

# **Making and Being- Experiential Creativity in Studio Arts**

## Annotated Bibliography

---

Prepared by Holly Ward

June, 2024



Making and Being- Experiential Creativity in Studio Arts- Annotated Bibliography by Holly

Ward is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

This Annotated Bibliography was created for my Academic Innovation Fund- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Category III pedagogical research study.

As a Professor of Visual Arts with a focus on Studio Arts, my Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grant aimed to assist in the development of student-centred, holistic, embodied, creative pedagogies. My research sought to develop a deeper awareness of what 'holistic pedagogy' is, and why this might matter, as well as some guiding principles and strategies for its implementation in the Studio Arts classroom. In light of the growing 'epidemic' of youth depression and anxiety, my project sought to establish pathways to not only support these students, but to shift the focus of the Studio Arts classroom towards integrated learning, personal development, and community engagement.

The term 'holistic' means that the parts of a given system are intimately interconnected, that they are understandable only in relation to the whole system. A holistic approach to teaching acknowledges that teaching is not merely the act of imparting information, but that learning happens through many different channels, direct and indirect, often simultaneously. When discussing creative pedagogies, holistic approaches acknowledge the multitudinous pathways to developing creative attunement, such as movement, spatial awareness, breathing patterns, interpersonal connection, etc... Creative artistic expression is therefore a product of global cognitive integration. How can our classrooms promote and enhance these processes, helping our students become the most engaged, empowered, and actualized individuals they can be? How might these pedagogical frameworks enhance not only student wellness, but our communities at large?

The research performed for my SoTL grant allowed me to explore the growing body of research examining new understandings of cognitive awareness, and how through holistic, student-centred, embodied approaches to learning, subjects can not only enhance creativity, but can develop individual well-being, strengthen community, and decrease the forces of alienation of our time, and to understand how to support our students better.

Holistic, student-centred learning environments can provide more than resilience in our students, they can also allow for future-oriented innovation in curricula, research, and community engagement in AMPD, and across York's diverse curricula.

These strategies are aligned with principles of equity, inclusion, decolonization and sustainability, in that students are provided pathways to sincere expression, to develop deeper awareness of their place within community, and to consider their potential to contribute to sustainable futures.

### **Annotated Bibliography:**

Blum, Susan D.(ed). *Ungrading Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)*, West Virginia University Press, Morgantown, 2020.

As current research shows, the pressures to obtain ‘good grades’ has been found to impede deep learning and integration of new knowledge, while increasing anxiety and depression in many students. This book describes how many elite medical schools have moved from traditional grading evaluation systems, to ungraded pedagogies, and offers concrete examples and case studies of how to implement ungrading methods into many different curricula.

This book confirms new pathways in post-secondary education, and I would consider it an essential read for any educator who wants to support student wellness, while fostering student excellence.

Burton, Judith M. “The Configuration of Meaning: Learner-Centered Art Education Revisited”, in L. H. Campbell & S. Simmons (Eds.), *The Heart of Art Education: Holistic approaches to creativity, integration, and transformation*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 2012.

In this chapter, Burton clearly outlines the primal relationship between human creativity and identity formation, making links between the experiential act of working with materials to change them into something with form and meaning as being essential to the development of individual agency. She also emphasizes the importance of non-verbal modes of communication through aesthetic objects, which then perform significant cultural roles, including those of ceremony, and articulations of the divine.

She goes on to describe how creative acts benefit many stages of cognitive development, from early childhood through adolescence, and into adulthood. This research helps a post-secondary teacher understand the deeply personal relationships each student may have to their creative outputs, and the role these acts play in their identity-formation as members of

society, and reminds us of our responsibilities to honour this process as we help shape and inform this work.

Cameron, Julia. *Walking in this World: The Practical Art of Creativity*, Penguin House Publishing, New York, 2003.

Cameron's book offers a step-by step programme to develop creative attunement, providing a method of sustained and scaffolded processes, procedures and activities, which are then analysed through journaling a reflection exercises. This programme is adaptable enough to suit many different personalities and objectives, however, each user of this book may benefit from the clear instructions and stated goals of each step in this 'creative journey'.

As author of the seminal book on creative development 'The Artist's Way', Cameron is considered a leading voice in the development of adult creativity. While her approach may not seem cutting-edge, it still offers many useful tips and strategies for today's studio arts classroom.

Campbell & Simmons (Eds). *The Heart of Art Education: Holistic approaches to creativity, integration, and transformation*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 2012.

This is a very comprehensive textbook on the importance of holistic principles in creative pedagogies. Consisting of 33 chapters, each written by different researchers and educators, many perspectives and approaches to the topic are offered, along with practical information and examples of practice in the classroom. Commencing with an introduction which tackles such lofty topics as the human requirement of art and the responsibility of the educator to support its development, the chapters in this book provide an extensive understanding of what holistic education is, and how essential these approaches are to the development, not only of artists, but of citizens.

I consider this book to be an essential read for anyone interested in how to expand approaches to creative pedagogies in ways that support overall well-being and personal

development in students. The depth of research and innovation in test studies offered here have the potential to deeply influence one's thinking about the role of the arts educator.

Coholic, Diana A. ; Eys, Mark ; McAlister, Heather ; Sugeng, Sheri ; Smith, Dayna. "A Mixed Method Pilot Study exploring the benefits of arts-based mindfulness group intervention with adults experiencing anxiety and depression", *Social work in mental health*, 2018-09, Vol.16 (5), p.556-572

This study developed a 12-week, arts-based mindfulness program specifically for adults suffering from anxiety and/or depression, and compared outcomes with a similar group who attended a 12-week Cognitive Behavior Therapy program. Overall, the conclusion of the study was that participants experiences similar levels of benefit from the two approaches, leading one to understand that creative exercises have the potential to support individuals suffering from mild anxiety and/ or depressive symptoms. It is worth noting that the participants in the creativity workshops performed their activities in a group context, and shared their experiences with others. These participants reported a greater connection to community, developed in tandem with personal growth, while the CBT participants were focused on their own individual experiences and did not have a similar opportunity to develop community connectivity.

As a post-secondary arts educator interested in developing group skills along with supporting individual growth, the program outlines many exercises and approaches that could be used as warm-ups, or less heavily graded components in the university context.

Florence-Davidson, Sarah & Davidson, Robert. *Potlatch as Pedagogy: Learning Through Ceremony*, Portage & Main Press, Winnipeg, MAN, 2018.

This book, co-authored by Haida educator Sarah Florence Davidson and her father, Elder and artist Robert Davidson offers a decolonial perspective on education, relating the act of education to the banned traditional Haida ceremony of the Potlatch, a ceremony in which the wealth of the leaders is shared with the community. In an act of cultural reclamation, the

example of potlatch's firm roots in relation to the land, its peoples, and its stories, offers a model of decolonial futurity.

This book offers both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators pathways to developing respectful awareness of Indigenous culture, and offers significant alternatives to thinking about the transference of knowledge and information.

Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear* Riverhead Books, 2015.

Gilbert's book focuses on aspects of creativity that are often overlooked in the educational setting, such as how to cultivate the source of inspiration (or the creative muse), how to develop the resilience to take creative risk and assess perceived 'failures' as creative gold, and the role of trust in artistic development. Gilbert explains how notions of 'talent' or creative genius can hinder artistic development, and instead offers guidance on how to develop not only craft and skill, but insight and the bravery required to follow through.

This book is a fresh take on the cultural misunderstandings or stereotypes of the 'great artist', and offers strategies for self-empowerment that are useful for students and pros alike.

Harper, Faith. *Unfuck Your Brain: Using Science to Get Over Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Freak-outs, and Triggers*, Microcosm Publishing, Portland, Or. 2017

This book looks at neuroscience and psychology to address the growing mental health crisis in today's youth, and offers clear explanations of what's happening, and strategies to develop healthy coping strategies and improved outlooks. The book is clearly oriented to a young audience; with use of edgy language and graphic-novel style illustrations and graphics, it is very approachable for students.

This book offers educators opportunities to develop a deeper understanding and awareness of what many of our students today are experiencing, and what they might want to express and explore through their creative work.

Harper, Faith. *Unfuck Your Brain Workbook*, Microcosm Publishing, Portland, Or. 2017

A companion to the book *Unfuck Your Brain: Using Science to Get Over Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Freak-outs, and Triggers*, this workbook offers practical tools to tap into students' experiences, and help them develop self-awareness and health coping mechanisms.

Many of these exercises, such as tuning into your body's sensations, tracking your moods, etc.. could be adapted to creative attunement strategies or exercises in the classroom.

Heinlen & Bremmer (Eds). *Wicked Arts Assignments: Practising Creativity in Contemporary Arts Assignments*, Valiz, Amsterdam University of the Arts, Amsterdam, 2020.

This book discusses the uniqueness of arts pedagogies, and explores their capacity as responsive, evolving, and deeply influential experiences. The first half of the book explores these concepts and pedagogical theories through a series of interviews by leading arts educators and artists across the globe. The second half of the book shares a number of assignments, developed by leading arts educators, which can be used and interpreted by others in the field.

This book offers a high degree of innovative and contemporary perspectives on student-centred arts education, with an emphasis on adaptability and experimentation, and a holistic approach to the students as future educators, cultural producers, and citizens of the world.

Jahoda & Woodward (Eds). *Making and Being: Embodiment, Collaboration, and Circulation in the Visual Arts*, Pioneer Works press, New York, 2019.

This book was collaboratively written and developed to provide new perspectives on the role of arts education in the cultivation of self and community. Commencing with a series of more philosophical essays on the role of art in culture, and the implications of cultural production, it segues on to share a series of modules for innovative advanced arts education, including assignments, activities, worksheets and reflective analysis.

This book offers a secure grounding in holistic arts education, in that it grounds the creative act within the self and community, and seeks to develop greater capacities of engagement

and development for those who practice it. This book offers a fresh perspective and set of resources for educators to foster positive growth in students and the culture at large.

Kent, Corita & Steward, Jan. *Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit*, Allworth Press, New York, 2008.

This book serves as a compendium of the work of the highly influential American artist and arts educator Sister Corita Kent, whose teachings and practice were aimed at serving those with whom she engaged, and arts educator Jan Steward, a former pupil and lifelong friend of Kent. One could consider Kent as a pioneer of holism in education, whose teachings since the 1950's exemplified her motto 'Begin, look, connect & create, work & play, celebrate!'

Firmly rooted in relationality, Kent saw the act of creation as one of connection. This book allows contemporary arts educators to reconnect with the divinity of their work, and what it means to foster growth through the creative act.

Kosofsky-Sedgewick, Eve. *Touching Feeling-Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Duke University Press, London, 2003.

This book offers a theoretical, philosophical framework through which to develop and explore tools for non-dualistic thought and pedagogy. Asking such questions as 'what is the nature of thought itself', and providing multiple possible answers to this question, this book offers radical perspectives on the creative act itself, and the implications of guiding this process. It offers expansive perspectives on how to encourage student thinking to be receptive to new ideas, nurture these ideas, and bring them forth in their creative outputs.

Magsamen, Susan and Ross, Ivy. *Your Brain on Art- How the Arts Transform Us*, Random House, New York, 2023.

This book focuses on the neuroscience of the act of making art, and makes an argument for the ability of the arts to transform our brains- the arts can foster connections, heal traumas, and can even develop higher intelligence in its audience. The growing field of neuroplasticity- how our brains can be changed through experience, emotions, and stories,

is here oriented towards the healing capacity of the arts, and is thus extremely important for contemporary educators to become aware of. The book discusses how aesthetic experiences, such as listening to music, seeing pleasing images, or hearing meaningful stories, shape our conceptions of self and others.

Applications in the classroom may be more general than that of a therapeutic setting, and can be aimed more at creative attunement or the development of aesthetic awareness, which in turn offers students opportunities to gain more personal benefit from the act of creating.

Miller, J. P (Ed). *International Handbook of Holistic Education*, Routledge, Oxfordshire, UK, 2018.

Offering 37 chapters of essays and case-studies, this book provides a comprehensive overview of Holistic Education: what is it, what are its roots, and how it has been applied across different global cultures. This book is an invaluable resource for any educator who seeks to support student wellness through their teaching, offering a wide array of perspectives and resources towards this end.

This book shares the diversity of approaches and complexity of thought behind holistic principles, and offers concrete examples along with inspiration for teachers who wish to bring this philosophy into their work.

Murphy Paul, Annie. *The Extended Mind: The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain*, Mariner Books, Boston, 2021.

This book explores contemporary neurobiology to debunk the separation of mind and body in Western educational systems. Outlining the clear connections between embodied, experiential learning as pathways to developing not only knowledge, but intelligence itself, this book is a guidepost for educators seeking alternative pathways to top-down learning.

Providing strategies of interoception- the 'reconnecting' of mind and body- through education, this book shows how learning in concrete, embodied ways is more valuable than attempting to illustrate abstract concepts and debunks the notion of 'objective' facts.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. *How to See*, Penguin Random House, Toronto, 2020.

This book provides a series of instructions, developed by the revered Buddhist philosopher and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, on how to develop embodied awareness, mindfulness and community consciousness. These exercises and epithets are proven to decrease anxiety, while deepening connection. Widely considered as a precursor to creative thinking, the development of awareness is a foundational skill for any creative person.

These exercises can easily be shared and explored in the classroom, and promoted as part of the 'process' of creating, while emphasizing the classroom as a place of healing and positive intention.

Rubin, Rick and Neil Strauss. *The Creative Act: A Way of Being* Penguin Press, 2023.

Authored by the famous music producer Rick Rubin, this book offers 78 'Areas of Thought'; brief reflections on the cultivation of creativity through a lens of self-love, acceptance, and Buddhist wisdom. This book serves as a compendium of the creative psyche, allowing readers and educators to explore the innate beauty and simplicity of creation, while acknowledging the complexity of exterior forces that can block us.

This book can be seen as a 'how-to' guide to overcoming creative blocks, thus encouraging personal growth and artistic excellence, while reducing anxiety and inhibitions. The possibilities of applying this approach in the classroom is open to a wide variety of personal teaching styles and methodologies.

Smith, Keri. *How to be an Explorer of the World: Portable Art Life Museum*, Penguin Books, New York, 2008.

This book is a fun, approachable graphic-novel-style workbook, offering step-by step programs aimed at the development of creative attunement. As with any good resource on creative development, there is an equal emphasis on cultivating creative inspiration, and clear hands-on methodologies for how to turn that inspiration into tangible outcomes that can be meaningful for both the creator and a wider audience.

Exercises in this book could be applicable in arts classrooms ranging from elementary to advanced post-secondary levels.

Talking Treaties Collective. *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, Art Metropole, Toronto, 2022.

Collaboratively created by the Talking Treaties Collective members Ange Loft, Victoria Freeman, Martha Stiegman and Jill Carter, this book presents a series of land-based, embodied workshops for residents of Toronto, whether Indigenous or not, to develop awareness of treaty relations in the area of Toronto/Takaronto. The aim with this is to foster an understanding of our past and current relations to these territories, its peoples, and our roles and responsibilities in community- essentially, how to be a good treaty partner in the present-day.

By locating a series of specific places in the region, providing historical background, and offering a set of creative land-based activities, this collective has essentially designed a situated learning opportunity to connect past, present and future, and develop right relations for all. Guidelines for reflection and group discussions are also offered.

Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Fernwood Publishing, Halifax & Winnipeg, 2008.

Written by Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson, of Plains Cree ancestry, this book offers valuable perspectives for Indigenous researchers on how to conduct research 'in a good way'. In other words, how to conduct research within your communities with an emphasis on relations, ceremony, and protocols. This book was written with an acknowledgement that most research on Indigenous communities is performed by non-indigenous scholars, and

highlights the problematics of this situation. By providing Indigenous researchers clear methodologies to choose appropriate research topics, enact this research in communities, and present this research to a broader audience is seen as an act of Indigenous self-determination and an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty.

For a non-Indigenous scholar and educator, this book can be a valuable tool for supporting Indigenous students as they embark on work that touches on identity and community, thus reflecting a holistic approach to students and their academic and creative outputs.