

Using Art Therapy Techniques to Improve Self-Efficacy with Adolescents

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NAEA National Convention 2015

"Florence Cane asserts that if teachers are successful in 'bridging the gap between feeling and expression, then students' work will surpass their frustration and they will feel creatively accomplished'." (Cane, 1983)

Take the temperature. *Pre-assess your students to see where they are individually, and as a group, in their perspectives and perceptions of art and art-making.*

- How do they define art?
- How do they feel about making art?
- What is their prior experience with art?
- Do they think they are able to create art?

This will allow you to meet your students where they are, choose appropriate experientials, and build opportunities for them to grow and build self-efficacy. This will also allow you to anticipate problems.

Structure. *Students (and teachers!) benefit from structure.*

- Routines: Do Nows, weekly practice, clear expectations
- Materials: Fluid vs. Resistive Media, availability
- Portfolios: data to monitor individual growth over time

Structure will allow you and your students to build a regular practice and reinforce perseverance through creation. Setting clear expectations for this time can help create comfortability with exercises and problem-solving in the moment. Adolescents benefit from tracking personal growth over time, and collecting work and reflections in a portfolio gives you and your students concrete evidence of growth and change.

Make space. *Implementing these techniques will require special space in your classroom curriculum and planning.*

- Time: plan a minimum of 8-10 min for an experiential (leave time for reflection)
- Share: offer a chance to share work with others (peers or teacher)
- Reflect: reflect on the experience *EVERY TIME*

By building room for this practice in your classroom, not only are you refreshing your curriculum to create a student-centered environment, but you are giving students the opportunity to grow a personal practice and construct their own meaning and understanding of art-making.

Be mindful. *Being mindful in the classroom takes patience and practice, but creates space for true creativity.*

- Nurture: mentor your students towards exploration and discovery
- Safety: classroom culture should foster safe-space to experiment
- Flexibility: teacher sensitive to meeting students needs

In being mindful, the teacher builds an awareness and empathy with students in their artistic journey, creating a more holistic art education experience. You will also foster an environment where students are building their complex communication skills in both their artistic and verbal forms of communication.

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Definitions:

ART THERAPY: Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art-making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well being of individuals of all ages. Art therapists hold master's degrees and study fields such as human development and psychotherapy, and practice their work through counseling and clinical practicums (American Art Therapy Association, "About Us," 2013).

SELF-EFFICACY: Self-efficacy is one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks, and can greatly impact an individual's approach to tasks, goals and challenges, as well as development of personality. Among the reasons for behavior, he says "none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives. Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave" (Albert Bandura, 1992).

Resources:

- Buchalter, Susan I. (2004). *A Practical Art Therapy*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
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- Kerlavage, S. M. (1998). Understanding the learner. In Judith W. Simpson, Jean M. Delaney, Karen L. Carroll, Cheryl M. Hamilton, Sandra I. Kay, Marianne S. Kerlavage, Janet L. Olson, *Creating Meaning Through Art: Teacher As Choice Maker* (pp. 23-72). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, an imprint of Prentice-Hall.
- Malchiodi, Cathy A. (2007). *The Art Therapy Sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rubin, Judith A. (2001). *Approaches to Art Therapy: Theory and Technique* (2nd ed.). Great Britain: Routledge.
- Rubin, Judith A. (1999). *Introduction to Art Therapy: Sources and Resources*. Psychology Press.
- Wood, Chip. (1997) *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14 : A Resource for Parents and Teachers Expanded Edition*. Northeast Foundation for Children.

Experientials:

Non-Dominant Hand Drawing:

Materials: Drawing paper, pencil, colored pencils/crayons

Procedure: Students are asked to close their eyes and not look at their marks. They use their non-dominant hand and a pencil to scribble for 1 minute while teacher uses a timer. After the 1-minute scribble is complete, students are asked to look at scribble from all angles and use colored pencils to embellish the scribble, to make it more complete. Provide students with minimum of 7-10 minutes to complete. At the end of this exercise, students respond (verbal or written) to the prompt “How did this exercise make you feel?”

Watercolor Blending Painting:

Materials: 2 small pieces of watercolor paper, watercolor paints, colored markers, brushes and water

Procedure (two steps): 1. Students are asked to add 3 to 4 colors of paint on each paper and let the colors run together by turning or tilting the paper and/or adding more water. 2. When dry, students are asked to look at painting from all angles and use colored markers to create a piece of artwork. At the end of this exercise, students respond (verbal or written) to the prompt “How did this exercise make you feel?”

Drawing Emotions:

Materials: 12”x18” Drawing paper, oil pastels

Procedure: Students fold paper into 4 sections. Students as a group populate a list of emotions. Teacher chooses 4 emotions from the list. As teacher announces emotion, students are instructed to impulsively choose a color oil pastel and create anything that comes to mind for 2 minutes. Repeat process for 3 other emotion drawings. At the end of this exercise, students respond (verbal or written) to the prompt “How did this exercise make you feel?”

Personal Reflection Questions:

1. Where do you see issues of self-efficacy with your students? (examples, quotes)

2. Where can you make space in your schedule or curriculum for this practice?

3. For which structure would you need the most support to carry out?

4. What do you already do in your practice to be mindful? Where could you grow?
