Reflections of a Pulse

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"Reflections of a pulse"

By

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ABSTRACT

A change has taken place over the last couple or years. It wasn’t realized until the final project was over. I have dedicated my life to learning. Reflections of all that was encompassing me began contorting and mingling with my schema. Teaching the basics of art without helping the student to develop change was standard before the creative pulse. Elements and Principles were the most important qualities to my teachings. I have seen that I have the ability to entice growth through learning experiences. The Arts are very important to the success of our being. Intellectual growth can be studied in the history of man. We are always growing, individual as well as a whole. Constant study and discipline of oneself creates intellectual growth.

Design is very important to the outcomes of all our actions. Design is everywhere and in all human endeavors. It is important to instill confidence in one’s ability to design. My professional goals and teaching style drastically changed. The multiple intelligence theory and concepts learned in the creative pulse have guided me to a different direction. These directions have become very meaningful and carry power of invention. I have learned how to help the student grow intellectually through application of learned concepts and theories. I have learned how to find meaning through reflection and use the meanings to grow myself. Application of new concepts and theories pave way to new ideas and journeys. Encompassing and encouraging the many pigments of knowledge attainable by the human schema, I choose to color my life with the arts.
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First Intent: Origin of Final Creative Project

My intent in the beginning was to implement bronze casting to my school. I am going to do this anyway, because I want to cast metals. This was my goal as a teacher and still is. Things changed as my ever-growing need of creating art has injured my body. I suffered much damage to my right wrist. It was swollen and kept me awake as I struggled to make sculptures for casting in metal. The pain was killing me. The sculptures were being made to sell. I was making sculptures of dancers. Being somewhat ambidextrous, my left hand took over. I continued making the sculptures. I was doing this project separate from my classes. My emphasis was making a body of art to sell. Pretty soon both hands were affected. I received several cortisone shots over several months and nothing seemed to help. Finally, after much aggravation, I traveled to Great Falls to see a hand and wrist specialist. He corrected the problems in a two-hour surgery. The doctor said I will be 100% and left me to heal. Healing was an incredible process as it leads me to discovering what was hidden in what was going on with my art and teaching. Reflections began flooding in and helped to guide me to the path of enlightenment. Understanding and using the elements and principles of design upon myself, I realized that I was out of balance. I was using my hands so extensively that I injured myself. I began doing two-dimensional art to ease the injury. When asked by a friend if I was interested in doing a project for the hospital, I said “no”. I did not need another project to work on. My life is filled with projects. In fact my life is a project. Positive reward comes from dedication to the disciplines of life. So I decided to meet with the hospital administration.
I was asked in a meeting with St. James Hospital to do a piece of wall art to fill a space on their walls. In the beginning, I was hesitant about adding another project to my life. With careful thought I saw how this project would be so beneficial to my careers as an artist and a teacher. Positive energies began to flow.

**Intent of Final Project:**

Randy Bolton was informed of the changes of my intent and gave me guidance on how to proceed. The setback of the change effected only my own production of art. He said to do a body of work. I immediately set off in that direction. While thinking about this body of work, I noticed something happening in my teaching. I was using concepts that were taught to me in the Creative Pulse program.

The intent of my project is to use “reflection” as a means to create art that entices critical thought. It also carries with it learning of who we are through a hands-on-project. The hands-on-project was a culmination of concepts and theories that were taught to me and I shared them with my students throughout the year. We were gathered together in a learning atmosphere and given a problem. The problem was that the hospital needed a work of art to make people happy. I was to take them on a journey of self-discovery. They had to work very hard to produce and capture a meaning. This was to come about based on student’s interpretations of happiness. They were to learn concepts and theories of self-discovery while practicing art techniques and strategies. I have never done a public art installation of a piece of art. My project was an installation of 50 masks in St. James Community Hospital’s new cancer ward. I involved my students and my community and received much recognition on this project. Through reflections I have found donation of time can lead to great things.
**What was achieved and accomplished:**

This project has given the community an unusual work of art. The cancer ward patients are given an opportunity for positive reflection while viewing the work. This project became bigger than my students or me. It gave my teachings a sense of place. A pause to look at myself in the mirror expelled the question, "who is this guy?" The reflections lead to what I learned through the Creative Pulse program. I gave more to the students than just the Elements and Principles of design. I gave them more than just little hands-on projects to keep them busy. I gave them the power of reflections. I gave them the Creative Pulse. Through constant reflection we grow.

The Creative Pulse hit me as I realized that making art is easy to me and I needed something new. Boosting my credentials as an artist was very important. This something needed to be bigger than me. The St. James Hospital was introducing the new Cancer Ward and was looking for art. They asked me if I wanted to do a piece. They commissioned me to fill a space, and I agreed, if I could do the project with my students. After reflecting, I came to the conclusion that getting my work out there in the world is important. Teaching is also very important. Volunteering time to take these students and do a public art would benefit more than just me. Involving my students when I could have easily created a piece of art myself felt gratifying. It also led me to the ability to direct. Direction is very important when one designs. I was to test my teaching capabilities as well as my arts background. I was also realizing it is not always about me! It is important to realize the plethora of differences humans encompass. I tend to be so engrossed in my projects that I sometimes overlook opportunity. It is always good to look over the opportunities with a microscopic eye.
Design and direction opportunities are everywhere. Dedication of the discipline of the arts leads me to this project. The work of art the students and I create will be seen and viewed by cancer patients, nurses, doctors and administrators. Family and friends will also have the opportunity to view the work when they visit the patients. The intention is to give the viewers something to entice critical thinking.

The idea on what to do was pondered over as I made repeated trips to see the sight. The area has two fifty seven inch square insets in the wall. This was a nice border to the art whatever the art would be. I did several drawings and started playing with clay. I pushed some clay into a plaster mold of a student’s face. When the blank came out I was staring at someone with his or her eyes closed. Bang. The idea hit me hard. I was going to create a bunch of blanks of different people’s faces. The blanks would be made of high fire ceramic clay. Clay is very manipulative until fired. Then I started doing drawings and found that fifty masks would fit in the insets on the wall. There were two insets, twenty-five faces for each one. This was a test of all that I have learned.

I had less than three weeks. I ordered glazes and started advertising for a big hands-on presentation with the students. I advertised that they would try their hands at forensics and plastic surgery. It was called the face-making project. It got some buzz and forty five students attended this after school project, to create seventy finished masks. The Montana Standard followed the project. The news showed up as I was giving them the lessons. The lessons started with reconstructing the faces to the true nature. When casting a mold, there are always imperfections that need tending. I explained to the students that we are not perfect, but there is always room for improvement.
The students then were guided into the realm of plastic surgery and how art skills are used in the medical fields.

The students were shown how to sculpt happy faces and open the eyes up on the clay faces. The students were disciplining themselves in kinesthetic intelligence. Working with your hands is very important in our society. We needed to portray “happy” in this installation. When the students were done, they were guided through a brainstorm of creative ideas. They were to sculpt and change the face. Reflections of who we are, what we do, and why we are becomes the problem that needs a solution. Ideas for changing the faces were immense. Sketches were critiqued and assessed as to how the ideas could be accomplished. The students then spent time sculpting their interpretations. The faces became their dreams and aspirations. The students were told that the top fifty would be on permanent display. The students were excited. We finished the masks and made a date for the following week to glaze the faces.

The following week, the students glazed with a variety of colors. The students and I talked about color and how it can change your moods. We decided on bright happy colors. I fired all the faces and asked the hospital to come and help me choose the fifty best to display. The representative was excited to see the faces. The following week we attended the big opening and I made a presentation to the public with the unveiling of this permanent piece of public art. This was the first time I have ever done this. I am getting all kinds of potential deals because of it. It has opened the door to more installations that could benefit my art students and me. It gave me a sense of place in my community and with my students. (Fig. 1 thru 10)
**Expected and unexpected results:**

I expected some students to get involved in this big project, but not as many as did. I expected the students to do a fantastic job and enjoy themselves. I did not expect them to get the praise from the community that they did. (Fig. 11 and 12) This work of art is a great example of discipline. The most important result was that the project was a direct reflection on the whole year’s teachings.

My students received these new tools to learn how to develop themselves as intelligent beings. I learned that donation of time can lead to great things. Being self-absorbed is not always the best direction to take on as an artist. “Opportunity is a paintbrush to success.”

**Significance of project:**

I found that using the concepts and theories to build upon intelligence could be very exciting and beneficial. Multiple Intelligence theory is a great jumping board into human schema. I found that the teachings I was giving my students in the advanced classes carried over to other students through peer interactions. It forced me to have direction and meaning. What am I teaching and how will I teach it? I started asking myself questions like, “how can I encompass my teachings in a broader sense? How can I teach through peer interaction and kinetics? How can I involve the students in issues that people face everyday?” These questions were answered as I worked through the projects with the students.

For example, the students kinetically move the subject of creating a display through each other and formulate answers by communicating the ideas with each other. The energy comes out when they are creating.
I noticed the students as they created telling each other if the piece of work was tasteful for the hospital or not. I even noticed some students taking on the shock approach knowing their piece would not make the cut. They were enforcing their beliefs about the subject. For example one student created a face that looked like a brick wall. When asked why the student said “We create the walls around us!” The student faces criticism saying the piece is how she feels about the issue. The issue of creating a work for the new cancer ward comes into play as the students try to encourage happiness through the obvious misery of having cancer. The students are told that the work needs to project a happy feel. Some of the students chose to do the opposite even if their project didn’t make the cut. They projected their reasoning to their peers and looked as if they enjoyed the opportunity to do so. I never thought I would create a work of art with the students for public display. The act of group work is something that I hope to carry on in future years. The idea of incorporating critical thinking in the concept of the work is a main goal. Teaching critical thinking is very important in our society.

*Reflections of a pulse*

The rigor and pursuit of a Master’s degree has been very intense. The Creative Pulse intensifies theories and concepts that are intended to encourage personal growth. Our whole being is tested, poked and prodded in an intense, holistic experience. A teacher’s responsibility to teaching is of the utmost importance and is examined and analyzed independently. The Creative Pulse Program helps to increase student success by teaching concepts that can increase want and desire of learning.
Personal growth should be utilized in all curriculums. This program inspires the teacher to design a successful curriculum.

The concepts learned in the Creative Pulse are positive reinforcements of the importance of learning in my teachings. The want and desire to learn how to better myself as a teacher and an artist was increased when exposed to theories. Walls were broken down. Assessment techniques for the critiquing progress, process, production, and final outcome began an interesting experience.

Exercising the multiple intelligences through class assignments is a goal. Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences theory is grounding. This theory gives us the ability to gauge our skills, intelligence and our schema. This theory gives meaning to individuals who do not fit the standard role of learning. Mathematical, and linguistic intelligences are not the only areas that humans can exceed in. This theory has added other skills that humans excel in intelligence. The hands-on act of performing tasks makes the learning process more visible and memorable.

A manifesto of learning and teaching was created to help and assist me when designing my curriculum. This manifesto is constantly tested and assessed to create an ideal learning environment.

**The opportunity to be exposed to the major concepts and theories relevant to my artwork.**

1. Read and seek education, criticism and knowledge. It is your job as the teacher to ensure your students are up to date on theories and ideas.
2. **The opportunity to continue your growth as an artist.**
   
   The artist must immerse oneself in growth. Do the assignments with the student to understand the student’s struggle in development. Use every second to learn something new or exercise intelligences.

3. **The opportunity to create, invent and improvise as a teacher.**
   
   Use formal and informal methods in developing teaching style. Inventive, intuitive modes of thinking are what you should strive for in your style. Assess, conquer, and reorganize excellence in teaching style.

4. **The opportunity to practice the art of perception.**
   
   Try to remember your teaching style. Develop your skills on seeing and understanding the cues from students. Continual self-assessment will strengthen your competencies.

5. **The opportunity to represent ideas and experiences.**
   
   Share your concepts and ideas with your students and colleagues.

6. **The opportunity for reflection.**
   
   Search for meaning, search for the “essence”, and reflect. Stand back and examine your methods and teaching from all perspectives.

7. **The opportunity to collaborate.**
   
   Work with your colleagues and your students in designing learning experiences.

8. **The opportunity to engage in genuine inquiry and research.**
   
   In order to grow as a teacher and an artist you need to continue to gain insight. Explore, reach out to others and analyze your insights, critique your identification.
and isolation of problems generated in actions. Synthesize your data, rewrite, assess and reassess.

9. **The opportunity to experience teaching.**

Commit to betterment of your teaching abilities. Assess your motivations, and practices. Use your want of strengthening the youth, to enhance your teachings.

10. **The opportunity to study ideas and settings holistically so that relationships and connections may be explored.**

Be aware of what is going on outside as well as inside your class, you may see opportunities. Connect application and ideas with the world around students and yourself.

11. **The opportunity to participate in mentoring, modeling, and apprentice activities.**

Immerse yourself in the surroundings of those who share in the enthusiasm of learning. It is important to surround yourself with people who are willing to share information and evaluate your theories and concepts. Learn from the experiences of those around you. Watch what others are doing.

**Compare and Contrast**

When I compare and contrast how my teaching style was before attending the Creative Pulse, I can see how my style has changed. Before the Creative Pulse Program, I was having a hard time relaying information to the students. The quality of work seemed to be mediocre, at best. Great presentations of design were made, but no real meaning.
The first summer of the Creative Pulse enlightened me and began a new image of teaching. I started asking myself what was important in my teaching. What do I want my students to do? "Learning does not merely mean the accumulation of knowledge; it also implies an understanding of how knowledge can be utilized. (Lowenfeld, p.16)

The concept of Risk, Rigor, Cost and Irrevocability becomes a reflective tool that allows the students to assess themselves in all they do.

Risking is a level of what the artist is willing to do to solve the problem. Rigor is the level in which the artist does a thing. Hard work and dedication become apparent when rigorous. Cost is what the artist gives in order to accomplish something. Irrevocability is the fact that you can't take back what you do. My students reflected to me that they understood these concepts. Measured by time, energy, thought, and hands-on work. We are our own worst critics. We are a culture that is flooded with self-absorbency. Some people do not want to criticize themselves and therefore invent an image that is not related to their whole being. These concepts guide the individual through critical, reflective thinking. Conclusions are made and the individual then has a choice.

Reflection is defined in many ways. In physics it is defined by the act of reflecting something, especially light, sound, and heat. In anatomy, reflection refers to the bending back of a structure: the bending back upon itself of a membrane or other anatomical structure. In mathematics, reflection is referred to as a symmetric transformation: a symmetric transformation in which a figure is reversed along an axis so that the new figure produced is a mirror image of the original one. Other definitions include careful thought, or the process of reconsidering previous actions, events, or decisions.
Considered ideas, or ideas or thoughts produced by careful considerations of something.
All these definitions are useful and important when one reflects upon reflection itself.

Some definitions include thinking, mirror image, criticism, contemplation, pretense, thought and analysis. All definitions need to be considered when discovering meaning. Reflections are everywhere in our world, reflections of the past, present and the future.

Reflections are complex activities that are interrelated and interdependent, depending on the level of rigor applied. Some go unnoticed and unscathed to interruption. It’s a natural process that unfolds according to its own rhythm and pace.

As an Artist and a teacher, I have entered a journey into a reflective world. My aim is to gain knowledge, teach and promote learning. Reflection is important to building knowledge. It promotes critical and creative thinking. It also lets us evaluate our thoughts, actions, beliefs, and feelings. I began introducing this into my curriculum and found many very interesting and positive results. Working through “Reflective Thinking” in my own work yielded many new ideas, and many thoughts on myself as an individual. “Where are you going in life? What are your goals, beliefs and desires? What are your strong and weak points? How can you build upon yourself as an individual? What do you want to project through your art and teaching?” I believe that everyday we reflect energy to the world. Our emotions, concerns, motivations, beliefs and ambitions are reflected in our lives. This energy that we give to the world is important. Coming from the teaching standpoint, it is crucial that the energy we reflect is positive. We like to receive positive reflections or energy from others, so we must make an effort to reflect out positive energy.
Sometimes we must bend over backwards and contort our lives to produce positive energy. Reflection can be very strenuous to one’s mind. Bending and contorting becomes hard work. When students are engaged in creating it is best not to interrupt environment but flow with the positive nature of learning. A teacher must recognize when a student is off track.

Additional lectures and lesson plans can be implemented to break monotony and induce “learning moments.” It is through these learning moments that the teacher can motivate to endure.

Students are completely different, so it becomes the mission to accommodate learning. By working with multiple intelligences, the teacher finds where the students are and where they want to be. Explaining the concepts and giving the students an actual assessment tool helps to create the desire to learn.

By journaling and reflecting, the teacher creates the learning environment through critical thinking. Careful thought can be utilized to reflect upon who we are, and what we do. We can get the big picture by analyzing, organizing, negotiating, presenting, and considering all actions we encompass.

I have noted in my journals and reflections of classroom assignments; the most common entries seemed to be how tired a person gets when giving energy. During critiques with the students, I found some students to take on a negative approach to reflecting. These students did not want to reflect and think critically. We (teachers) have not the power to control student’s intellectual growth, but have the power to give tools and discipline. It is our hope that the student becomes adept at using the tools; this tends to work very well when using hands-on exercises and assignments.
The student is forced into a "reflective" exercise where they are given a problem that needs a solution. Each student is given the tools to find the solution; their assignment is to solve it.

Critical thinking is crucial to constructing independent thoughts, conceptualizations and confidence of one's being. By teaching and learning how to analyze, negotiate, organize and construct solid presentational thoughts, notions, beliefs and understandings of something, we grow as individuals. The many reflections around us may be the key. With a critical look at our environment, politics, family life etc., we begin to formulate thoughts, emotions and beliefs. My mission or goal was to create an environment of learning. This place must allow the student to learn not only about all aspects of the fine arts but how to apply it to their lives. The student learns to use the Elements and principles of design as tool to creating astounding images. The student is in an environment where they are faced with having to look in the mirror at who they are. Students see levels of students who do exceptional to those who do nothing. They make decisions and suffer consequences of failing or having to do extra work. Discipline becomes the most important aspect of the environment. Discipline levels are apparent and are exposed during class critique. Each student critically ponders each project and presents what they found during their critiques. They are able to suggest, and point out obvious aspects of each piece. This presentation gives them a chance to build interpersonal intelligence while building confidence of ones reflective ability. Reflection is then forced on student as their work is displayed and critiqued. What the student does with the reflection becomes very important to the learning process. Some students may learn from their mistakes after one
or many times making the mistake. Some students can learn from the mistakes of others. It is important for the student to understand that what they do with this very important reflection can positively guide them. A hand’s on project that involved critical thinking and the multiple intelligences was constructed to give the student opportunity of reflection and exercising of ones schema.

The lesson gave them the power to be a plastic surgeon, forensic scientist and an artist in one project. The students had opportunity to critique and assess themselves based on the problem set forth in the assignment. The student's complete schema is tested and exercising of ones intelligences is encouraged. Students are engaged in opportunity and given choice to participate.

**PHOTOGRAPHY 101 “Practicing of theory application and reflections of relevance”**

Opportunities are very important. Encouraging exercise of ones schema is very important. Doing the project for the St. James Hospital helped to encourage reflection in my own life. I started to reflect on my progression as a teacher and an artist. It was this reflection that helped me realize the immense capabilities a teacher has in enlightening the student to positive experience and an artist to creating. I learned that I could do both. I began to question the concepts and theories when I was reading through my journals. I needed to assess myself and it involved two directions. Assessment of my teaching and assessment of my own artistic ideas was a way for me to have closure in this paper.
I decided to reflect upon the last five years of teaching and see the use of discipline in my abilities. With careful analyzing of my teaching I can see a change in myself as well as my teaching.

A colleague and I started the photography program at Butte High School four years ago. It was built with donation of old equipment people had lying around. People started getting into digital photography and didn't want their old darkroom stuff. I kept accumulating more and more equipment. One day we had enough to begin a class. Each year the class size got bigger we were able to add another class.

This last year I was given four Photography classes of all seniors. I taught these students for three quarters of the year. As I reflect I can see how action is the only way to achieve goals. Our school did not have a photo program until a few art teachers built it. The next goal is to create a ceramic shell casting.

The first quarter started out with the teaching of the Elements and Principles of design. I explained, exampled and tested. The students then were to display their knowledge of the Elements and Principles. They built a book, a journal of sorts to arrange their thoughts and ideas about the Elements and Principles of design. They need to find photography examples that best explain the use of a particular element or principle. Images are abundant and the search becomes a visually reflective learning experience. The student must train their eyes to grasp the qualities in design. They use the room as a lab. The students ask where they are to find the images and I pull out a box of magazines, comic books, advertisements, and newspapers. I exampled to the students that using risk, rigor, cost and irrevocability can be as simple as recycling. Finding the images becomes much easier when one spreads out investigation.
For the next few days I noticed the students bringing in their own magazines, newspapers and articles to help them find the best use of a particular element or principle. They question and communicate the language involved in critical thinking. They ask questions and evaluate imagery based on the concepts. Risk, rigor, cost and irrevocability are main qualities that will be discussed at the final grading critique. Each student has the problem to solve. They are given the tools to solve the problem. They are given a deadline and use class time as a lab. Creating this atmosphere is exciting as the teacher. Watching the student rearrange the room for studio production is great.

The students learn that they are responsible for the care of the tools in the room. If you put a tool back after using it, it will always be there when you need it. The teacher facilitates the learning process by aiding students in creating a positive atmosphere and providing tools. The use of the tools will develop tool knowledge in their schemas. The process becomes skillful. This was noticed after demonstrating the use of the tools and equipment. The students begin a process to explore. When a tool or the room is used inappropriately the teacher or a peer brings the act to light.

During critiques we discuss the elements and principles and show our examples we found. Each student presents his or her project to the class. The class responds with evaluation of risk, rigor, cost and irrevocability. The critiques are a great form of reflection. The students learn about design more thoroughly as they perform their knowledge to their peers. The students can see levels and a better understanding of our individual intelligences. The teacher assesses to make sure all students understand the concepts of design. The book with elements and principles then seconds as journal. The students are required to make entries and document process.
After the introduction of multiple intelligences, elements and principles and cost, rigor, risk and irrevocability the students begin to learn about the camera. The pinhole camera is introduced. The students learn how it works and relates to how we see. They build their own cameras and learn the methods and process of developing. This introduces the student to the darkroom studio. I used this assignment to introduce the physical science of how light works. Brain function is very important and has endless learning abilities. Talking about the brain with my students is key to how they progress in my class. I let the students know how the brain is capable of making a plethora of interconnections. It’s like a spider web that never ends. I ask my students “If we have this plethora of possible knowledge ability, why do we have students that can’t do simple math functions?” The students have many answers as I expected they would. One student says, “Because they don’t have to!” These answers can be discussed to create a learning moment for the student. By asking what the students think helps the teacher to manipulate learning moments for the student as well as the teacher. Poking and prodding at these discussions is the introduction into critical thinking. These reflections will bring out the real person inside the student by enticing them to discover what they think.

The students shoot self-portraits with their pinhole cameras and get involved in critiques that critically assess who they are. The relevance of the multiple intelligences, risk, rigor, cost and irrevocability come to light. After several days of critical thought about self-portraits and concepts of self-growth the students seem to be anticipating shooting again. The next assignment the students carried their cameras with them into the world to find an image. They didn’t even know if their pictures would turn out until they brought the cameras back into a darkroom studio for process.
I could see the amazement in their eyes as they mastered their own cameras. All cameras will be different depending on the diameter of aperture and size of focal length. This very technical knowledge is learned through trial and error. The reflective qualities of meaning seemed to be displayed when creative writing was applied. The apparent in-depth look at their imagery was reinforced through poetry. (Fig.13)

The student grounds in the critical process of placement in the world. They know they are the controller of the image. Their journals reflect that they assess their progressions in life and aspirations for their futures. They all choose to succeed in creating interesting images. Not just for the grade, but for the chance to reflect with their peers in class critique.

Discussions on the importance of visual imagery and how their images hold many meanings and directions of thought lead the class critique. The students seem to have a lot to say. They talked about meaning, ignorance, and began to see themselves in their own society.

Thematic teaching is very important in teaching. Stressing to the students how all disciplines connect in many ways and we as learners should extract meaning from our experiences. It’s not always black and white, and reading between the lines will sometimes yield treasures beyond what is being taught. During the Creative Pulse program I noticed that the lessons seemed to be orchestrated. It seemed like learning flowed and kept me on edge. I applied concepts and I learned from what I taught. The students journal, do creative writing, presentations and evaluate work based on concepts and theories I learned through the “Pulse.”
This year I found some very useful questions that I should answer as I teach. They seemed to help me orchestrate the experiences into a very adequate learning environment.

(Making Connections, pg. 170)

1. Are students involved and challenged?
2. Is there a clear evidence of student creativity and enjoyment? Are students dealing appropriately with dissonance?
3. Are students being exposed to content in many ways that link content to life?
4. Are student’s life themes and metaphors being engaged?
5. Are there “Hooks” that tie the content together in the big picture that itself can make sense to students?
6. Is there some sort of continuity, such as through projects and ongoing stories, so that content is tied together and retains interest over time?
7. Is there any sign of continuing motivation or student interest that expresses itself above and beyond the dictates of the class?
8. Is the physical context being used optimally?
9. What do the setting, decorations, architecture, layout, music, and other features of the context actually say to the students?
10. What sort of group atmosphere is emerging?
11. Are there any signs of positive collaboration, and do they continue after the lessons and after school?
12. Do the students have opportunities to reorganize content in creative and personally relevant ways?
13. Are there opportunities to reflect in an open-ended way on what does and does not make sense?
14. Are students given the opportunity to apply the material in very different contexts?
15. Do students consciously and deliberately examine their performances in those different contexts and begin to appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses?

The system I have developed based on my masters program has definitely opened my eyes. Dramatic changes have taken place. Even since last summers classes I have changed. This means that application of knowledge does not always begin immediately. We find change only when we begin applying reflection. A critique of my critique of a fellow pulse student’s work was reflected on and helped me change my direction. I was told that my critique was a very good representation of Elements and Principles. I wasn’t giving criticism on critical issues that were available in the students work.
I was introduced to and immersed in experiences that really hit home. These reflections were coming out in my experiences with my students. Emphasis in critical thinking becomes a main tenant to my teaching. This system is opening my eyes to discovery. A quote from my journal November 3 2003, after lecturing about the contents of an image, “The students didn’t seem to grasp how I came to all the conclusions about the photographs. You need to put their critical thinking to the test. How? What will you do? Ideas...show them photographs from the past! Show them famous photography! Talk about the relevance of photographs.” The students were all given a famous photograph from Time Life’s Classic photographs collection. The students weren’t given any other information about the images. They were told to study, reflect and critically assess all aspects the picture held. They wrote in their journals and shared with the class. The images include Vietnam, Africa, Nagasaki, Kennedy and other famous images of photojournalism. I choose images that are very energetic with emotions. After they are done sharing their ideas, I read them stories of the images. An excerpt from a student’s journal read, “We learn about these events in other classes like history, but never deal with them like this. I could visualize the events more.” The students were engaged and brought up many notions that related to themselves in our society. Grounding in the thinking process was taking place and the only thing I did was orchestrate a simple assignment. My journal after this assignment read, “Critical thinking was taking place today! The students were forced to reflect realms of thought that tend not to be looked into. Is this important? How does this relate to your teaching? Art is the ability to see the extraordinary from the ordinary. Do the students understand the concepts? Develop and use more critical thinking in class.”
Reflecting helped me realize this method is mirroring the teachings I encountered in the Pulse program; I began to look at how I could apply critical thinking to my class and community more. This paved a path to creating a permanent reflection installation with my students. I am an artist and will spend my life producing art. When I can make a difference for so many others, I should jump on it.

My classes were asked to reflect about what it was like learning the methods and concepts that were applied in class. I gave them handouts and asked them to fill them out. The results show a connection that is relative to reflective thinking. (Fig. 14-16)

After the project I worked in the darkroom and created a body of work separate from this project. (Fig. 17-21) It related to the project in many ways. I was using what I learned and was applying what I have been teaching. Testing myself became a mission. Were all of the concepts and theories beneficial? I found that they were. The montage photos I created were symbols of reflective thinking. I juxtaposed two or more images together to form meaning. The meaning isn't always apparent unless reflected on. I wrote about them and created poems to go with each. The project became very meaningful. I was practicing what I was teaching.

Reflection of this past year's teachings has improved my growth strategy for teaching. It has given me a chance to build self-discipline as a teacher and an artist. It has taught me that growth and the never-ending quest of growth is very valuable. Self-initiative and self-assessment are most important for my own personal growth. This is a way of life that will produce a very talented teacher and artist. I have seen first hand a positive growth in my teaching style. It has increased the results in student work and attitude. I will always continue to use reflection to fine-tune my life.
The presentation becomes a direct reflection on the artist. The student creates and uses their knowledge and creativity to display intelligence. We learn to accustom how we move through the world. The world does not accustom to us.
(Fig. 1)
(Fig.2)
Fig. 5
Butte High artwork at St. James outstanding

Recently, when I had gone for a check-up at the oncology department at St. James Healthcare, I had the privilege to observe the sensational artwork from the talented Butte High Art Club and other participating schools. What a wonderful contribution!

I stood in awe at the creativity of these young students. I wish to thank them for allowing us to admire their beautiful collection. The colorful masks and other pieces certainly help patients take their mind off of the reason why they are there.

To Dameon Matule, speaking as a cancer survivor we do appreciate the time, effort and care that was graciously put into each and every piece your class created. It means a lot to me, and I’m sure it’ll mean a lot to others on their journey as well.

To Mr. Bercier, a great impact from this terrific idea will be made upon each person who walks down the hallway and sees your student’s extraordinary work. You will be touching people’s lives and hearts.

Debbie Best
Butte

5-17-04
To the Butter High Art Club,

Survivors & Thrivers
would like to personally
thank you for your hard
work & dedication on your
art project for the Oncology
Department at Dr. James
Healthcare.

It's a phenomenal
collection that will be
unforgettable. Be proud
of your unique accomplish-
ment!

Sincerely,
Survivors & Thrivers

...for
brightening
my world!
A cold lonely deserted place, frozen with the winter chills. The world stands still in the shadows, once alive, now dead between two hills.

Amanda Crossely

(Fig. 13)
1. How did this photography class, the process and the teachings change you? I didn’t know it at first, but this class really changed my perspective on the way I view things. Photography is something that I really want to continue throughout my life.

2. What did you learn about yourself? I learned that I could do anything if I really put my mind to it. At first I didn’t understand anything and then it clicked… photography became a way to express myself.

3. How do you think your creative and critical thinking skills were increased? Emancipately! Now I do. I have written blocks or a thinking block of any kind. I can look at my negatives and design my picture of art in my head. (even if I can’t see it on my first try) I will use these new skills whenever I can, even if I’m not in the dark room. I can use these skills in every part of my life. To put it simply, I enjoy problem solving all because of Mr. Bercier, he’s an excellent teacher.

4. How will you use your developing creative and critical thinking skills? I will use these new skills whenever I can, even if I’m not in the dark room. I can use these skills in every part of my life. To put it simply, I enjoy problem solving all because of Mr. Bercier, he’s an excellent teacher.

5. Did you think you gained any discipline with Mr. Bercier’s teachings? (explain) Yes, definitely! Mr. Bercier always had a task for us, and eventually, we got used to it. Now, I am more focused and I can concentrate better, which is good because I showed not only other people, but me, who I really am. If we didn’t do the reflections, I could almost guarantee you that the majority of us would still have “crappy” photos.

6. Did the reflections (poems and statements) teach you anything about yourself and your work? (explain) Are you kidding? The reflections is what have helped me see new things and helped me learn new things. (This is a form of self-reflection.)

7. Did the concepts you learned in class help or change your views of the world? (how) Yes, like I explained earlier in question 3, I can and not too long ago, started seeing things I have never seen before and I wish I had my camera and film constantly with me because it makes me sad that I can’t capture this picture for other people to see.

8. Will you use any of the concepts, teachings or lessons in your future? (how?) Every day, I know that I will remember everything that Mr. Bercier taught me because it was all hands on (that is, his teachings), which easier for me to remember what I have learned. You see, I consider myself a visual person, so I look up to John.
1. How did this photography class, the process and the teachings change you?

   It made me develop the need to produce better images and work harder overall. It also made me more appreciative of other photographers.

2. What did you learn about yourself?

   I learned that I get extremely stressed when things don’t work out, but it’s not worth it because I can work harder the next time and get a better result.

3. How do you think your creative and critical thinking skills were increased?

   They were pushed beyond what I thought I could create. I am much more picky about my creative work because I know I can do it.

4. How will you use your developing creative and critical thinking skills?

   I plan to pursue architecture, a field that requires major creative thinking. I know that I won’t settle for anything short of fabulous.

5. Do you think you gained any discipline with Mr. Bercier’s teachings? (explain)

   Yes, because of deadline grades. I know that I must turn in promptly.

6. Did the reflections (poems and statements) teach you anything about yourself and your work? (explain)

   It taught me that each piece of work has a creative side to it, and all I have to do is to dig deep.

7. Did the concepts you learned in class help or change your views of the world? (how)

   I understand that the world is perceived differently by everyone. For example, Mr. Bercier had an exercise: There was a box outlined with tape. Everyone had to name what was in the box. Few went out it to the spatial area.

8. Will you use any of the concepts, teachings or lessons in your future? (how?)

   Yes, I will realize that there are no limits to thinking creatively.

(Fig. 15)
1. How did this photography class, the process and the teachings change you?
   It has opened my mind to see things in new ways, it has made me more creative, improved my patience, and increased my understanding of art as a whole. It has also taught me to respect the personal space and property of other artists.

2. What did you learn about yourself?
   That I always have room for improvement, I have unique ideas and style, and I love photography as much as any other form.

3. How do you think your creative and critical thinking skills were increased?
   I've learned to work under pressure and still make the image speak to me, and hopefully the audience as well.

4. How will you use your developing creative and critical thinking skills?
   In future art projects, writing, and everyday life, I've learned to appreciate my surroundings in general.

5. Do you think you gained any discipline with Mr. Berciers' teachings? (explain)
   Absolutely, if my attention span goes out for a split second, my image will suffer or even be ruined. I have to be very patient and disciplined in photography.

6. Did the reflections (poems and statements) teach you anything about yourself and your work? (explain)
   I'm already a poetic person in my spare time, but they made me examine my work, a little closer so I could understand what kind of emotions I wanted to convey in future projects.

7. Did the concepts you learned in class help or change your views of the world? (how)
   Of course. It made me notice everything in greater detail and now I consider the world around me in completely new angles and lights.

8. Will you use any of the concepts, teachings or lessons in your future? (how?)
   I hope to be a graphic artist, and I will most definitely keep doing photography in my spare time for my own entertainment.

(Fig.16)
"Dragonfly Express"
Gotta move, gotta keep moving. Fast Efficient and on time.
Graceful power glides us. Ingenuity guides us.

(Fig.17)  
Jon Jon
"Natures way"
Natives lived with it, honored it, and praised it.
Are we moving so fast that we forget to raise it?

JonJon

(Fig. 18)
“Ominous clouds”
Reflections of what we see and what we want to see; matter only if we choose to see.

JonJon
"Butte Bohemian"

When all else says it can’t be done, you are there to do it. 
Awake to work, sleep to rest, and rest you need, from all you do and all you see.

JonJon

(Fig. 20)
“Rampage Train”

It’s coming at a frightening speed. Progressive havoc precedes destruction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of a nation. You just happen to be pondering at the station. Passengers are boarding with a blood stained pass. I guarantee that you will miss the train if you don’t get off your ass.

JonJon

(Fig. 21)
Bibliography


