215). The feeling of being connected to each other by performing a new ritual together

in the form of a group Check-in in which everyone in the group makes themselves vulnerable by sharing personal stories. My perspective on changing habits of thinking/ habits of mind, on healing a group; feeling and experiencing connectedness through intersubjectivity.

With using the term art learning community I mean a certain curious, open, respectful and inclusive work and learning environment, more tangible as a sort of atmosphere where my students feel connectedness and experiencing artistic freedom.

Democratic Classroom

As Paulo Freire states Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. (Freire, 2017, p. 72). Ideally, this is how education can and should be. In reality, the Dutch system with its very traditional, top down way of educating and grading our students, leaves us teachers little to no room in giving our students responsibility and ownership regarding their education. My project of building an art class community in my 4VWO art class is based on a more democratic classroom. This calls for playing with set structures challenging power dynamics within the classroom. I truly believe that empowering students with a voice in their own educational process can generate a more flat hierarchy, where teacher and student work next to each other so that students can contribute to society, their education and their future. Empowering me as their teacher. Today's individualistic and performance-oriented approach in education creates division. In this project I challenge my students to explore their natural authentic inner self and try to embody this through their artworks. In my opinion, this can only happen in a classroom where the conditions for democratic consciousness are present, such as the principle of equality within the classroom both in mutual relationships between students and also the student-teacher relationship. Importantly, the classroom also needs to be a place where every individual student feels heard and respected. A place where pluralistic ideas and opinions are listened to and valued, where everyone feels part of and where everyone respects and cherishes this and therefore works to maintain it (hooks, 2010, p. 16).

With using the term democratic classroom I mean a more horizontal way of teaching, changing existing structures and power dynamics of the classroom. Through art-based, active and playful participation and questioning including all members, I encourage those who always make their voices heard to share the classroom with other, less confident or introverted student. Deliberately making use of the social aspect of group Check-ins and making Communal art as a method for conscious and unconscious individual self-development through others present in the classroom. It also includes my personal idealistic view of a classroom where teacher and students learn and work together, next to each other, almost as equals. Although the reality of this experimental graduation project is still that I am part of the earlier mentioned traditional educational system, with traditional notions of teaching and learning where exercises and grades have to be given. This makes my role as an equal, a member of the community, a bit questionable and contradictory at times.



'Group Chandelier' Feedback moment

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will describe my theoretical framework for my project of Building an Art Community. In this project I am researching whether working with a new, different method of working and learning brings about more authenticity in art making among my senior art-class students at a regional Highschool.

For the reason of crossing social borders within a newly formed senior art-class and for sharing identities I used Marit Dewhurst' 'Teachers Bridging Differences' as guidance in this project. Throughout the whole book Dewhurst points out the importance for educators to practice connecting with others across differences by using art to teach and learn about identity in the classroom.

Envisioning this 'free spirited' art class community at the Minkema College asks for a different, social, more democratic and critical teaching method. This new approach of learning is based on the ideas of communal learning of Paulo Freire's, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and bell hooks' *Teaching Critical Thinking*. In the spirit of Engaged pedagogy I attempt to build a genuine working relationship between students and teacher, encouraging independent thinking and mutual participation in the classroom. Interwoven with this is the imaginative capacity of Maxine Greene's "Releasing the Imagination" that speaks about looking at things as if they could be otherwise. In my perseverance of building this art learning community I am using Communal art as a practice based method to generate connections between all individuals of my newly formed senior student art class. By exploring and sharing identities through organising Check-ins, short and long playful activities in my art class I provoke students including myself as a participant of this art learning community. This is an attempt to change the rooted patterns in our habits of thinking that hold us back in crossing social borders, into taking risks. It is about choosing dialogue to create opportunities to hear and respect every single voice in the classroom, encouraging every student to become an active participant in the classroom community.



Workshop 'Dance as Inspiration'

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can communal learning contribute to being an authentic art class student?

In order to answer the main question How can communal learning contribute to becoming an authentic/ being an authentic art class student, it is important to clarify the terms in my project. Based on the assumption that an authentic self-arises from a pure self-identity located in the deeper layers of the self, uncontaminated by external society. This leads to **sub-question 1**: 'How to practice new habits in the art classroom that change habits of thinking/ habits of the mind?' Habits of thinking/habits of the mind often arise from other external factors such as influential behavior of others, assumptions or prejudices based on the opinions of others or behavior due to fear, uncertainty, disgust or admiration for certain friends, classmates, even artists. I will use the method of Check-ins. Short, 15 minutes, medium and longer, till 70 minutes art-based exercises for sharing identities which appeal to the pure self-identity of the student. The purpose of students making substantive connections with others within the art classroom will contribute to the feeling of being part of a social community where art is used for communal learning.

Leading to **sub-question 2**: 'How can Critical pedagogy be practiced to achieve a more inclusive and democratic art classroom?' Changing the existing structures and powers in the classroom by teaching in a more horizontal way will give students the opportunity to take control over the process of their learning in a classroom where reciprocity, exchange, respect and mutuality are pillars. The different, sometimes challenging way of connecting with classmates through experiencing the feeling of discomfort while showing vulnerability lays the foundation for a more social way of working and learning. Finally leading to **sub-question 3**: 'How to encourage my students to participate and engage through dialogue?' The method of art-based Check-ins is aimed at establishing connections between students. By using Check-ins to prompt a dialogue through the Arts for sharing identity; in one by one showing their artworks and reading out loud a personal story we ensure that everyone is actively present, feeling excitement and waiting on their turn to share.

2. TRANSCENDENCE

2.1 SHARING IDENTITIES & INTERSUBJECTIVITY

This different, social way of working and learning by means of sharing identities goes hand in hand with the stimulation of imagination. Check-ins based on sharing personal stories or experiences and exchanging thoughts and feelings between students are aimed on offering them new lenses (of peers) to look through. John Dewey states that consciousness always has an imaginative phase, and imagination, more than any other capacity, breaks through the 'inertia of habit' (Dewey, 1934). With appealing to their imagination, seeing the world through others' eyes, they gently adjust what they find out about the intersubjective world, intervening such inertia of habits encourages active learning in students. This gradually results in distancing themselves from perspectives shaped by their upbringing and inevitably in reinterpreting their earlier experiences.

Determining one's position is only possible by knowing the perspectives of others (Taylor, 1989). Forming one's identity is a continuous phase of development in which you discover yourself through others. So when using the method of Check-ins with a more reflective and transformative effect in conducting dialogue in the classroom; by sharing stories about identity, feelings, experiences and dreams with their peers students start to think of their moral and spiritual stance. This experience helps them to revise their previous ideas and thoughts from earlier times. Hearing one another's personal experience in the classroom promotes an atmosphere of cooperation and deep listening. Such sharing helps create a community of learning and enhances ways of knowing (hooks, 2010, p. 58).

Thinking of a Check-in for the purpose of assessing my students in determining the identity of peers in a different, indirect way I used a derivative of an assignment from Marit Dewhurst's book *Teachers Bridging Difference* (Appendix D6).

The Homework Assignment: Sketch/draw or outline a precious object, communicating something about yourself that the rest of the group might not know.

Knowingly confusing them with this "vague" homework assignment, I intentionally made the students think independently about the content of the assignment. An assignment like this calls for honesty. On the one hand it could give me insights about the level of exposure and their willingness to share personal information within this group. On the other hand it could be a magical tool to promote various personal identities interact and intersect (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey) by letting them sort out who they are in relation to others through 'reading' the drawings. Who has the confidence or is confident enough to be vulnerable? Who dares to be themselves, who can be authentic? Indirectly asking them to show us how they identify themselves. In doing so they need to reflect on who they are and think of an object representing this.

The purpose of this exercise in relation to my research question is finding out what the level of authenticity is shared within stories told through personal objects. To better understand the lenses through which we view the world, close analysis of works of art can help us turn inward to examine our biases, assumptions and beliefs (Dewhurst, 2018). Having conversation followed by sharing and discussing associations and assumptions about an object feels less intimidating but is equally valuable in a group setting.



Check-in 'Precious Object'

2.2 ENGAGED PEDAGOGY & CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Engaged Pedagogy

This schoolyear I started off with a new senior art class group. This newly formed group, is an assembly of twenty-eight students, all girls, who have chosen art as a subject for the next three years up to their final exams. Working and learning as a community has all to do with mutual participation of everyone in the classroom. Establishing a mutual relationship between teacher and students starts with getting to know one another. hooks emphasises that 'as teachers, we can create a climate for optimal learning if we understand the level of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence in the classroom. That means we need to take time to assess who we are teaching' (hooks, 2010, p. 19).

This ties in with what I stated earlier, in longing for a personal relationship with this new senior group of art students. It is important and valuable to me to know who they really are, what kind of life they lead, what moves them; who they are outside of this institution. Building a sincere relationship with students is sometimes difficult, not everyone is open to this or feels comfortable with this. In traditional educational system, students and teachers have been taught that knowledge transfer is a functional, one-sided transaction; the banking concept (Freire, 2017, p. 45). Suddenly having to share more with a teacher than is necessary on a personal level can therefore feel unnecessary, unnatural and uncomfortable. Expectations with regard to learning must then be adjusted. In my opinion, authenticity can only be exposed if the learning environment meets a number of conditions based on a more social and horizontal way of learning. This starts with establishing relationships among students and teacher based on mutual participation, dialogue and storytelling. hooks states that a mutual relationship involves taking risks in sharing thoughts and stories in the classroom between teacher and students, together discovering vulnerability in the space of shared learning (hooks, 2010, p. 21).

Within the method of Check-ins, a number of exercises are aimed on sharing identity and stories about themselves, their family or their passions. As I mentioned earlier, just before the spring break I asked my art class students to make a postcard of the things that stood out during their coming spring break. We used this as a starting point for conversation the first lesson after the break. The postcards were visual stories, drawings, collages, photos or whatever the students came up with. One by one I asked them to show and share the story behind their little artworks. I experienced a lot of connectedness and openness in sharing each other's activities. Everyone was silent, listening actively to the stories being told. After each story, I sometimes posed a question, or gave a comment about the artwork. In some of the artworks I even recognised some of the characters/ identities of the students.

Shadlyn a very serious, conscientious, sincere student showed us her collage, through which she shared with us a very special moment: the day when her parents got married during the spring break. She talked about it solemnly, thinking back of that special day.

Meike showed us her collage of a cat, she shared being busy during the spring break with a new cat from the animal shelter. Being very careful not to let him get outside, because he first had to get used to the people and the house. Her artwork and story show us something about the caring, dedicated, responsible and patient person she is, making just that one portrait of her cat.



With this storytelling Check-in I aimed at consciously creating understanding and acknowledgment of the feelings and emotions of the narrator and those of listeners. Sharing personal, sensitive and intimate stories almost made me, teacher and participant, experience a sacred ritual in showing vulnerability. The feeling of being part of something intimate is my idea of Engaged pedagogy, the mutual willingness to share and to listen, among teacher and students.

Critical Pedagogy

My aim with practicing Critical pedagogy is to work with my students toward a classroom of possibilities by challenging traditional notions of teaching and learning, prioritizing a student-centred approach and a classroom of imagination. According to Greene Imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible (Greene, 1995, p. 3).

With starting this project and believing that today's world would benefit from young people being taught in a more social way. Empathizing with others, as opposed to today's individualistic and performance-orientated education, I hope to offer my students a different, new perspective on education. Challenging them in sharing their stories, posing their questions and appealing to their imaginative thinking about possibilities and things being otherwise even regarding education.

Working from this student-centered approach requires more input from my students and less from me as a teacher. This is reflected in their degree of self-direction. Practical assignments are designed in a way that students must make decisions as a group to determine the progress of the assignment, calling on everyone's initiative. In the first assignment of the group chandelier (Appendix B1 Assignment 'Group Chandelier') all students made a design for a chandelier, suitable for 28 students to carry out. In the second individual assignment 'Modern Nomad' (Appendix B2 Assignment 'Modern Nomad'), students made their own construction material to build a shelter/ tiny house with. This involved experiments, emerging from students own environmental and ecological engagement or fascination. The third group/individual assignment 'I/We had a Dream' (Appendix B3 Assignment 'I/We had a Dream'), appeals on students' imagination; to what is not yet, but perhaps might or should be, challenging students in creating their own digital dream. The result of this practical exercise were several video's with personal, intimate and vulnerable subjects considering their happiness, hopes, worries and fears: subjects from the heart, showing their social involvement by critically expressing themselves about expectations and stigmas of today's society. Demi made a video about the fear of losing her loved ones, involving her own family and friends as characters in her video. The video of Eva, Jasmijn, Leandra and Rosalie v. I. showed me a peak in their lives as young children, including all sorts of photos from family trips, friends, pets as well as hobbies and sports. A video in which they look back with nostalgia on a mostly carefree youth. Wishing they could go back to these times when they felt free, when there was no stress or pressure to perform and expectations of others about them. In particular the beautiful video '[Perfection is found in Embracing Imperfections](#)' of Amber, Anouk, Alicia and Sarah, showing me a glimpse into the minds and lives of teenagers full of doubts and insecurities.

This is what Amber, Anouk, Alicia and Sarah share about the content of their video:

'Our video is about accepting your own insecurities and imperfections. We try to make this clear by comparing our own body with nature. The main question is: Why can't you accept your own body, while you like the similarities with it in nature? After all, we as humans are also part of nature, right?

We also want to make it clear in our video that you do not have to endure this feeling of no self-acceptance alone. In the beginning you first see someone running away from her problems and thoughts on her own, but later there are other people who pull her out of that low point. So she is no longer alone.

Striving for perfection, or even being perfect, is virtually impossible. Yet you can find this perfection in accepting your own imperfections.'

Because of the importance of sharing their video about insecurities and low self-esteem teenagers experience in navigating challenges in modern society, we signed up their film for the NFFS, a Film competition for Highschool students. Their video won the third prize at the NFFS 2024! Because of "the beautiful and vulnerable concept" (Juryreport).

Experiencing this social way of teaching compared to the majority of subjects where lessons are teacher-led and where set power structures are maintained to keep the teacher in charge of students, this alternative way of learning empowers my students in defining their own educational needs and conditions for learning; learning and working through and with others. This critical consciousness in acknowledging the value of sharing identities and connecting with others in this project is what they wish for in the subjects that are approached more traditionally.



Also with the challenging group Check-in 'Sharing Passions' (Appendix D10) I'm encouraging critical thinking and a sense of agency in my classroom. By one by one revealing passions about themselves and listening to others makes students more aware of their identity and able to reflect on who they are, how they behave in school, how others see them and how they want to be seen. Hearing one another's personal experience in the classroom promotes an atmosphere of cooperation and deep listening. Such sharing helps create a community of learning and enhances ways of knowing (hooks, 2010, p. 58).

By setting the example of giving them a little peak into my passion for helping animals in need and describing some of my actions in saving the wounded animals and shovelling the dead off the road. Taking a risk with sharing my love and motif for helping animals in need, students too might dare to share other, maybe not previously shared, engaged passions with us. I made it a homework assignment to think about this further at home, perhaps to prepare a little cheat sheet for this Check-in 'Sharing Passions'.

During the actual Check-in 'Sharing Passions', we all sat in a big circle, me starting off with reading out loud my passion for animals in need in a more detailed version this time, questions were posed, is it so busy where you live? Do you often find wounded or dead animals? Where do you take them? Some of the students wondered out loud; wouldn't it be dirty, picking up dead animals? After sharing my story, they all read out loud a prepared story. Some of the students shared being passionate about their hobbies, on a more recreational level, like feeling passionate in performing hockey or dancing, but most of the students shared agency on a more social level.

Student Liza read out loud:

'I think buying second-hand is very important, because in the clothing industry, for example, people are underpaid or work for far too long. This interest arose for me when I bought a second-hand piece of clothing for the first time. To this day, I still find it very important to buy second-hand or fairly produced clothing on Vinted or other sites.'

Student Meike knowing it by heart:

'For me, respect for people who are different is important. One reason for this is that my older sister has multiple disabilities and she functions on the level of a baby. People always look at her on the street. Because of this, I always try to be understanding, patient and kind to people who behave differently. You don't know what they are like or what their situation is. I don't actively do anything with this, but I think it is important.'

After each story questions were posed, students showed themselves as curious, respectful, patient and active listeners. hooks states that when we see the classroom as a place where teacher and students can share their 'inner light' we have a way to glimpse who we are and how we might learn together (hooks, 2010, p. 20). With using group Check-ins, in one by one or sharing stories as a group, gives others present the classroom the opportunity to consider other perspectives and to shift or dismantle our assumptions, beliefs and biases of others. Reflecting on own revelations in relation to those of other active participants opens up the possibility of social transformation within the art classroom, perhaps even outside of it.



Check-in 'Sharing Passions'

2.3 DIALOGUE

Among students in a Highschool there is a lot of prejudice and gossip about other students, without ever having spoken or really even met one another. Emphasising the more social way of learning and working in the art class I deliberately use dialogue as a pedagogical practice to engage and move students towards a more inclusive, non-discriminating and self-reflective frame of reference.

Dialogue within the art classroom can be practiced in multiple ways. It can be literal, conversation with new classmates to get acquainted with one another. For this particular situation I've thought of a light-hearted and accessible way of having conversation by upfront preparing questions and answers to prelude the first meeting of my new senior art class group (Appendix D1). Building up a relationship among a community of teacher and students starts with getting to know each other on a personal level, encouraging every student in my classroom to participate in the group Check-ins. Laying the foundation for a genuine relationship based on integration of experiences, creating knowledge and transforming together, as Freire states; dialogue is founded upon love, humility and faith, a horizontal kind of relationship of mutual trust between the dialoguers (Freire, 2017, p. 91).

Personally I see the dialogue in the classroom as an evolving process. From starting off small, with the Check-in 'Speeddate' (Appendix D1) to define this new community, the world and our place in it. Gradually, more in depth reflective group Check-ins like 'Precious Object' and 'Sharing Passions' enhancing an intimate common language, talking from the heart.

3.UTOPIA

3.1 REACHING AUTHENTICITY

From my view as an art teacher the added value in students becoming more authentic is that their artworks will contain more expressiveness and meaning from them as makers. As I explained earlier, authenticity in making art and identity are inextricably linked. By staying true to their identity, students go more in depth with their content. They appeal to their own thoughts and experiences, reaching their inner self to make use of their authenticity in making their art. This leads to unique experiments instead of just making a piece of work that meets the criteria of an assignment. My experience with the formation of a new senior art group is that the development of students' personal creative process is often negatively influenced by the search for a balanced group dynamic. Social pressures and insecurities ensure that students are not free to act spontaneously, intuitively or from emotion. Held back by invisible rules and the power of set group dynamics they stay low, presenting themselves as common and ordinary, almost cliché in their sketches. Instead, students must feel and experience that getting ideas or inspiration should arise from themselves and not be forced from social pressure nor other students' expectations. Using the method of art-based Check-ins as a different approach to change my students' inertia of habits, challenging them to find their natural authentic inner self and use this to express themselves in their artworks.

3.2 COMMUNAL ART

Thinking of ways to emphasise participation of all students in working and learning together I introduced a different way of working in the art classroom. Normally students in senior classes work individually in order to create their own style and repertoire. But with starting off with this new group, the aim was to foster collaboration and experience the sense of community. To do this I proposed to undertake a Communal art assignment, making a group chandelier.

The aim of this group assignment is to learn to work together. Everyone designs a small part of the chandelier. All parts together form the chandelier. The individual parts have to form a dialogue and connect to each other. They will have to consult each other carefully and coordinate how to allow parts to flow into each other. It requires thinking about shapes, colours, size, textures and more. In this assignment they can work entirely according to their own ideas and imagination. The separate, adjacent parts may completely different, unique, but a connection from one part to the other is necessary as to make the collaboration visible. Students are tasked with consulting with each other to coordinate the fit and make connection between separate artworks possible.

This different and new way of working as a collective raised a lot of insecurity and questions from the students, asking me to show some examples of group chandeliers. They questioned me about the size, about their individual part in this group assignment and how to connect it to other parts. They also had questions about the materials and more questions about the grading, I had to give some clarity! By giving an example about the possibility of choosing a collective theme like 'the city', I unintentionally manipulated the concept of them defining what this chandelier could look like instead of letting it evolve organically from within the group - I presented an option to follow -. Reflecting on the situation, while watching them draw little buildings for this supposed collective city, I decided to intervene.

Restoring the democratic process in the classroom of designing this group chandelier together, without a teacher deciding what it should look like. In doing so, the process of deciding what theme to choose presented itself naturally. Partly by providing peer feedback during two separate feedback rounds, where all individual dummies with ideas, designs and notes were viewed and valued by all participants. Together they picked out six themes, suitable for the whole group to engage with. After pitching the top three ideas, students were asked to vote for the best design, and students chose Sams' 'Chandelier of Heaven, Earth and Everything in Between', to realise as a group project. Choosing this design gave them the opportunity to work out their own interpretation in connecting to one of the three possibilities, heaven, earth and everything in between. Realising their individual parts took several weeks.

Student Shadlyn wrote in her reflection on this Communal art assignment:

'When I heard that the chandelier would have three layers, with one layer becoming the universe and everything above it, I immediately knew that I wanted to make something with planets. I have always been interested in the universe, stars and planets and I also want to choose a study related to that later. I ended up creating three planets. My idea was to create planets that are different from normal and imperfect. One planet is therefore split in half, the other has two oblique rings with a sharp object through the north and south poles and the last one has all craters.'

I sensed a considerable degree of authenticity in the artworks made by my students in this Communal art assignment. The diversity in design, material and size of the individual artworks already represent my aim for this research. Making art-based on personal interpretation, self-

generated ideas and imagination is what is reflected in the uniqueness of the artworks and what I read back in the reflections of students about this assignment. However, Pinterest was still used extensively in this first assignment. Because of this, in the next assignment, I will focus more on the experiment and let students work from the material instead of from a concept/idea. The evaluations of this Communal art assignment show that the degree of freedom and the making of joint decisions were not always experienced as pleasant. Some students experienced difficulties in reaching consensus or with agreeing what design to realize by the group majority. Others thought the assignment was too unclear, too open, and would have liked a clear framework. Others experienced the offered space as very pleasant and liked being able to give direction to the assignment themselves.

Due to the necessary welding of the frame, finalising the chandelier with all the artworks has taken up more time, but before their final exams, next year, the chandelier will be hanging on the ceiling in one of the art classrooms, proof of a successful start of trying out a more social way of educating.



Workshop 'Dance as Inspiration'

3.3 CHECK-INS

In this chapter I provide insight into the goals, working methods and preparations of four Check-ins that I performed in my 4VWO senior art class. In addition, I describe my approach and experiences with regard to the execution and reflect on my findings. The Check-ins below represent the new, more social way of working and learning within my project.

The power of these Check-ins lie next to being an assignment focused on changing social and pedagogical habits of thinking in the more reflective and/or transformative part. By reflecting on who students are as a person, on their own identity, to reflect on what is important to them, what they value. But also in the reflection afterwards, in considering other perspectives and in shifting or dismantling their assumptions, belief and biases of others by gaining more insight through dialogue into the identity of others.

Throughout this whole Research Project you can find parts of the Check-ins elaborated below.

Check-in 'Sharing Passions'	
Keywords:	Sharing identities, sharing personal interests, showing vulnerability, feeling connection, Critical pedagogy (scan), engagement/agency (scan)
Purpose/intentions:	<p>For this Check-in I was inspired by reading bell hooks', Teaching Critical Thinking. She does not begin to teach in any setting without first laying the foundation for building community in the classroom. To do this, she says it is essential that teachers and students take time to get to know one another. One of her ways of getting to know her students is to write little personal stories with them and reading them out loud in class. She thinks a story, especially personal story, is one of those powerful ways to educate, to create community in a classroom (hooks, 2010, p. 56).</p> <p>With this exercise I aim on encouraging critical thinking and a sense of agency in my classroom. With one by one revealing passions about themselves and listening to others makes them think more about their identity and reflect on who they are in performing their passions, who they are in school and how others see them, maybe intentionally changing this into how they want to be seen in my classroom. Hearing one another's personal experience in the classroom promotes an atmosphere of cooperation and deep listening.</p>
Identity Level	Micro-Level
Working methods:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art-based Storytelling Reading out loud Deep listening Dialoguing Critical pedagogy Group conversation

Preparation teacher:	The teacher initiates the assignment by sharing her/his passion her/himself in an earlier lesson Mark as an homework assignment
Preparation students:	Homework exercise for students
Duration:	30-50 minutes
Description:	What is important to you? What/where do you feel involved in? (where do you want to make a stand for, where lies your heart / where do you feel passionate about/ where do you care about? Write a small text about this, how did this came about (name an incident / a situation) tell us how this involvement, this passion expresses itself in you?
Experience:	<p>By setting the example need and describing some of giving them a little peak in my passion for helping animals in my actions in saving the wounded and shovelling of the dead animals of the road. I hoped in taking risk sharing with them my love and motif for helping animals in need, they too might dare to share other, maybe not previously shared, engaged passions with us. I made it an homework assignment to think about this further at home, perhaps to prepare a little cheat sheet for this Passion Check-in.</p> <p>During the actual 'Check-in Sharing Passions' we all sat in a big circle, me starting off with reading out loud my passion for animals in need in a more detailed version this time, questions were posed. After sharing my story, they all read out loud a prepared story on paper or knowing it by heart. Some of the students shared being passionate about their hobbies, on a more recreational level, like feeling passionate in performing hockey or dancing, but most of the students shared agency on a more social level. Sarah shared caring for people in welfare. She experienced the difficulties and hardship of it through her uncle who lived in welfare. She and family see the importance of donating clothes and other things to welfare organisations because of this awareness. And also Liza shared her story about her buying most of her clothes second hand because her awareness of the damage and pollution of nature because of the clothing industry. Anna shared her care and concern for the elderly people, because of her volunteer internship;" it's nice to do something small and let them smile, or do something together".</p> <p>Rosalie shared her story about her concern for women rights, that she was thinking of demonstrating later on this month in a mars for women rights. After each story questions where posed, students showed themselves as curious, respectful, patient and active listeners.</p>
Reflections:	In summery this exercise contributed to gaining more insight into the identity of others, in considering other perspectives and in shifting or dismantling our assumptions, belief and biases of others. From leaning outward into leaning inward, reflecting on own revelations in relation to those of other more active participants and opening up the possibility for social transformation within the art classroom, perhaps even have a bigger scope outside of the art classroom.

Check-in 'Precious Object'	
Keywords:	Exploring identities, sharing identities, sharing personal interests, sharing personal stories, showing vulnerability, feeling connection
Purpose/intentions:	Students exposing themselves. I imagined my students to be confused with the assignment, asking themselves for what use to make this drawing of a precious object and also of them having considerations about what certain object to pick out. I thought of them wondering, what specific object will communicate them the best, thinking, choosing, maybe comparing, maybe changing or even reconsidering all of their potentially suitable objects. Perhaps talking to friends or peers about it, discussing what to choose, even though I asked not to do this. At the same time asking myself whether they would really have the guts to expose themselves to me or to others with this cherished object. And if their choices be truthfully made, maybe revealing, sensitive, intimate or strategically chosen, neutral or even superficial? Do or don't they have considerations about what others will think of them, picking out this particular object, even if it's strange, childish, or too serious? Will these thoughts force them sketch/ draw something completely different?
Identity Level	Meso-identity
Working methods:	Art-based Drawing Storytelling Analysing Reflecting Exposing
Preparation teacher:	Mark as an homework assignment Cut small pieces of paper Set up the classroom with two long/big groups of tables Divide the group in two by a grouping tool
Preparation students:	Homework exercise for students
Duration:	30-50 minutes
Description:	<p>Draw or make an outline of a cherished object/an object that says something about yourself that others don't know yet.</p> <p>I asked them to sketch/draw or outline of a precious object at home as a homework assignment so they could think longer about what object to choose. By giving them longer time to think about the assignment, I hoped for a conscious choice of the object taken along.</p> <p>During the exercise I divided the group in two with the magister grouping tool and let them take a seat in their groups at long tables, sitting opposite to each other. The students had to hand in all the outlines/sketches to me so that I could place them in the middle of the table myself without the students knowing who put down which sketch. All students were given</p>

	<p>pieces of paper which they had to write what the object says about its owner.</p> <p>After this part, the owner was able to read all the pieces. The owner then explains what the object means to her and then shares the most accurate and least accurate description with the group.</p>
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>Some students exposed themselves in a very vulnerable way in their revelations.</p> <p>Rosalie had made an outline of the first elf in her collection of elf's. A particularly sensitive story about a ritual that she and her family perform annually, going to the Efteling and buying an elf in the Efteling shop afterwards, as a memory.</p> <p>Not only the explanations were quit revealing, but also the drawings itself. The way the owner drew her cherished object, the story behind it and the identity of its owner were visible in some ways.</p> <p>For instance the key from the piano of Tamana, beautifully drawn, with lots of detail, showing a lot of tenderness, delicacy, care and respect for the object. Told by a very serious, introvert, modest girl, sharing that she loves playing the piano so much on her beloved instrument.</p> <p>The quick drawing, an outline of the tree of Rianne contradicts in its indifference compared to the introvert, insecure girl she is in class, sharing a very vulnerable side of her; enjoying and loving nature as a tough girl scout. Alicia, who, when reading her slips, thinks that a fellow student's version on the slip describing its owner, is better than her own description of herself. And then the Twix drawn by Sigrid.</p> <p>Sigrid's Twix raises many questions to me. Why did she choose this object, just a Twix. This cannot be a cherished object, what does this Twix say about her? Did she choose this object not to reveal anything, not to share anything with the group? What did she feel or think while hearing all those very personal, substantive stories, real revelations. Her experiencing this, would she be embarrassed about bringing the outline of her superficial chosen object, would she'd chosen differently if she knew what others would have brought?</p> <p>In some way the outline of the Twix was in my opinion a conscious undermining of the assignment. No one would have thought that this Twix would actually mean something precious to her. From this point of view, it could also be interpreted as a daring statement of her; deliberately chosen this object, not wanting to reveal anything personal.</p>
<p>Reflections:</p>	<p>The outcome of this exercise was positive and hopeful because of the sometimes very personal stories, the innocence and openness of some students. I hope, experiencing the sphere, the respect showed while sharing stories, will invite everybody for further exploring identities. I think all the considerations that the students have made by choosing their precious object have had a great reflective value. Asking themselves who they are through a cherished object that represents them and analyzing others through their precious objects.</p>

Check-in 'Postcard'	
Keywords:	Storytelling, sharing personal stories, connection, listening, silence
Purpose/intentions:	Sharing stories I imagined my students wondering what medium to choose, asking themselves what others will choose, what size to work with, how detailed or extended they need to be. Thinking over their activity's, choosing what is easy, or interesting to work with and to talk about in class. Would they have thought about picking something worthwhile to impress others, or would they choose something convenient or something random not to stand out to much. I imagined some students enjoying making the postcard, spending time on it, being critical, is it good enough? Others working on it the day/ evening before art class, just doing their homework.
Identity level	Micro-Level
Working methods:	Art-based Storytelling Active listening
Preparation teacher:	Mark as an homework assignment Set up the classroom with one big group of tables
Preparation students:	Homework exercise for students
Duration:	30 minutes
Description:	<p>Just before the spring break I asked my art class students to make a postcard of the things that stood out during their coming spring break, as a Check-in for the first lesson after the break, a visual story as a starting point for conversation. The postcard could be a drawing, a collage, a photo, or whatever they could come up with.</p> <p>I imagined my students wondering what medium to choose, asking themselves what others will choose, what size to work with, how detailed or extended they need to be. Thinking over their activity's, choosing what is easy, or interesting to work with and to talk about in class. Would they have thought about picking something worthwhile to impress others, or would they choose something convenient or something random not to stand out to much. I imagined some students enjoying making the postcard, spending time on it, being critical, is it good enough? Others working on it the day/ evening before art class, just doing their homework.</p>
Experience:	After spring break all students sat at a big table in the middle of the classroom, putting their postcards in front of them on the table. The little artworks were very divers, in using different sizes, different media. One by one asked them to show and share the story behind their little artworks. I experienced a lot of connectedness and openness in sharing each other's activity's. Everyone was silent, listening actively to the stories being told. After each story, I sometimes posed a question, or gave a comment about the artwork. As teacher of this group, member of the community, I felt an

	<p>intimate setting in the classroom by sharing all their personal stories, I felt honoured, witnessing this.</p> <p>In some of the artworks I recognised some of the characters/ identities of the students.</p> <p>Sarah showed us her landscape painting, she spent her spring break in Texel, loving the beach walks with her family. I saw her efforts by making this landscape painting. Taking this exercise very serious as one of our newest three members of the art class. Wanting to make a good start and leaving a good impression on the group.</p> <p>Ronne showed us her very colourful postcard full of drawings of all her hobby's she loves to do. Her artwork reveals much of her enthusiasm, her curiousness and her energy as a person.</p> <p>Remarkably a lot of them talked about the normal, familiar activity's like visiting their grandparents and meeting friends, baking/cooking, spending time doing their hobby's, going on holiday, shopping in different cities, working, doing their internships, having birthday parties, listening to music and watching Netflix. In sharing those normal, little, intimate moments showed me what an honest and save environment we are working on already is emerging.</p> <p>Not everyone was present this lesson and two of the students forgot their postcard. I asked them (by magister) to prepare their postcard and talk for next lesson.</p> <p>That lesson we again sat around the big table, looking at seven not yet shown postcards and listening to the students talking about their spring break activities.</p> <p>Sigrid showed us her postcard and shared her story of looking forward to a guest dog for the spring break, but being very disappointed because of her allergic reaction caused to the dog and being sick all week. Luckily enjoying visiting her grandparents and the beach. She showed herself being a quick learner in self-reflection after sabotaging our first identity sharing 'Precious Object' Check-in. Being committed and serious, wanting to fit to this new community, wanting to share something real and honest, staying closer to her heart.</p>
<p>Reflections:</p>	<p>I experienced this exercise as positive. I think the reflective aspect of this exercise is about exchanging personal values, interests and family-customs, what is important for me and what is it for others? I think my students gained more interest, insight in and understanding of each other with this exercise. Different identities, but showing a lot of common ground and connections in experiencing joy of little things, like being with family, in enjoying hobbies like hiking and baking and other activities of every single student. Intending to bring the group closer together by emphasizing resemblances instead of differences.</p>

Workshop 'Music as Inspiration'	
Keywords:	Music, inspiration, abstract, emotions, feelings, sensing, embodying, intuition
Purpose/intentions:	With these two workshops (music and dance)I aimed to enlighten my students with ways of finding inspiration. By offering workshops on a more abstract level of finding inspiration I hoped to invite them to explore other possibilities than the familiar ones they used to consult, like for instance Pinterest or other image based social media network and use those ideas as an example for what they want to make for their art projects. The workshops I want to try out are based on sensing and embodying inspiration through music and dance. My aim is changing their pedagogical habits of thinking in making them perceptive and more open minded for other ways of finding inspiration. I hope my students will become more authentic in making art; in expressing themselves based on their own memories, their own experiences, their own feelings and thoughts.
Identity level	Micro-Level
Working methods:	Art-based Deep listening Embodying
Preparation teacher:	Make a playlist on Spotify with all different genres/types of music Grouping tables for 5-6 students Divide art materials like watercolors, pastels, chalk, ink, charcoal and different sorts of brushes on the table groups Paper, cut up in a postcard size.
Preparation students:	None
Duration:	50-70 minutes
Description:	The exercise was only to focus on the music, listen to the music intensely, experiencing the music, feeling the emotions within the music; the sadness, the happiness, the peace, the joyfulness, the restlessness, the sphere it breaths out. Meanwhile translating their own feelings, thoughts and emotions on paper with all the material laying on the table in little artworks. I asked them to use a paper per song and to be silent during the exercise, not to guide or follow others in using certain materials, making their artistic choices, not taking any notice of others or the emerging artworks.
Experience:	While putting on the first track, I could feel, hear and sense the excitement, the curiousness and the rejection of some students. Laughing, still talking and making faces to each other, not really knowing how to start, how to surrender themselves to music, their feelings? Looking for references among others, how to act, what to do or how to do it 'wright'? After those first minutes of insecurity and hesitation students let down their

	<p>guard and became more relaxed, more focused, disconnecting themselves from others, drawing, painting more intuitively, only hearing the music. Some of the students shared having fun doing this exercise regretting it was only a workshop. Because of this reaction, the workshop, only seen as an activity that is considered fun or not tells me that the potential or value of their own authenticity, the backbone of this workshop could not yet be reproduced or initiated by themselves.</p> <p>I experienced this workshop as positive, because of its artistic value and of the underlying reflective component of it. My aim was to change their habits of thinking by introducing them to other, new ways of finding inspiration. With experiencing what it is like to use music as a subject, as a source of inspiration to transform feelings and emotions by making art themselves they've put into practice in this workshop.</p> <p>Telling a personal story based on their own embodied interpretation of six songs has all to do with the translation they make through their own identity. It values their personal associations and assumptions as a source, not using any already existing material (of others) to make their own authentic art. By putting down all the artworks at the end of my art class and showing them the diversity, the richness and uniqueness of all the 165 little artworks is what values this exercise in a visual, direct way for all of us.</p>
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CONCLUSION

In summary my Graduation project involves the practical research into how to build an art class community at a Regional Highschool in Woerden, the Netherlands. It is deployed among a group of twenty-eight 4VWO senior art class students in the school year 2023-2024, in the implementation of three practical assignments and eleven art-based Check-ins in the subject of Arts.

This research stems from my interest as an art teacher in persevering authenticity in the artworks of my senior art students. However, in order to be authentic as an art student a regional High School, a large number of conditions must be met within the art classroom. In witnessing returning patterns in the classroom within forming a new senior art group concerning excluding students at the beginning of the school year challenged me to develop an art-based method to break set power dynamics. The concept of building an art-class community refers to a different, social way of working and learning, in creating an atmosphere of respect and tolerance through the arts.

To meet these conditions I developed an art-based method of Check-ins, inspired on the airy, playful Check-ins at MEiA. This method of Check-ins encourages students to get closer to their inner selves through short or longer art assignments, in being vulnerable, by sharing personal stories in the group and by experiencing new and different working methods that can sometimes be uncomfortable. In getting closer to their inner selves, self-reflection from views shaped by their upbringing are vital in defining their own identity, in formulating their own values and standards.

In representing myself as an art teacher with introducing this method as our new way of working and learning together, demands a different way of teaching. Through practicing Engaged pedagogy and Critical pedagogy in the classroom; one by one sharing personal stories in a group setting, I encourage active listening. Students recognize habits and values of themselves in experiences of others, in sharing a common intersubjective world. Next to this insight it also ensures the recognition of others' values, reformulation own values and ideas based on the experiences and feelings of others and thus creating support in making new connections based on imagination and empathy with 'other' classmates. Also in writing assignments using communal work as a group work method, asking input from all students - determining and elaborating the concept and design of 'Group Chandelier' - promoting a more democratic classroom.

The conclusion of this research is based on my experiences and findings as an art teacher and those of my students concerning their artwork, written reflections and fifteen filled in evaluation forms.

From my observations practicing new habits in the art classroom has partially succeeded. A large number of students experienced that this new, social, refreshing way of teaching matches their curiosity and open-mindedness. This is expressed in their enthusiasm to attend the workshops embodying music and dance and in their engagement in the Communal art assignment. Other less outspoken, more introverted students experienced this new way of learning and working very exciting, didn't liked to be in the spotlight and already experienced difficulties in live on a social level, in making contact. Experiencing discomfort with each other is part of the process to move forward through this new way of learning and working. A smaller number of students is comfortable with the traditional way of learning and think it is strange or weird to share personal stories or draw on music or dance in classroom setting. These students present themselves differently in the exercises than who they really are. Because students somehow 'know' each other, they quickly see whether students are being honest in sharing personal stories or whether they are deliberately sabotaging the Check-ins by simply telling a story that sounds interesting to them. The success of this exercise is

therefore closely related to student's honesty. Dishonesty, which is noticed, certainly does not contribute to a safe classroom environment.

On the question whether the application of Critical pedagogy has contributed to achieving a more inclusive and democratic art classroom, the answer is yes. Partly due to the Communal art assignment, in shifting existing power structures in the classroom and empowering students with the responsibility for determining direction and conceptual execution of this assignment as a group. This has contributed to the feeling of ownership and in experiencing freedom, giving substance and direction to their own education themselves, not imposed by any teacher. I think that due to the experience of working together as a community, in including every participant in the process of decision making is an example of a democratic classroom. Experiencing this other way of working and learning can ensure that students develop a critical attitude towards education in formulating what this way of working has taught and brought them.

Not everyone was feeling comfortable in determining the concept and design together as a group. Some experienced the degree of freedom as too open, as too vague and therefore too difficult for making decisions about any concept and design. But shared responsibility kept all of them motivated in producing a lot of designs for the joint work meetings, sharing individual ideas. As a group, they democratically chose to execute Sam's design, consisting of heaven and earth and everything in between. Imaginative subjects where every student definitely could make a matching part for.

My role as a teacher involved guiding the entire democratic process and providing feedback during the design and implementation phase on the practical feasibility of the designs, in terms of approach, materials and techniques and in solving problems.

In addition, I believe that teaching in a social way, by sharing identities, encouraging every student in learning through others, also demonstrates of applying Critical pedagogy, namely as a counterpart to the existing traditional ways of educating at our Highschool. In showing my students, teachers and management this other, social way of education as a fertile, valuable and respectful way of teaching.

On the question whether dialogue encouraged my students in participation and engagement, the answer is yes. Some of the Check-ins were specifically developed for dialoguing, for sharing personal stories about identity. In all Check-ins sharing personal stories I asked my student to prepare some text or art work at home, not feeling any pressure of others, using their own imagination, being close to their inner selves. In all cases all student came in prepared, handing over their art works at the beginning of the exercise or brought in cheat sheets for reading out loud their stories and in some cases doing it by heart. I think the level of engagement is very diverse, some of the personal stories were somewhat surfaced level, sharing their love for hobbies and shopping, others were more substantive in sharing stories about joining scouting because of the love for nature and a story about attending a first demonstration fighting for women rights. In some cases I think superficiality is due to not wanting to share anything personal with the group. In other cases I imagine, some think they have little to share or think it's weird to share real personal stories. What I noticed was that the more often we did a Check-in sharing identity, the more extensive the stories became and the more students dared to share.

Finally answering my research question: has communal learning contributed in becoming an authentic/ being an authentic art class student. I think this is partly true. When I look at the students who were already more open and unbiased towards others at the beginning of this research, I observed that this different way of learning was very suitable for them and that their already revealed authenticity has become even more apparent. These students were already close to their

inner selves and have been able to appeal to this even more by using their identity, for the purpose of making art.

Another group has experienced great personal growth in sharing their identity. By being vulnerable and experiencing discomfort, they have come further in expressing themselves in their artwork. They have shown courage to get closer to their inner selves and to convey their sense of insecurity through their art. Within this community, these students have become a very strong group in expressing themselves. One of their artworks, a video, won a prize and received a lot of publicity. With publishing this video online as one of the winners, students however have been confronted and have been embarrassed by the reactions of others from outside the community watching their video. The proud feeling about this authentic video has unfortunately quickly been destroyed by the influence of the harsh 'outside' world. The strength of showing vulnerability at a High school has its risks.

Lastly, I would like to discuss the group that has more difficulty with this different way of learning and working. A smaller group of students who don't like to work together with others outside their own group of friends and show less engagement in joint Check-in exercises. This is also visible in their practical work. Their work shows little expressiveness or a deeper underlying thought or message. In the work of these students, I still see little to no authenticity in terms of concept or execution at the end of this research. Getting closer to their inner selves is not what they want to pursue in my lessons, they mainly just want to make 'beautiful' art and especially not want to complicate things.

This Research Project in revealing authenticity with my art students by introducing a social way of learning was quite idealistic and naïve in nature. This approach fitted me well as a positive and loving person connected with my sense of self-esteem, that I as a person, or teacher, could make the difference for someone, specifically a student. Starting this project from the point of view of love - love for my profession - love for the arts and love for my students into developing a method that represents this love - . For me, seeking connections between students and between teacher and students through art-based Check-ins is a sign of love.

Unfortunately, the method has not caused the connections as I hoped and imagined, in the spirit of new friendship. Students do see more similarities in each other and enjoyed knowing more about each other due to the Check-ins, but generally maintained their fixed groups of friends working alongside each other and not, as I had hoped, more social bridging between established groups. I've met most of the conditions to reveal student's authenticity and have challenged and inspired students in this, but one of the conditions I've underestimated is the feeling of tension experienced by students in an educational setting, the feeling of being judged or misinterpreted even in my 'social and more democratic classroom'. My ignorance in sensing an open and good atmosphere myself in the classroom, has brought about a completely different charge for some of my students, full of negative feelings (feelings of insecurity, feelings of deception, feelings of exclusion, feelings of jealousy). Above all, the harsh opinions and judgments of students outside my classroom played an enormous role in whether or not my students can or want to reveal their authenticity. Although the relationship between students has not really been strengthened, my relationship between students has become stronger. I have noticed that in sharing personal stories a stronger bond of trust has occurred, sensing a different, more relaxed, natural attitude from students towards me as a teacher. Since I will be guiding this group to the final exam next school year, I will be able to continue in working further on the relationship among students, so that the revealing of students' authenticity can be more secured within this art class community.

In short, I'm looking back with pride on a period in which I challenged myself and the students to use a different, more social method of working and learning. Although some students found it difficult to

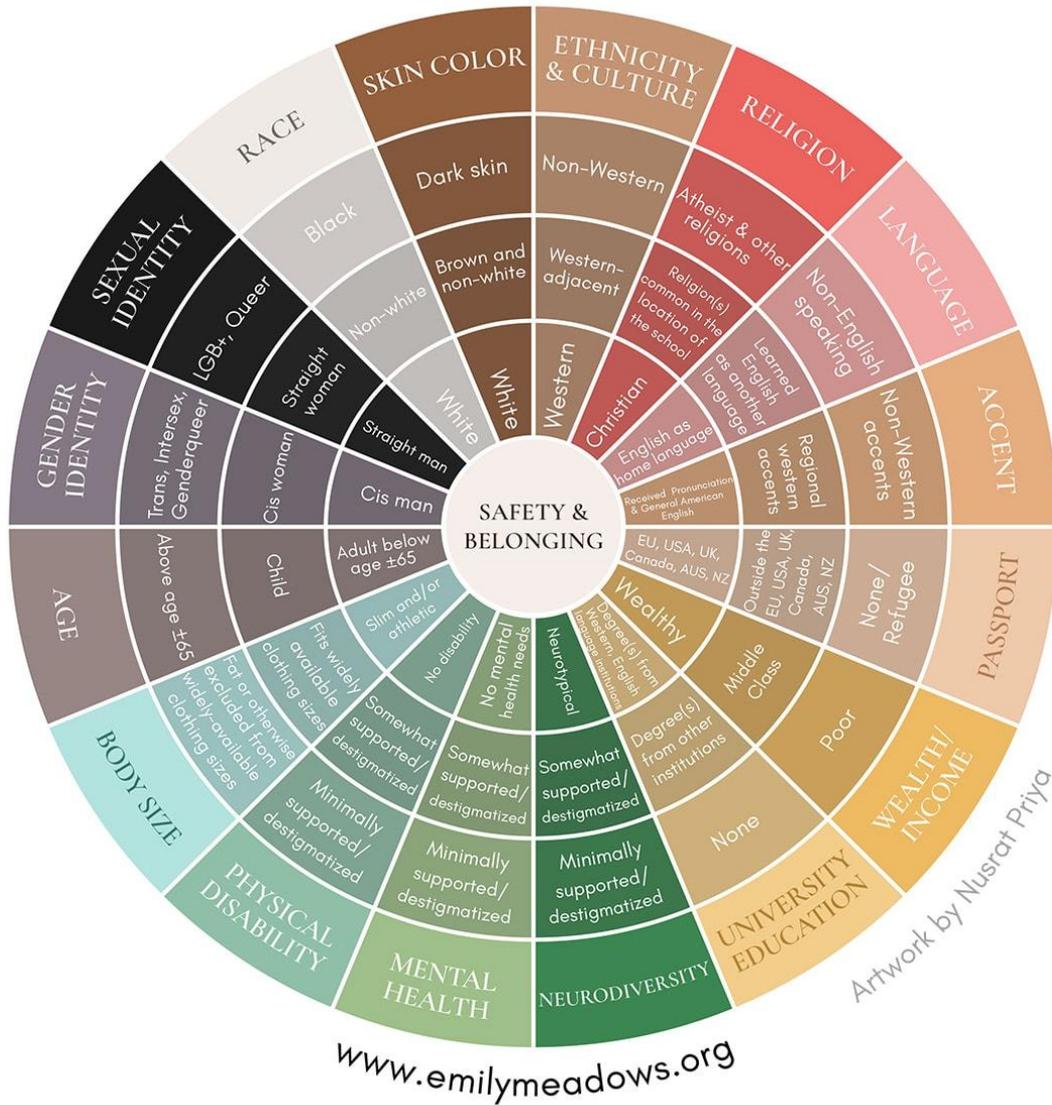
be vulnerable, which resulted in less personal growth, both socially and creatively. Revealing authenticity was not or hardly successful for them. However, by being part of this art learning community and participating in Check-ins and workshops, they had to behave more socially towards others. Yet their participation did not feel entirely natural or honest to other classmates and therefore did not suffice as a basis for an equal friendship/relationship between all students. Nevertheless, I do see an open and interested attitude towards each other among the majority of the group, this is palpable in the spontaneous contact with each other, despite the fact that they still work in permanent groups of friends in my classroom. In the work of this larger group of students I see a high degree of authenticity, in their creative process and in their artworks. As a result, artworks can be traced back to individual students and due to that show more depth and content, showing more vulnerability and love, the basis of this research project, where it all started from,.....LOVE.

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APPENDIX

International School Wheel of Safety & Belonging



(Meadows, 2025)

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

APPENDIX B1 ASSIGNMENT 'GROUP CHANDELIER'

Assignment 'Group Chandelier'

Time: approx. 12 hours + 6 homework hours/workshop hours

Delivery date: Thursday December 13th

Objective: introduction to the way of working, connecting, collaborating, creating one piece of work together

Assignment type: 3D

Material: free

End product: chandelier composed of separate, individual parts

Photo: installation MCA Chicago by Mexican architecture and design studio Pedro y Juana



The Assignment

The aim of this group assignment is to learn to collaborate with each other. Everyone designs a part of the chandelier, all parts together form the chandelier. The separate parts form a dialogue and connect with each other. You will have to consult with each other and coordinate how you let the parts flow into each other, think about shapes, colours, size, textures, etc. In this assignment you may work entirely according to your own ideas and fantasy, the separate, adjacent parts may be completely different, unique, but,..... there must be an overflow, connection from one part to the other. A visible collaboration must have been entered into. Your task is to consult, coordinate, fit and measure well with each other so that there is a connection between the workpieces.

APPENDIX B2 ASSIGNMENT 'MODERN NOMAD'

Assignment 'Modern Nomad'

Time: 11 lessons + 6 hours of homework time/workshop hours

Delivery date: March 29th

Objective: thinking about current issues, getting to know (interior) architecture, converting ideas into a prototype, developing your own material.

Type of assignment: architecture, design and prototype 2D and 3D

Final product: research in dummy + scale model 1:25 (extensive shape/colour/material research/experiment) and prototype house with 3 living spaces.



A new hype has emerged in America since the crisis; 'Tiny houses'. People are going back to basics and consciously opting for a small house (max. 28m²). The mini houses are self-designed and meet all the conveniences and comforts. The houses are completely movable and therefore often not connected to the regular water, gas, electricity network. Due to the choice of building materials, type of energy consumption and their small surface area, the houses fit perfectly into the current idea of sustainable construction. Furthermore, the owner does not need a building plot and the house can be purchased with a very low (or sometimes no) mortgage. This craze has now also reached the Netherlands and people have united in 'Tinyhouse Nederland' [Tinyhouse Nederland](#). The first houses are currently being built in Almere.

The Assignment:

Design a 'Tiny house' with a floor area of max. 28 m², height max. 4 m, that meets all living requirements. In addition to your research and designs, you make a prototype on a scale of 1:25 (height max. 16 cm, door = 8 cm). Show that you have done research into existing designs and smart solutions, for example, think of your own material to build with. The emphasis is on shape, material (innovative/ sustainable/ recycle/ reuse/ biobased construction) and space.

Assignment 'I/We had a Dream...'

Time: 10 lessons + (limited) homework time

Delivery Date Wednesday 19 June (classroom/by email)

Objective: introduction to new media (audiovisual techniques) as an art medium

Type of assignment: film/photography/sound, 3D installation



Final product: film/large format photo/photo series with attention to presentation/photoshop/mixed media/digital/hybrid

In the 20th and 21st centuries, many useful media have been added for the artist. This started with photography, then film, but now also with programming or intelligent technology. Some works of art can even respond to the viewer. You understand that these new resources are developing very quickly and have become an indispensable part of the art world. Sometimes new media are used in combination with older ones (see 'hybrid art' pp. 133-135 in 'art is blue'). The great thing about these media is that you can create a world for your viewer, which makes the art experience deeper. For example, you can play with time (see 'Time' pp. 106-109 in 'art is blue'). A basic knowledge of Photoshop and film editing (Première) is therefore almost indispensable for today's art student.

The Assignment:

Create a work with film or photography in which you use the medium to take your viewer along in 'your dream' in the freest sense of the word. Ensure a certain layering in your work so that you emphasize the experience (art & entertainment) for your viewer and you intrigue the viewer. Your final work is a film edit of approx. 1-2 min., a large format photo or a photo series of at least 3 small format photos or an elaboration of your choice. Finally, think carefully about the presentation form of your work.

Dimensions: A2/A3/1-2 min. Time distribution: submission and presentation week 25

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C1 IMAGES ART-WORKS

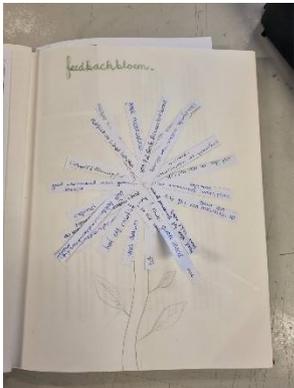
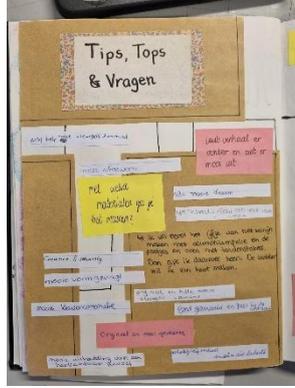
-Honouring all my students
by showing their beautiful artworks of the assignments 'Group Chandelier' and 'Modern Nomad'
in this section-



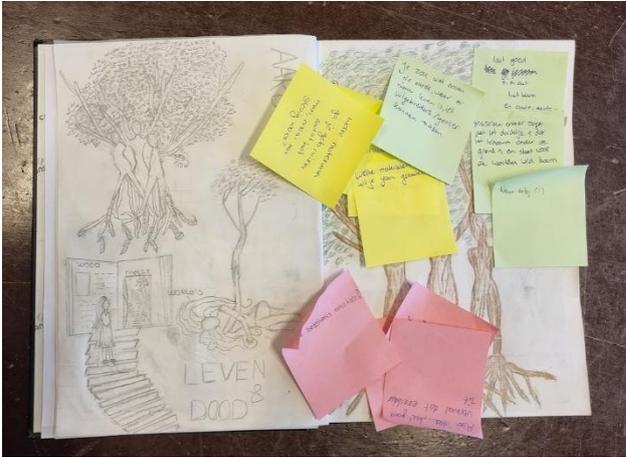


APPENDIX C2 IMAGES CHECK-INS





APPENDIX C3 IMAGES PROCESS PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS



APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D CHECK-INS

APPENDIX D1

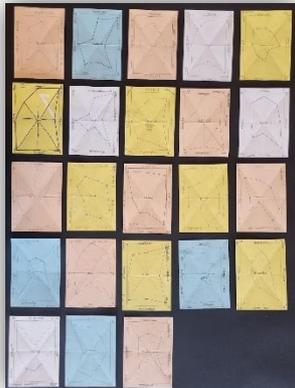
Check-in 'Speeddate'	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Speeddate</i></p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wat heb je gedaan in de zomervakantie?</i> • <i>Waar bestaat je familie uit?</i> • <i>Heb je huisdieren?</i> • <i>Welke hobby's heb je/ welke sport beoefen je?</i> • <i>Wat is je favoriete feestdag? Waarom?</i> • <i>Welke zanger(s)/band(s) vind je leuk/mooi?</i> • <i>Wat staat er op je bucketlist/ wat zou je heel graag een keer willen doen?</i> • <i>Waar zie je jezelf over 15 jaar?</i> <hr/>
Keywords:	Start of the schoolyear, new beginnings, getting acquainted, accessible, playful
Purpose/intentions:	Getting acquainted with all students attending the subject of arts at the start of the schoolyear
Identity Level	Micro-level
Working methods:	Dialogue One on One
Preparation teacher:	<p>Share homework: sending your students speeddate questions in advance, for preparing themselves not feeling overwhelmed or blocked in having conversation with new people And setting up tables for one on one conversations Use a timer to start and to end the conversations</p> <p>Notions: Teacher is one of the participants One of the pairs stays put while others move on clockwise In turns questions and answers are given Questions can be chosen randomly/ spontaneous</p> <p>My questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you do during summer holidays? • Who are your relatives? • Do you have any pets? • What are your hobbies/sports? • What is your favorite holiday? Why? • Which singer(s)/band(s) do you like/love? • What is on your bucket list/what would you really like to do? • Where do you see yourself in 15 years?
Preparation students:	Prepare questions/answers
Duration:	70 minutes
Description:	This first lesson of the schoolyear students have little 2 min. conversations for getting acquainted with each other. Initiating an accessible method for

	conversating with all classmates, not only friends. Every 2 minutes the group rotates and meets somebody new.
Experience:	For students it was a fun and easy accessible way to meet classmates for the first time or less exiting because of the targeted questions, and prepared answers.

APPENDIX D2

<p>Check-in 'Reasons and expectations choosing art'</p>		
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Mapping out the classroom, reason of choosing, expectations, art as a subject</p>	
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>This type of Check-ins gives students and teacher insight into the initial situation of the group at the start of the school year. What students think about art, what role does art play in their daily lives, what are the reasons for choosing art and what expectations do they have of the art subject for this year</p>	
<p>Identity Level</p>	<p>Micro-level</p>	
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Writing Speaking from the heart Individual</p>	
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Providing Post-its</p>	
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>15-20 minutes</p>	
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Asking students to write down their reasons and expectations for choosing the arts a subject</p>	
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>Most of the students shared loving making art. Being creative was also a reason for choosing the arts as a subject. Another reason was art being different, more practical compared to the other subjects; choosing art as an outlet between all the theoretical subjects. Expectations where very divers from becoming better in making art and nice assignments to working together and conviviality.</p>	

APPENDIX D3

Check-in 'Positioning art in your life'	
	
Keywords:	Mapping out the classroom, positioning, providing insight, looking for resemblance, creating connections, art, diagram
Purpose/intentions:	This type of Check-ins gives students and teacher insight into the initial situation of the group at the start of the school year. What students think about art, what role does art play in their daily lives, what are the reasons for choosing art and what expectations do they have of the art subject for this year.
Identity Level	Micro-Level
Working methods:	Art-based Drawing Analysing Reflecting Individual
Preparation teacher:	Cutting coloured paper, postcard size Draw an example on the board and fill out the words to use in the exercise: art in the middle, along the side: interesting, meaningful, challenging, fun, necessary, important, difficult
Preparation students:	None
Duration:	15 minutes
Description:	In this exercise students draw a diagram by filling in the words: interesting, meaningful, challenging, fun, necessary, important and difficult along the side and art in the middle. With setting dots how much the words alongside personally relates to the arts/the subject of the arts and connecting those dots with lines, a diagram appears.
Experience:	This exercise provided me a lot of insight into students' engagement and perspective within the arts represented in clear and very divers diagrams. Most of my students experienced art as fun and challenging, fewer as necessary or important.

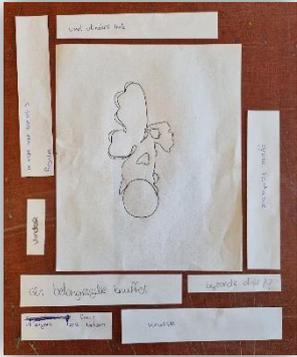
APPENDIX D4

Check-in 'Pin Art'		
Keywords:	Making connections, name game, playful, fun, accessible, airy, group-activity	
Purpose/intentions:	Making physical connection with new classmates	
Identity Level	Meso-level	
Working methods:	Making connections Learning Playing Groupwise	
Preparation teacher:	Pul aside tables, making space in the classroom Forming a big circle of students Bringing 6 skeins of yarn	
Preparation students:	None	
Duration:	20-30 minutes	
Description:	Standing in a big circle, with 4-6 skeins of yarn (depending on the group-size). Dividing the skeins among students, asking them to make eye-contact and call out a name of a student, followed by throwing the skein to that student. The receiver of the skein wraps the yarn around her legs (knee-high) and calls out another/new name and throws the skein again, and so on, till a (dense) web is created, as a symbol of this newly started community.	
Experience:	In the beginning students were excited, not knowing what to expect, what to do. After explaining what to do, it all went by itself. Calling students, making eye-contact or the other way around and throwing the skein of yarn. The more skeins were thrown the more dynamic this working method was. Student were having fun, laughing, experiencing this Check-in as a playful way to get to know each other.	

APPENDIX D5

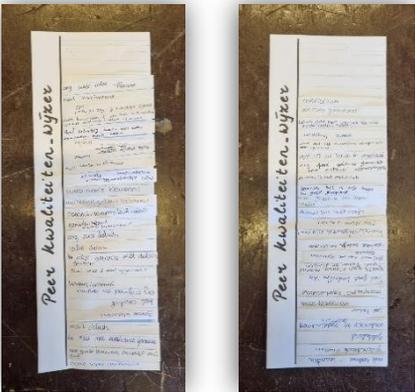
Check-in 'Describing yourself to others'		
Keywords:	Sharing identity	
Purpose/intentions:	Describing yourself to others in way you want to be seen or how other see you.	
Identity Level	Micro-level	
Working methods:	Writing Reading out loud Groupwise	
Preparation teacher:	Providing paper	
Preparation students:	None	
Duration:	15-20 minutes	
Description:	Asking students to describe themselves to others who don't know them. After writing down their own description, they one by one read out loud their descriptions in the classroom.	
Experience:	Some students made an extensive, detailed or substantive description, other were more superficial or pointed out general characteristics, not specific, personal enough.	

APPENDIX D6

<p>Check-in 'Precious Object'</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Exploring identities, sharing identities, sharing personal interests, sharing personal stories, showing vulnerability, feeling connection</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>Students exposing themselves. I imagined my students to be confused with the assignment, asking themselves for what use to make this drawing of a precious object and also of them having considerations about what certain object to pick out. I thought of them wondering, what specific object will communicate them the best, thinking, choosing, maybe comparing, maybe changing or even reconsidering all of their potentially suitable objects. Perhaps talking to friends or peers about it, discussing what to choose, even though I asked not to do this. At the same time asking myself whether they would really have the guts to expose themselves to me or to others with this cherished object. And if their choices be truthfully made, maybe revealing, sensitive, intimate or strategically chosen, neutral or even superficial? Do or don't they have considerations about what others will think of them, picking out this particular object, even if it's strange, childish, or too serious? Will these thoughts force them sketch/ draw something completely different?</p>
<p>Identity Level</p>	<p>Meso-identity</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Art-based Drawing Storytelling Analysing Reflecting Exposure Groupwise</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Mark as an homework assignment Cut small pieces of paper Set up the classroom with two long/big groups of tables Divide the group in two by a grouping tool</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>Homework exercise for students</p>

Duration:	30-50 minutes
Description:	<p>Draw or make an outline of a cherished object/an object that says something about yourself that others don't know yet.</p> <p>I asked them to sketch/draw or outline of a precious object at home as a homework assignment so they could think longer about what object to choose. By giving them longer time to think about the assignment, I hoped for a conscious choice of the object taken along.</p> <p>During the exercise I divided the group in two with the magister grouping tool and let them take a seat in their groups at long tables, sitting opposite to each other. The students had to hand in all the outlines/sketches to me so that I could place them in the middle of the table myself without the students knowing who put down which sketch. All students were given pieces of paper which they had to write what the object says about its owner.</p> <p>After this part, the owner was able to read all the pieces. The owner then explains what the object means to her and then shares the most accurate and least accurate description with the group.</p>
Experience:	<p>Some students exposed themselves in a very vulnerable way in their revelations.</p> <p>Not only the explanations were quite revealing, but also the drawings itself. The way the owner drew her cherished object, the story behind it and the identity of its owner were visible in some ways.</p>
Reflections:	<p>The outcome of this exercise was positive and hopeful because of the sometimes very personal stories, the innocence and openness of some students. I hope, experiencing the sphere, the respect showed while sharing stories, will invite everybody for further exploring identities. I think all the considerations that the students have made by choosing their precious object have had a great reflective value. Asking themselves who they are through a cherished object that represents them and analyzing others through their precious objects.</p>

APPENDIX D7

<p>Check-in 'Naming someone's personal qualities through an artwork'</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Naming, personal qualities, identification, compliment, characteristics</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>Recognising and naming qualities of others, formulating a personal compliment</p>
<p>Identity Level</p>	<p>Meso-level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Analysing Complimenting Formulating Writing Individual</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Preparing your own 'Peer kwaliteiten' form Displaying all artworks on tables throughout the classroom Keep track of time</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>30-40</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Tell students what to do: look at an artwork of a peer, analyse its qualities, formulate this to a personal quality of its' maker/the student. Hand-out forms and ask students to put the form next to their artwork. Start with analysing an artwork of a peer, keep rotating till every artwork has been analysed.</p>
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>It was a very dynamic working method. Students were focused, taking their time but having difficulties formulating qualities they recognized in an artwork to personal qualities. Due to that the results are not that personal, but more general or superficial.</p>

APPENDIX D8

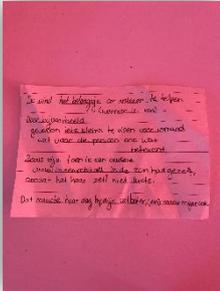
<p>Check-in 'Naming someone's personal qualities through an artwork' (iteration)</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Naming, personal qualities, identification, compliment, characteristics</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>Recognising and naming qualities of others, formulating a personal compliment</p>
<p>Identity Level</p>	<p>Meso-level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Analysing Complimenting Formulating Dialoguing Writing Groupwise</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Handing out Post-its Displaying all artworks on tables throughout the classroom Keep track of time</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>15-20</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Because of the more general/superficial results of the first 'Peer kwaliteiten' Check-in I am carrying out an iteration this earlier Check-in, in group form. More consultation takes place about what is a real personal quality and how this can be recognized through an artwork. Tell students what to do: look at an artwork, analyse its qualities, formulate this to a personal quality of its' maker/the student.</p>
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>The result of this iteration was more substantive in naming personal qualities. Intended as a personal compliment, to generate growth.</p>

APPENDIX D9

<p>Check-in 'Postcard'</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Storytelling, sharing personal stories, connection, listening, silence</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>Sharing stories I imagined my students wondering what medium to choose, asking themselves what others will choose, what size to work with, how detailed or extended they need to be. Thinking over their activity's, choosing what is easy, or interesting to work with and to talk about in class. Would they have thought about picking something worthwhile to impress others, or would they choose something convenient or something random not to stand out to much. I imagined some students enjoying making the postcard, spending time on it, being critical, is it good enough? Others working on it the day/ evening before art class, just doing their homework.</p>
<p>Identity level</p>	<p>Micro-Level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Art-based Storytelling Active listening Groupwise</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Mark as an homework assignment Set up the classroom with one big group of tables</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>Homework exercise for students</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>Just before the spring break I asked my art class students to make a postcard of the things that stood out during their coming spring break, as a Check-in for the first lesson after the break, a visual story as a starting point for conversation. The postcard could be a drawing, a collage, a photo, or whatever they could come up with.</p>
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>After spring break all students sat at a big table in the middle of the classroom, putting their postcards in front of them on the table. The little artworks were very divers, in using different sizes, different media. One by</p>

	<p>one asked them to show and share the story behind their little artworks. I experienced a lot of connectedness and openness in sharing each other's activity's. Everyone was silent, listening actively to the stories being told. After each story, I sometimes posed a question, or gave a comment about the artwork. As teacher of this group, member of the community, I felt an intimate setting in the classroom by sharing all their personal stories, I felt honoured, witnessing this.</p> <p>In some of the artworks I recognised some of the characters/ identities of the students.</p>
<p>Reflections:</p>	<p>I experienced this exercise as positive. I think the reflective aspect of this exercise is about exchanging personal values, interests and family-customs, what is important for me and what is it for others? I think my students gained more interest, insight in and understanding of each other with this exercise. Different identities, but showing a lot of common ground and connections in experiencing joy of little things, like being with family, in enjoying hobbies like hiking and baking and other activities of every single student. Intending to bring the group closer together by emphasizing resemblances instead of differences.</p>

APPENDIX D10

<p>Check-in 'Sharing Passions'</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Sharing identities, sharing personal interests, showing vulnerability, feeling connection, Critical pedagogy (scan), engagement/agency (scan)</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>For this Check-in I was inspired by reading bell hooks', Teaching Critical Thinking. She does not begin to teach in any setting without first laying the foundation for building community in the classroom. To do this, she says it is essential that teachers and students take time to get to know one another. One of her ways of getting to know her students is to write little personal stories with them and reading them out loud in class. She thinks a story, especially personal story, is one of those powerful ways to educate, to create community in a classroom. (hooks, 2010, p. 56)</p> <p>With this exercise I aim on encouraging critical thinking and a sense of agency in my classroom. With one by one revealing passions about themselves and listening to others makes them think more about their identity and reflect on who they are in performing their passions, who they are in school and how others see them, maybe intentionally changing this into how they want to be seen in my classroom. Hearing one another's personal experience in the classroom promotes an atmosphere of cooperation and deep listening.</p> <p>Translation text above: <i>I think it's important to help others (when I can). For example, by just doing something small for someone, which also means something to someone.</i> <i>Like for example for an older woman, who I had put in the sun because she couldn't do it herself. That hopefully made her day a little better (and) but mine too. (Anna)</i></p>
<p>Identity Level</p>	<p>Micro-Level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Art-based Storytelling Reading out loud Deep listening Dialoguing Critical pedagogy Group conversation</p>

Preparation teacher:	The teacher initiates the assignment by sharing her/his passion her/himself in an earlier lesson Mark as an homework assignment
Preparation students:	Homework exercise for students
Duration:	30-50 minutes
Description:	What is important to you? What/where do you feel involved in? (where do you want to make a stand for, where lies your heart / where do you feel passionate about/ where do you care about? Write a small text about this, how did this came about (name an incident / a situation) tell us how this involvement, this passion expresses itself in you?
Experience:	By setting the example need and describing some of giving them a little peak in my passion for helping animals in my actions in saving the wounded and shovelling of the dead animals of the road. I hoped in taking risk sharing with them my love and motif for helping animals in need, they too might dare to share other, maybe not previously shared, engaged passions with us. I made it an homework assignment to think about this further at home, perhaps to prepare a little cheat sheet for this Passion Check-in. After each story questions where posed, students showed themselves as curious, respectful, patient and active listeners.
Reflections:	In summery this exercise contributed to gaining more insight into the identity of others, in considering other perspectives and in shifting or dismantling our assumptions, belief and biases of others. From leaning outward into leaning inward, reflecting on own revelations in relation to those of other more active participants and opening up the possibility for social transformation within the art-classroom, perhaps even have a bigger scope outside of the art-classroom.

APPENDIX D11

<p>Workshop ‘Music as Inspiration’</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Music, inspiration, abstract, emotions, feelings, sensing, embodying, intuition</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>With these two workshops (music and dance)I aimed to enlighten my students with ways of finding inspiration. By offering workshops on a more abstract level of finding inspiration I hoped to invite them to explore other possibilities than the familiar ones they used to consult, like for instance Pinterest or other image based social media network and use those ideas as an example for what they want to make for their art projects. The workshops I want to try out are based on sensing and embodying inspiration through music and dance. My aim is changing their pedagogical habits of thinking in making them perceptive and more open minded for other ways of finding inspiration. I hope my students will become more authentic in making art; in expressing themselves based on their own memories, their own experiences, their own feelings and thoughts.</p>
<p>Identity level</p>	<p>Micro-Level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Art-based Deep listening Embodying Groupwise</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Make a playlist on Spotify with all different genres/types of music Grouping tables for 5-6 students Divide art-materials like watercolors, pastels, chalk, ink, charcoal and different sorts of brushes on the table groups Paper, cut up in a postcard size.</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>50-70 minutes</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>The exercise was only to focus on the music, listen to the music intensely, experiencing the music, feeling the emotions within the music; the sadness, the happiness, the peace, the joyfulness, the restlessness, the sphere it</p>

	<p>breaths out. Meanwhile translating their own feelings, thoughts and emotions on paper with all the material laying on the table in little artworks. I asked them to use a paper per song and to be silent during the exercise, not to guide or follow others in using certain materials, making their artistic choices, not taking any notice of others or the emerging artworks.</p>
<p>Experience:</p>	<p>While putting on the first track, I could feel, hear and sense the excitement, the curiousness and the rejection of some students. Laughing, still talking and making faces to each other, not really knowing how to start, how to surrender themselves to music, their feelings? Looking for references among others, how to act, what to do or how to do it 'wright'?</p> <p>After those first minutes of insecurity and hesitation students let down their guard and became more relaxed, more focused, disconnecting themselves from others, drawing, painting more intuitively, only hearing the music. I experienced this workshop as positive, because of its artistic value and of the underlying reflective component of it. My aim was to change their habits of thinking by introducing them to other, new ways of finding inspiration. With experiencing what it is like to use music as a subject, as a source of inspiration to transform feelings and emotions by making art themselves they've put into practice in this workshop.</p> <p>Telling a personal story based on their own embodied interpretation of six songs has all to do with the translation they make through their own identity. It values their personal associations and assumptions as a source, not using any already existing material (of others) to make their own authentic art.</p>

APPENDIX D12.1

<p>Workshop ‘Dance as Inspiration’</p>	
<p>Keywords:</p>	<p>Dance, music, inspiration, abstract</p>
<p>Purpose/intentions:</p>	<p>With these two workshops (dance and music) I aimed to enlighten my students with ways of finding inspiration. By offering workshops on a more abstract level of finding inspiration I hoped to invite them to explore other possibilities than the familiar ones they used to consult, like for instance Pinterest or other image based social media network and use those ideas as an example for what they want to make for their art projects. The workshops I want to try out are based on sensing and embodying inspiration through dance and music. My aim is changing their habits of mind, their habits of thinking in making them perceptive and more open minded for other ways of finding inspiration. I hope my students will become more authentic in making art; in expressing themselves based on their own memories, their own experiences, their own feelings and thoughts.</p>
<p>Identity level</p>	<p>Meso,- and Micro level</p>
<p>Working methods:</p>	<p>Dancing in pairs/as a group</p>
<p>Preparation teacher:</p>	<p>Prepare a lesson plan for the invited student dancer Pieces of paper with words Pieces of metal wire and cut up smaller pieces of clay</p>
<p>Preparation students:</p>	<p>Ask students to wear loose fitted clothes or sportswear</p>
<p>Duration:</p>	<p>50-70minutes</p>
<p>Description:</p>	<p>This was the second workshop for changing habits, inviting them to try other ways of finding inspiration. I planned this workshop to be led by a student dancer from Codarts (Appendix D11A). I booked half of the Auditorium for this special occasion. I asked Clara (the dancer) to differ in composition, work with the group as a whole and work in pairs. At the beginning of the workshop she gathered them in a big circle where the all could see each other. She started with all sorts of movements as a warming</p>

	<p>up. After this she let them draw little pieces of paper with words on it like, big, small, legs, water, curve, etc. Standing in the circle again she asked them two by two to share their word and showed a movement she thought would represent this word and we all performed this together by copying her. Then she asked the students for 10 minutes to practice movements they thought would suit their word. All went on moving, dancing, jumping, turning, practicing seriously. After this she positioned us in a circle again and she let us perform our little rehearsed dances, the other pairs clapping their hands.</p> <p>Because I wanted to use this dancing experience as a direct source of inspiration I had prepared buckets with pieces of metal wire and cut up smaller pieces of clay to use as a pedestal. The exercise was making spatial sketches of movements they saw or performed themselves. While sitting on the floor, in smaller groups they went on bending, folding and cutting the material till it represented a movement.</p>
Experience:	<p>I also experienced this dance workshop as positive. I was very lucky with the student dancer of Codarts. She was very approachable for the students and me. And she had the ability to improvise and react with movements instantly. Her chosen movements were accessible and enjoyable for everyone in the group.</p> <p>The interpretation with the little pieces of paper was her idea, partly this created a combination of watching her, watching each other, making movements with each other and practising and performing movements in pairs. She organised this in a very safe and fun way, so students didn't feel like they were being forced, it felt more like doing something fun together, something harmonious. The auditorium was quite dark, which also contributed to this safe atmosphere.</p> <p>The result of finding inspiration in dance was directly visible in the spatial sketches the students made. Their reactions while making these sketches differed a lot. While Anais told me just doing something, Sam performed her sketch in real, so I could see the resemblance myself and Elizabeth referred in her sketch to the movement of the letter O she performed in pairs. I think this ties in with appealing to students' authenticity. Evoking movements of dance based on their own experiences, their own memories by embodying dance themselves.</p>

APPENDIX D12.2

<i>Lesson plan Workshop 'Dance as Inspiration'</i>		
Duration	Activity	Learninggoal
5min	Intro and warming up	
30 min	Students dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can apply/experience/feel different dance poses/movements. • The student can think of/perform dance movements in pairs.
30 min	Students sketch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can use dance/movement as a source of inspiration for a spatial work. • The student can translate dance/movement into a practical processing in metal.
5 min	Workmeeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can connect their own spatial sketches to dance/movement. • The student can reflect on the offered possibilities of finding/searching for inspiration. • The student can store and apply acquired experiences in a creative process.

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E STUDENT EVALUATIONS

QUESTION 1

How do you experience starting in a new group composition or cluster? Does it bring stress or uncertainty, or rather curiosity and/or enthusiasm? Explain.

- It really depends on the people in my old and new class. Honestly, I'm not a big fan of the current class composition because I've had bad experiences with almost half of the class.
- Normally, such a transition is already stressful, but this makes it even worse. Luckily, I do have friends I can sit with and work with for group assignments.
- Starting in a new group often initially brings uncertainty. I'm usually a bit nervous, but once I get started, I find that it actually brings enthusiasm. I also notice that the more I do it, the less stress I feel.
- A bit of nervousness when I know I don't know anyone, but that's rarely the case. Otherwise, I don't feel strongly either way.
- I was curious and enthusiastic because I really enjoyed art in year 3. But I also became a bit insecure because the assignments were quite difficult.
- I'm always curious who's in the class and whether I know them. I do get stressed if I don't know anyone or don't have friends to sit with.
- Enthusiasm and a little bit of stress.
- I find it exciting, but it always works out in the end.
- Depends if I know who I'll be with. If I know there's at least one good friend, I don't mind. But if I don't know anything about the group, it does cause me a lot of stress.
- Depends on how I feel about the cluster at that moment. Right now, a new composition in my base class would bring enthusiasm, but a change in most clusters would bring stress. Change is always scary, because it can always get worse instead of better—you never know who you'll end up with.
- I usually enjoy having a new cluster because it helps me meet more people. But I do like knowing at least a few people—it gives me more confidence.
- If I know in advance that at least one friend will be in the cluster, I'm fine with it. Otherwise, I really dread it.
- I feel neutral about it. I don't mind being in a new cluster. I do prefer to sit with people I already know, because I've 'chosen' my friends very deliberately and they're important to me.
- I'm very social so I get along fine with new people, but I usually don't feel really understood by them.
- I didn't find it very stressful, since I was with a lot of my friends. But I was excited to meet new people and see their ideas.
- I actually find a new composition more stressful.
- I find it a bit difficult, because sometimes you have to make new friends. If I start in a new cluster and don't know anyone, it's harder than when I already know people.

QUESTION 2

Did you find the Check-ins, workshops, and group assignments in art class helpful to get to know the group (students and teacher)? Explain.

- I honestly remember very little of it, even after trying to recall. What I do remember mostly distracted from making art itself, so I can't really judge it well.
- Yes, it was a good way to get in touch with the class. Normally, we always stick to our own groups, and now we were encouraged to step out of them.
- I think so. Without the assignments, I wouldn't have gotten to know some classmates better.
- Some I still don't know, but it certainly didn't hurt.
- Sometimes, but I think there could be more fun Check-ins.
- A little bit. I didn't really learn much more about others than I already knew. I already knew almost everyone in the group. I only occasionally recognized something in others. Mostly, you think about yourself and what others think of your work or words, so I didn't really retain what everyone said or made about themselves.
- Not always, because some Check-ins were just focused on your own task.
- Not necessarily to get to know each other, but they did offer different insights from classmates on the subject.
- Not really. I don't think people paid much attention to those they didn't know well.
- Some Check-ins did help, but others didn't. Sometimes the questions were more personal, and sometimes they were more superficial.
- I think especially at the start they helped a lot to get to know everyone and made it easier to start conversations.
- No, not really. Sometimes they were fun, but I didn't remember anything new about classmates.
- A bit. I don't remember much, though I do know I quickly learned everyone's names. Still, I don't feel like I got to know the people themselves. I felt most of the class did the Check-ins without much joy. Often you had to prepare them in your own time, which took the fun out.
- They didn't really lead to personal conversations. Mixing the class or groups also backfired.
- People then didn't feel like being friendly. I think it works better to do something fun with the whole class in a relaxed way.
- Not really, but it did bring new insights and inspiration.
- Sometimes helpful, but often it came at the expense of time for your sketchbook.
- You did get to know people in the class a bit better, but I don't think it necessarily strengthened the group bond.

QUESTION 3

Did you find the Check-ins, workshops, or group assignments helpful in breaking or changing your own habits/patterns? Explain.

- As far as I remember, no. Also, I know not everyone was honest during the conversations about who they are and what they stand for. That doesn't help.
- I wouldn't say the assignments changed me significantly, but they did help me be more social during lessons.
- No, I didn't really need that, so it didn't happen.
- Not really, only the painting assignment with ecoline was inspiring. So it depended on the task.
- No, I didn't notice that I changed my habits or patterns. Sometimes I recognized my own patterns more, but I didn't change them.
- No, I just saw them as assignments.
- Yes, I got different ideas from others that I could build on.
- No, I can't think of anything I changed because of them.
- Not me personally, but I can imagine it worked for others.
- The assignments with music and dance helped me find inspiration in a different way.
- Not that I know of. I didn't enjoy art more last year. This wasn't really because of the Check-ins, though.
- Not really, most Check-ins weren't that deep. If they were, I didn't go too deep into them, because they were shared with the whole class and not everyone needs to know personal things about me. So I wasn't focused on that, and I wouldn't say I broke patterns.
- Yes, as I said above, it helped me find new inspiration, etc.
- Not really, because you didn't have to do things that forced you out of habits.
- No, they were just tasks to complete, I didn't behave differently because of them.

QUESTION 4

Did you experience working and learning in the art classroom last school year as pleasant or unpleasant? What caused this? Explain.

- Working in an art classroom is nice. You don't have to sit at a table facing a smartboard, and you can walk around if you want to. It is a bit annoying, though, that you have to put your bag away every lesson. Sometimes you have to walk to your bag four times during class to get or put things away.
- I found it very pleasant last year. I always thought the art classroom had a nice and cozy atmosphere, where I could talk comfortably but also relax a bit (especially after more boring or sleepy classes). I also really liked moments like when you brought tea and cookies for your birthday—it always added to a good atmosphere.
- Pleasant. All my friends and acquaintances are in the art class and I love the subject.
- Pleasant, except sitting on those stools for a long time is uncomfortable.
- Both pleasant and unpleasant. It's nice to have lots of space with large tables where no one is watching you and you can do your own thing. However, the stools get uncomfortable over time, especially when trying to focus during instruction. That really distracts me.
- Pleasant, classmates were nice.
- Yes, it was always very cozy.
- Yes. It's a large space where you can also take space, so that was nice for working. Also, you could just sit with the people you chose yourself, so I was always with my friends.
- I mostly experienced it as pleasant. There was enough freedom and support, and it was fun in the class.
- I experienced it as pleasant. I liked the atmosphere, and I felt free to work independently in the workspace outside class time. I felt I could ask questions and that I was supported in developing my project.
- Yes, because we could sit in groups.
- Pleasant. I think art is one of the nicest subjects. I really like that you can chat while you work. Especially on long school days, it makes the day lighter. I also like that you can choose where to sit, and if you need something or need inspiration, you can just walk around and talk to others.
- Pleasant. It's a big classroom and you sit in a group, which makes it easy to ask for help or share ideas.
- Pleasant. You sat with people you liked and could do your own thing.
- I found it very pleasant because the atmosphere in the class was good and I was with nice people.

QUESTION 5

Did you notice a difference in the teacher's role during art lessons (3D-art) compared to last school year?

- No.
- No?
- I did notice that teachers are now a bit more involved with the students and their projects and what we want to make. This was also somewhat the case in 3D-art, but the teachers were a bit less involved then.
- I don't remember.
- Yes, in 3D-art the assignments were much clearer. Now things are more vague, which gives you more freedom, but I didn't really like that.
- Yes, this year I notice that the teacher is more involved in the content of the assignments compared to last year, where it was more about visual guidance. This year the teacher helps more with brainstorming and developing ideas, while last year they helped more with the actual making of the art.
- No.
- Not really in the teacher's role, although for some assignments we were given more freedom and for others more support. I do notice more attention from the teacher for ideas and work, and questions are answered more thoroughly. You really get good guidance.
- I noticed that the teacher paid a lot of attention to the group atmosphere. There was a lot of attention to giving and receiving feedback. We were also challenged to justify our choices during the process.
- No, I didn't notice anything.
- Not really. I only had Ms. Menthen, and I don't notice much difference, except that in year 5 she lets us work more independently. I like that.
- A little, more support during the creation process and generating ideas.
- A bit, they are a bit less involved now.
- Our teacher helped us well, but there's no difference from last year.

QUESTION 6

Did you experience last year's art lessons as more social and democratic/equal? Explain.

- Not really. It didn't feel much different. It's not very social, but that might be because of the small friend groups that aren't always friendly toward other groups in the class.
- I found the lessons social and equal. There was always room for discussion and input.
- Not specifically. It was pretty much the same as previous years.
- A bit.
- I feel it was the same last year and this year. Our class is clearly divided into different groups, and that was the case both years. This year feels a bit more social because we know each other better.
- Yes, we often voted on the themes or how we would execute the assignments.
- Not necessarily.
- I don't really know how to interpret this question.
- More social than in the lower years. For example, we got more inspiration from each other.
- There was more attention to group assignments than in year 3, and also more discussion about each other's work. We had to make group decisions in the chandelier project. That definitely required social and democratic collaboration.
- No difference. Same class and same teacher.
- Not really, although it is noticeable that the same people always get high grades. For example, they get very high marks for originality, even though their work comes straight from Pinterest.
- I don't understand this question.
- Actually less social, because we had a substitute teacher for a large part of the year.
- No, not really.

QUESTION 7

Were you pushed out of your comfort zone during art lessons last year? How did it feel? Explain.

- Uhm... I don't really remember. There were assignments I didn't see the point of, which made me reluctant. But I already push myself out of my comfort zone regularly, so maybe I just didn't notice it much.
- Yes, in art lessons I had to work differently than I was used to—like in the style of my projects or through collaboration. It was difficult, but in the end useful.
- A little, like when we threw yarn balls to create a yarn web—but it was fine.
- A bit.
- Yes, during the Check-ins or opening assignments. Sometimes it didn't feel good. I get stressed quickly when I have to speak in front of the class or talk about myself. I felt judged, but eventually I got over it. In the moment though, it was uncomfortable.
- No.
- Yes, a little. I learned to think more creatively and develop ideas further than I normally would.
- Yes, I had to talk about my personal life with people I didn't know well. I'm not really a chatty or social person, so that wasn't great for me.
- Not really.
- Working together was sometimes difficult. I had to take others into account and couldn't work as precisely or manage my time as freely.
- Yes, kind of. I'm more comfortable with small assignments like the Check-ins.
- Yes, I like doing my own thing at my own pace. So when we had to work together as a whole class, I found that quite hard. In the end it went fine, and I realized sometimes you have to accept a less 'perfect' result if it means everyone could contribute.
- A little, I started thinking more outside the box and tried out techniques I wouldn't normally use.
- No, not really.
- Yes, a little. I didn't really like it because I prefer just working on assignments.

QUESTION 8

Did the assignments/Check-ins add value to the formation of the group?

- I think the idea is very valuable, but maybe the execution didn't work for me.
- Yes, I think the Check-ins helped bring the group closer together and step outside our usual groups a little.
- Not really, I just know people's names a bit better now...
- A bit.
- I didn't feel like the Check-ins or assignments influenced the group. The group quickly split into cliques and stayed that way.
- A little bit.
- Not necessarily, I felt it was more useful for your own process and inspiration.
- I don't think so. Everyone already had their own group from the start, and I don't believe those changed.
- Yes, a little. You interact more and get to know each other better.
- That's hard to say. It was nice to get to know each other a bit better, but I don't think it changed how much I interacted with others.
- Maybe, but not much. I don't think it made much difference for me, though it might have helped others.
- A little, it sometimes created funny moments, but I felt most people saw the Check-ins as forced connection rather than something genuine. At this age, those connections tend to form more naturally.
- A bit, I think there was slightly more contact beyond the usual groups. But the groups themselves remained, which is fine since we still often shared ideas.
- No, I still talk to the same people as before.
- I don't think so.

QUESTION 9

Did the Check-ins (sharing stories/information) lead to new connections—i.e., did you make new friendships or contacts?

- No.
- No.
- I didn't really make new contacts, but I did make some acquaintances and got to know others better.
- Yes, the speed-dating with each other was fun.
- No, I didn't make new contacts because I already knew many people in the class.
- No, but it does make it easier to reconnect with someone if you've already talked before.
- Not through the Check-ins, but more because other people started sitting at 'our' table in the classroom. That just happened naturally, like I mentioned earlier.
- Not really.
- No, I did get to know people better, but I didn't make new friends.

QUESTION 10

Did knowing more personal stories of others give you a more familiar/comfortable feeling in the group? Why or why not? Explain.

- No, because I can't remember any real stories.
- A bit, it helps you see people differently.
- If they were shared, I don't really remember them.
- Yes.
- Yes, I had already formed opinions about some people, but by learning more about them, I changed my view. That made things feel more familiar and comfortable, and my negative assumptions were reduced.
- Not really, it's more about the person than their stories.
- Kind of. Hearing others' stories helped me feel more comfortable sharing too—but only to a point.
- Not for me. Sharing personal things didn't really change my sense of connection in the group.
- Not really. Sometimes it felt more like "I'm doing this because I have to" rather than being genuine.
- Not really. I don't feel the atmosphere was very different from other subjects.
- Yes, but I think people will still mostly stick to their own friend groups.
- Honestly, I don't remember anyone's personal stories. It was nice to learn a little about everyone, so you're not completely clueless—but it didn't leave much impact. I only remember a few.
- Yes, because sometimes you hear things others struggle with that you can relate to. It's nice to know you're not the only one.
- Yes, you get to know each other better.
- Not really—sometimes yes, but mostly no.

QUESTION 11

What could the teacher have done more or differently to improve group connection?

- I don't really know. As I mentioned, this class wasn't very well-composed for this to work at all.
- I think the groups that always sit together could be separated more often. It's fun, but it does lead to strong subgroups in the class.
- I think the teacher has little control over that. If a student doesn't want to connect, that connection won't last. But the teacher can keep opportunities open—for example, suggesting students pair up with someone they don't know well for a group task. Those open to it will do it, those who aren't should be left alone. Forcing it helps no one.
- No idea.
- Break up the groups (not permanently or every lesson, but sometimes using a randomizer like in Magister so people have to work with others). And focus more on connecting through art rather than personal stories. We all chose this subject, so that's already a shared bond. Let us interact through painting, creating, drawing, brainstorming. One assignment, 'Music as a Source of Inspiration', was great and related to art. Doing that in mixed groups would be a good bonding activity.
- Nothing, it was done well.
- Not much.
- More assignments where you have to work with different people than you usually do.
- I don't really think we need more group bonding. Everyone has their group, but we can still communicate well when needed. It would be nice to be closer, but I don't know how.
- I don't know. I think people naturally stick to their friends.
- No idea.
- Maybe a class trip. Emphasize the art class as a distinct group, different from your biology cluster, for example. We're going on an exam trip together—it'd be nice to do something as a group up front.
- Not much, I think the group already grew closer and can work together. In the Singel Art assignment, for example, we collaborated well as a whole class.
- Let us form different groups.
- No, I think the bond came naturally because we've had the same class for two years.

QUESTION 12

Is there a different (more social) atmosphere in the art room, a sense of connection?

- No.
- Yes, it is a social place—more than other subjects.
- It does have a pleasant atmosphere for me.
- Pretty much the same, not especially connecting, but just cozy.
- Art is usually light-hearted and you can share a lot. The small groups people form are less connecting, but that's okay.
- Yes.
- Not really, it's still school.
- No idea.
- ?
- I do feel at home and can walk in easily. I know where everything is and what I can use. I can chat with others who are working, but I also do that in other subjects.
- You can talk more during art lessons—that's nice.
- I think art is a place where you talk about real things—not just small talk like in French class.
- That's because during art there's the freedom to be creative and laugh together. That's very pleasant.
- Not really?
- No, not really.
- Yes, it's a nice atmosphere in class.

QUESTION 13

Does the art room feel like a safe space? What contributes to this? Explain.

- No, because of the people who are there.
- Yes, it's very open and free, and if you need help it's always available.
- Yes, definitely—one of the more accepting places in school. Art and people in the art stream are generally more open-minded, in my opinion.
- Yes, you can be yourself.
- Yes and no. Within my own group (the people I always sit with), it feels safe and you can say whatever you want. But with the whole class, it's different—some classmates judge a lot, which makes the whole class feel less safe.
- Yes, because I don't feel judged.
- Yes, but no more than other classrooms at school.
- Yes, for me it's a place in between, where you can work more calmly and at your own pace.
- Yes, there are nice people and you can work comfortably.
- Yes, sitting in groups at large tables is nice.
- No idea.
- Yes, I think the art room is a nice place. I'm there often, so I know where everything is and how everything works. It might be helpful if younger students understood that senior art-students get priority in the workspace and with materials. That's not really considered right now.
- A little. It's still school, so it always feels a bit different. But it is a pleasant place to work.
- Yes.
- Yes, everyone just does their thing quietly and I like that.