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**EXAMINING HOW ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN THE CLASSROOM CAN
INCREASE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND
UNDERSTANDING OF COURSE MATERIAL**

by

Jake Taylor Marrazzo

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership, Administration and Research
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education

at
Rowan University
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Dedications

I dedicate this thesis to my loving father, who is not physically with us but has been my guiding light, inspiration, and support throughout my life. I also dedicate it to my amazing mother, brother, and our golden retriever, who have all guided, healed, and helped me through life's ups and downs. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my aunt, who has been a loving part of my educational journey.

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This research study would not have been possible without the support and guidance of Dr. Wright-Mair, who kindly opened her classroom to allow me to facilitate an artistic expression exercise to gather my research data. Each in-class facilitation was nothing short of astounding; this would not have been possible without her collaboration.

I want to express my appreciation to my supervisor during my graduate coordinator position, Mrs. Peterson, whose assistance, expertise, and passion for education have made me a better higher education professional.

Lastly, I thank Dr. Tinnin for his assistance in teaching, molding, and refining my thesis and for all the questions he has answered throughout this process.

Abstract

Jake Taylor Marrazzo

EXAMINING HOW ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN THE CLASSROOM CAN INCREASE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF COURSE MATERIAL

2023-2024

Andrew Tinnin, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

This qualitative research study examined how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material. This study consisted of graduate students in the Masters of Arts in Higher Education program at Rowan University, during the Fall/Spring 2023-2024 semesters, enrolled in at least one of the following courses: Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, and The College Student. The study utilized an artistic expression activity, painting, in connection with participants' course material and readings to understand the benefits of artistic expression on student success in the classroom. Some findings of this study show that artistic expression in connection with course material sparked participants' critical thinking, imagination, and creativity, had a deeper connection with classmates, allowing them to gain a better understanding of the readings, and let them to express themselves freely in the classroom conversation.

Keywords: artistic expression, painting, academic performance, course material, higher education, graduate students

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Imagine restructuring the way students can learn in the classroom. Imagine stepping outside the traditional lecture style of teaching that may lead some students to become disconnected and instead foster a new, creative, and fun pedagogical approach to teaching and learning that impacts each student on a holistic level. Can tests and papers show a teacher how bright a student is? Sure, in some instances, but you cannot understand *who* the actual student is. Academe has trained us to believe papers and tests are the only way to judge a student's intelligence. What if students are not good at taking tests or writing papers? Does that make them unworthy when trying to further their education? This style of teaching is the problem. With a diverse student population, everyone is a different learner, and having different teaching methods is crucial. Artistic expressions and painting, particularly, could significantly impact students' learning.

This qualitative research study examines how artistic expression in the classroom increases students' academic performance and understanding of course material by using weekly course readings and incorporating an art activity to enhance their learning. A phenomenological qualitative research method was used to (a) explore students' explanation of how utilizing artwork impacted their understanding of course material and (b) reflect on how utilizing artwork during the semester helped them as graduate students. This research study focused on graduate students enrolled in the Master of Higher Education Program during the 2023-2024 fall and spring semesters at Rowan University. The graduate students - enrolled in one of three courses: Crisis Management, Higher

Education in America, and The College Student. Following the activity - using surveys, observations, and focus group interviews with students will help me better understand who they are as learners and how painting can help students understand course material and increase their academic performance.

Statement of Problem

Using creative arts as a teaching method has great benefits: Students gain interpersonal skills (Simons & Hicks), an increased sense of belonging and authenticity in the classroom (Andrelchik & Schmitt, 2014), increased creativity and imagination when learning (Eisner, 2003), and the ability to learn from others, and understand their experiences (Lai, 2012). All these benefits of integrating artistic expression in the classroom can positively impact a student's academic performance.

Significance of Problem

Much of the research I draw upon discusses the benefits of various artistic expressions in the classroom, such as music, dance, and poetry. There has been limited research on using painting as an alternative learning style for graduate students since much of the research discusses implementing artistic expression in elementary and middle schools. Painting helps me with mindfulness in the heat of a stressful semester. Painting is a way to show who you are and escape the stressors of reality. Focusing on painting in my research will be a beautiful thing. Since everyone is a different learner, using multiple pedagogies is crucial to meet the needs of all students. I will see if painting affects and impacts the learning of other students in the classroom as it does for me. I hope it will enhance students' learning abilities.

Purpose of Study

This qualitative research study examines how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material for Rowan University graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Higher Education program. Using a phenomenological approach consisting of surveys, observations, and focus group interviews will help me better understand who they are as learners and how painting can help students understand course material and increase their academic performance.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Graduate students will be able to learn from the experiences of others because they will be painting a portrayal of how they view the topics discussed in class. Also, I assume they will use their creativity and imagination to develop their painting ideas. This will help them think critically and look at the discussed topics differently. Lastly, they will be less stressed when completing the painting activity while continuously learning than when writing an essay.

Limitations

The population of this study is graduate students in the Masters of Arts in Higher Education. This study does not consider other Master's programs or undergraduate students. Another limitation would be the artistic ability of the graduate students in this research study. The length of the painting session is another limitation. Since we will be

painting in our first session and coming back a few weeks later to conduct interviews and surveys, the participants may forget what they wanted to say and how they related their painting to the course material.

Operational Definition of Important Terms

Artistic Expression – the ability to express yourself creatively through art.

Course Material – the concepts and information you are discussing and learning about in class.

Academic performance – students' achievements in various school courses.

Graduate Student – Someone who has completed a bachelor's degree and is furthering their education.

Painting – applying multiple colors to a canvas using a brush to create an image.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Everyone is a different learner, and traditional lectures may fail to impact students. What benefits can creative arts (painting) help provide students with unique learning opportunities? (Simons & Hicks, 2006).

We hypothesize that using artistic expression – painting, in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material because it allows them to think critically, be creative, and learn from the experiences of their classmates.

Organization of Remaining Chapter of Study

Chapter II will review the literature on artistic expression in the classroom.

Chapter III describes the methodology I used during my qualitative research study.

Chapter IV: A discussion and report of my research data.

Chapter V: A conclusion of the results and their positive/negative impacts on graduate students, how artistic expression can be implemented in the classroom, and the implications for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

I start with a brief overview of the history of art and how it came to be - much of the research I draw upon discusses the benefits of different artistic expressions that have been utilized in the classroom—for example, music, hip-hop, rap poetry, interviewing artists, and arts-based projects. There is limited research on using painting as an alternative learning style for graduate students. Painting helps me with mindfulness in the heat of a stressful semester. Painting is a way to show who you are and escape the stressors of reality. Painting in my research will be a beautiful thing. I will see if painting affects and impacts the learning of other students in the classroom as it does for me. I hope it will be utilized to enhance students' ability to learn and comprehend information and provide professors with a new pedagogical approach to teaching.

The History of Art

We are surrounded by art everywhere we look, whether the products we buy at the grocery store, our clothes, or our natural environment. According to the work of Gryglewski et al., 2020, “In Ukraine, the instances of art have been known since the times of Trypillia culture, from the 5th century BC” (p. 57). Art was typically depicted in churches; it told a story and provided information to the people living in the area (Grylgewski et al., 2020). In addition to this Grylgewski et al., (2020) stated in their work, “Art can be oriented at performing a religious ritual function. It is one of the oldest roles of art, known since the prehistoric times of cave rock paintings” (p. 60).

Dating as far back as cave painting, art has been a part of our lives whether we know it or not. The question raised here is, can artistic expressions enhance academic performance and understanding of course material? Several studies and research have suggested the benefit of artistic expression on a student's academic achievement. This literature review examines these studies and research. It discusses what art contributes to the learner, supporting studies that back up the contributions, arts-based projects being implemented in schools, and other forms of artistic expression outside of art and their role in students' academic achievement.

The Arts Contributions to Learners

The participation gap between students is evident; the use of creative arts (painting, dance, music, theatre) can provide students falling behind with unique learning opportunities (Simons & Hicks, 2006). Using creative arts in the classroom is crucial because it allows students to think creatively and imaginatively (Simons & Hicks, 2006) and (Eisner, 2003). According to Simons & Hicks's (2006) research on the benefit of using creative arts to learn, "the results show that students using creative arts in learning helped them develop communication skills, questioning skills, team skills, problem-solving skills, lateral thinking, flexibility, and adaptability" (p. 11). Deasy (2022), supports this claim by stating, "significantly more self-regulatory behaviors were seen in lessons in which arts were integrated into the curriculum than lessons with straight academic instruction" (p. 76). Additionally, in Gibson & Larson's (2007) work, "visual arts offer unique experiences that can serve to enrich children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical dimensions" (p. 30). Another aspect discovered in using creative arts was the ability to be authentic, have a sense of belonging, and understand your identity

and others (Andrelchik & Schmitt, 2014; Eisner, 2003). To support these claims, two descriptive studies draw upon their research regarding the connection between creative arts and student achievement.

Artistic Expression Studies

The work by Punzalan (2018) had a sample size of 44 first-year elementary education students at Bulacan State University. “The primary purpose was to identify the impact of visual arts or art integration in the student’s academic performance” (Punzalan, 2018, p. 122). There was an experimental and control group. Pretests and posttests were used to see if visual arts increased academic achievement (Punzalan, 2018).

Communication skills were compared using pre- and post-oral tests (Punzalan, 2018).

Results:

It may be concluded that visual arts or art integration was effective. An active participation from the experimental group regarding various activities was outstanding. The overall findings revealed the advantage of art integration and the use of visual arts in the learning process of the students. The traditional lecture-discussion method used in the control group revealed a less active participation and difficulty in the learning process (Punzalan, 2018, p. 125).

(Stein, 2009) used a more statistical approach when addressing student academic achievement when taking part in creative arts:

Overwhelmingly, 94% believe that knowledge, experience, and participation in the arts contribute to students’ achievement (see Table 9) (Stein, 2009, p. 42).

Additionally, 22 out of the 22 (100%) subjects surveyed somewhat agreed, agreed, and strongly agreed that the arts (theatre, music, dance, and the visual arts) make a difference in a student's GPA and standardized test scores (see Table 10) (Stein, 2009, p.43).

With these results, we can say the use of the arts can help enhance a student's academic achievement. However, there has been limited research regarding implementing arts-based projects in a graduate school setting. The following section will address four arts-based projects conducted in the classroom and how they positively affected the students.

Arts-Based Projects in the Classroom

The first arts-based project was conducted by Kanagala and Rendon (2013) using a contemplative, arts-based pedagogy approach known as the cajita project for students in higher education leadership and student affairs. To engage with course material differently, the cajita project is an artistic canvas created with artifacts, pictures, symbols, colors, etc. The materials chosen are representations of their development as a person and student (Kanagala & Rendon, 2013). It helps them understand who they are, what they want to bring, or what they want to change in their profession in higher education (Kanagala & Rendon, 2013). Providing these opportunities will help students self-reflect, gain motivation and responsibility for their work, and be more engaged with student programs on campus (Kanagala & Rendon, 2013). Understanding different perspectives can be used to engage with a diverse student body and find ways to improve ineffective systems and programs (Kanagala & Rendon, 2013).

Secondly, Lai agrees with the findings of Kanagala & Rendon, an interview project where students interview professional artists to increase global consciousness, understanding, appreciation, and interaction with other cultures (Lai, 2012). Through this arts-based project, students understood other cultures' backgrounds, hardships, and traditions within our world (Lai, 2012).

The third arts-based project was conducted by Hunter-Doniger and Howard (2018). Using culturally responsive teaching, storytelling, and art, they have adopted a new model, STEAM. The “A” stands for Arts. Artwork can increase creativity and imagination when learning STEM topics (Hunter-Doniger & Howard, 2018). Art and storytelling can bridge the achievement gap for students, create a fun learning environment, and combine science, technology, and math into one lesson unique to each student’s learning skills (Hunter-Doniger & Howard, 2018). Using art in STEM can also increase students’ sociopolitical consciousness (Hunter-Doniger & Howard, 2018).

The last work is by Hanley and Noblit (2009) in their research using hip-hop and rap poetry as an alternative pedagogical approach. The assignment was applied to different subject areas to enhance reading, writing, and content knowledge to see if it leads to academic success (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). The results showed an increased understanding of their backgrounds and feelings of validation in the classroom, much like those found by Hunter-Doniger & Howard (2018) and Lai (2012). Feeling validated in the classroom can lead to academic success (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). This literature review included a table of skills learned through artistic expression. Some skills were “critical thinking, cultural knowledge, empowerment, and active and affective learning” (Hanley, 2009, p. 66). A new body of research shows that art is not the only form of

artistic expression that increases academic performance. Music can play a role in students' academic achievements as well.

Student Success

McNair et al. (2016) presented an alarming realization, “In the search for the college-ready student, we put the burden of readiness and preparation on the student, when in reality, preparing today’s students for the rigors of college should be a shared responsibility” (p. 13). A student-ready college is one that is ready to meet the needs of all students, fostering their success from the beginning as opposed to the student taking full ownership (McNair et al., 2016). Preparing them for their educational journey, from their first class to graduation, becoming connected to the campus and its culture through the interconnections across campus departments, and developing students as individuals as they advance into their future professions and engage in society (McNair et al., 2016). A student-ready college must be structured for student advancement and must be aware of the barriers many college students face when deciding where to go to college and how they plan to knock those barriers down (McNair et al., 2016).

McNair et al. (2016) define student success as:

From our perspective, if the goal is to prepare students for the kinds of challenges they may confront in work, life, and as citizens, both U.S. and global, and to help them integrate and apply their knowledge and skills to complex and unscripted problems, then the definition of student success at an institution is more than the institution’s mission statement, graduation rates, or retention rates. It is the

institutional learning outcomes. It is the learning that every student will achieve before graduating from the institution (McNair et al., 2016, p. 54).

Music's Contribution to Student Success

In Kelstrom's (1998) work, "it was found that music/arts students consistently scored significantly higher on both the math and verbal sections of the SAT" (p. 36). This agrees with the work Yoon (2000) conducted, "Evidence for the benefits of music education is found in standardized test scores, academic recognition, and high grades" (p. 14). This may be because music can stimulate both sides of the brain to work synchronously (Yoon, 2000). When we develop both sides of our brain, our capabilities will increase (Yoon, 2000).

Conclusion

Creative arts in the classroom has been shown to benefit students' academic achievement. Using creative arts helps students think creatively, imaginatively, and can bridge the participation gap for underserved students (Eisner, 2003; Hunter-Doniger & Howard, 2018; Simon & Hicks, 2006). The arts can enhance students' cognitive development (Gibson & Larson, 2007). The use of artistic expression projects in school has excellent benefits as well. Several researchers agreed that the arts allowed them to be their authentic selves gained a better understanding of their own identity, as well as the background of other cultures (Hunter-Doniger & Howard, 2018; Kanagala & Rendon, 2013; Lai, 2012).

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Context of Study

The study I will be conducting will utilize artistic expression (painting) to enhance the academic performance and understanding of course material at Rowan University. Using a painting activity to understand how well it can strengthen students' understanding of chapter material and who they are as a person and a learner that traditional lectures cannot. According to our texts, "Qualitative research stresses multiple realities that are rooted in participants' views and perceptions. A focus on understanding and meaning is based on social interactions, verbal narratives, and observations, rather than numbers" (McMillan, 2016, p. 11).

The method I will be utilizing in my research is a qualitative approach. A phenomenological approach using a close-ended survey, observations, and focus group interviews with students will help me better understand who they are and how painting can help students understand course material, whereas using a quantitative approach cannot help me understand their holistic experience.

Theoretical Framework

Three theories will strengthen my understanding of my research. The first is cognitive theory. Cognitive theory is the process of how people think and make sense of the world or what they are learning (Patton et al., 2016). Everyone has a brain that works differently in creative and imaginative ways. One's ability to construct information will

look different from another, and painting is the same way. Creativity and imagination can help me understand how they interpret the course material, and we can learn from each other.

Next, using social constructivism is the second theoretical approach. Since using a cognitive theory will help us understand how other students learn, social constructivism will help me tie it all together regarding how we make meaning and learn from the experiences of others. McMillan states, “Knowledge then for each individual, is built upon their lived experiences, and situation-specific interactions with others. Meaning is ‘socially constructed’ arising from the interactions with others” (McMillan, 2016, p. 307).

Third, identity development theory. Identity development theory will help describe the lived experiences of my research group and how their understanding of themselves will help them make sense of who they are as a learner (Patton et al., 2016). Using a qualitative approach will help me better understand the experience of others, how students interpret and make meaning of these experiences, and how it can strengthen their understanding of the course material. Learning using a qualitative approach will provide a richer understanding of how students understand course material and how artistic expression (painting) helped them with the process. As I move forward as a scholar-practitioner, having this knowledge can help me integrate activities like this in the classroom so that every student can learn effectively in creative and imaginative ways that a traditional lecture fails to do.

Study Purpose

This qualitative research study examines how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material for Rowan University graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Higher Education program. Using a phenomenological approach, such as surveys, observations, and focus group interviews, will help me better understand who they are as learners and how painting can help students understand course material and increase their academic performance.

Research Question

Everyone is a different learner, and traditional lectures may fail to impact students. What benefits can creative arts (painting) help provide students with unique learning opportunities? (Simons & Hicks, 2006).

Population and Sampling

The population I will be studying is male and female of all gender identities and backgrounds who are graduate students ages 21- 60 years old at Rowan University enrolled in the Master of Arts in Higher Education. I work alongside the College of Education with a graduate professor of mine. The sample of students I will use is students enrolled in Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, and The College Student.

Data Instrumentation and Collection

I will contact Dr. Wright-Mair to conduct this research study. The timeline for my study will take place during the fall and spring semesters in their Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, and College Student courses. All classes comprise roughly 20-30 students in total. Students will be instructed to paint an image representing their understanding of the chapter material they read for class that week. I will be a complete observer, which is, according to our text, someone who “observes without becoming a part of the process in any way” (McMillan, 2016, p. 340). I will observe in a natural setting.

Following this task, I will ask open-ended questions in a semi-structured focus group interview with the students in the class. McMillan states, “Focus groups are an effective method for obtaining in-depth information about a concept or issue and learning from people’s experiences...instead of being directed by predetermined hypotheses or controlled by existing measures, focus groups enable participants to express themselves in their own words in an open and flexible process” (McMillan, 2016, p.348). Focus group interviews will be an effective method since I am using a phenomenological approach with the theories of cognitivism, social constructivism, and identity development in mind. The student will be able to learn from their peers and make meaning of their experiences by communicating with others. Following the activity, I will send a survey to understand each student’s experiences.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, I will use open coding to collect and categorize the information. Following open coding, I will utilize axial coding to combine the categories into similar themes that arise (McMillan, 2016). To ensure trustworthiness, I will ask clarifying questions, re-read what I interpreted from the focus group interviews, and regurgitate my findings back to the group. To ensure credibility, I will use member checking. “Member checking is completed when the researcher asks the participants to review interpretations and conclusions, and the participants confirm the findings” (McMillan, 2016, p. 357). These strategies for collecting and analyzing data will ensure credibility and trustworthiness and that I interpreted the information from the focus group correctly.

Chapter 4

Discussion and Report of Research Data

Population Sample

This qualitative research study examines how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material for 20-30 Rowan University graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Higher Education program. These 20-30 participants participated in an artistic expression activity where I facilitated the class and gave them a painting prompt connected with their weekly readings. Using a phenomenological approach using surveys, observations, and focus group interviews will help me better understand who they are as learners and how painting can help students understand course material and increase their academic performance to answer the question regarding what benefits can creative arts (painting) provide students with unique learning opportunities? (Simons & Hicks, 2006). Five of the 20-30 participants completed a focus group interview to help me better understand their experiences, and eight completed the follow-up survey.

The remainder of this Chapter will consist of a combination of the findings of the transcribed experiences of the participants who took part in a focus group interview, their demographic breakdown, common themes that arose, and the findings presented in charts based on the experiences of the eight research study participants who completed the survey following the artistic expression activity in connection with their class readings.

Table 1 displays the demographic breakdown of the participants who participated in the focus group interviews after completing the artistic expression activity held in class.

Table 1

Focus Group Interview Participants Demographic Data

Participant	Age	Gender	Master's year
P1	23	Female	Second year
P2	23	Female	Second year
P3	23	Female	Second year
P4	23	Female	First-year
P5	22	Female	First-year

Painting Prompts

The following text is the painting prompts from two of the three in-class facilitations I held to gather my research data; the following prompts were for the participants enrolled in the Crisis Management and Higher Education in America course. P1-P3 painted their canvases in Crisis Management, and P4 and P5 painted them to the prompt in Higher Education in America.

Crisis Management Course

Paint a portrayal of your experiences with civil unrest and how you have made sense of this in relation to your identities. Consider your processing journey, including

feelings you experience on this journey and how you have navigated feeling (or not feeling) seen, heard, and valued—whether at Rowan or your previous institution. How does your painting reflect your feelings and experiences, and how are they connected to the readings? What stands out when looking at your and other students' paintings?

Higher Education in America Course

Paint a portrayal of your experiences with race and racism and how you have made sense of this in relation to your identities. Consider your processing journey, including feelings you experience on this journey, and how you have navigated feeling (or not feeling) seen, heard, and valued—whether at Rowan or your previous institution.

Remember, your painting should serve as an example of your experiences with race and racism in the context of higher education. Use your artistic expression to inspire, reflect, empathize, and depict the change you want to see in higher education.

As you paint, think about positive changes in higher education that will foster understanding and build bridges across diverse communities. Let your artwork be a powerful visual story where everyone's journey is celebrated.

How does your painting reflect your feelings and experiences, and how are they connected to the readings? What stands out when looking at your and other students' paintings?

Common Themes

Table 2 displays the common themes that arose from the five participants who participated in the focus group interview portion of this qualitative research study. An X

is placed in the box underneath the participants labeled P1-P5 who stated similar experiences.

Table 2

Common Themes From the Focus Group

Theme	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Deeper connection with classmates and readings	X	X	X	X	X
Sparked critical thinking, creativity, and imagination	X	X	X	X	X
Stepped outside of comfort zone	X		X	X	X
Stress relief and mindfulness while continuously learning	X	X	X	X	X

Interview Questions and Findings

The following text is a transcription of some of the questions and responses of the five participants who completed the interview portion of this research study and the common themes found in Table 2. P1- portrays the interviewees and their experiences in this research study using painting to increase their academic performance and understanding of course material.

Q1: Did creating art in connection with your readings positively or negatively impact your learning?

All five participants stated that it positively impacted their learning by challenging how they usually think by looking at it through a different lens. Their feelings that arose were portrayed on their canvases. Below are some of their responses to question one.

P1: It positively impacted my learning. It challenged me to think differently about how I take in information and process it.

P2: To be able to make common themes and express what I felt when reading the text into my painting, and for me, that helped me comprehend a lot more about what the readings were telling us.

P4: Being in graduate school, I am so used to taking in so many different readings; they are all formative and very great, but to a certain extent, you get tired, and it is nice to do something different and take knowledge in a different way than you are used to. It was helpful to unlock a creative side while doing it so you can remember it more.

Q3: Did using art spark your critical thinking, creativity, and imagination when analyzing what you read? How so?

P2: A bit of both is happening; it sparked my creativity and imagination. I felt a lot of freedom when I did it.

P3: I am going to say yes to question three. Even outside of class, I write songs, which helps me process big feelings. So, even doing it in the

classroom and processing big chunks of text and big ideas helps ground the material and make it feel more familiar.

P4: Yeah, to go off what you were saying. I agree because when you go into class, you are often ready and quick with the information you want to say. You have learned through the reading, but you are not digesting it. You are just getting your participation for the day. Sometimes, I feel like you must compete to be heard or get something across, which adds a lot of pressure when you are meant to be in a setting where you are supposed to learn. So, it is nice to have the option to express yourself this way and have less pressure surrounding it.

Q4: What do you think the benefits are, if any, of using artistic expression in the classroom to increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material?

P1: It does help you see other people's perspectives differently. So again, with all the talking and the exchange of words, sometimes things can get lost. However, now you have that added connection with the form of the picture. That helps add to the learning experience.

P2: The benefits are that not every student learns the same way. So, breaking up the standard traditional learning style is helpful to get students out of their comfort zone. You often do some of your best learning when you break out of that comfort. It was helpful because when you do a creative project and explain your thought process and perspective, you get a lot from other people, too, and you might not have thought about it like they

did. However, even the people who did not like a creative project had something profound to say and made those connections and themes. Moreover, I was able to get their perspective on it and learn from them as well.

- P3:** One of the benefits is just giving students another alternative as opposed to writing more papers or presenting. If I had the option to do something creative, I would not have to struggle through writing a book report or worrying about standing up and talking in front of the whole class.
- P4:** It was very helpful to draw it out. It helped me grasp the concepts better, especially after seeing what everyone else did, like my other classmates, because we all had the same problem delivered very differently through messages and pictures, and it all answered the question. So, seeing the multiple perspectives that can be applied to one thing was helpful.
- P5:** I got a better understanding of the readings, too, because, looking at everyone's stuff, I was like, oh, that makes sense, because everyone had a different opinion of the prompt. So, seeing everyone's stuff helped me understand it more.

Survey Findings

In this section, I will discuss my survey findings and provide pie charts to visually display the eight survey participants' experience regarding the painting activity in class.

One hundred percent of respondents stated they saw the benefit of using artistic expression in the classroom to understand what they are learning. Six of the eight participants strongly agreed or agreed that they comprehended the weekly readings better, while the remaining two neither agreed nor disagreed.

Five out of the eight participants answered they strongly disagreed or disagreed when asked if they needed an artistic background to do this activity, and three out of eight answered neither agree nor disagree. This is an important statistic to highlight because future educators who utilize artistic expression in the classroom may have students worried that their creative ability is not up to par for such an activity. This survey finding suggests that you do not need to be a Picasso or Van Gogh to participate in such an activity.

Additionally, one hundred percent of survey participants felt comfortable doing this activity. Fostering a supportive and safe environment is crucial when utilizing artistic expression in the classroom and was vital in this research study. It can alleviate the stress and uncertainty of sharing and open doors that conventional teaching methods may fail to do, allowing everyone to contribute to the conversation even if they do not have an artistic background.

Moreover, if participants were given the choice to do a traditional essay assignment or utilize artistic expression instead, seven out of eight strongly disagreed or disagreed that they would choose the essay, while one out of eight strongly agreed they would choose the essay.

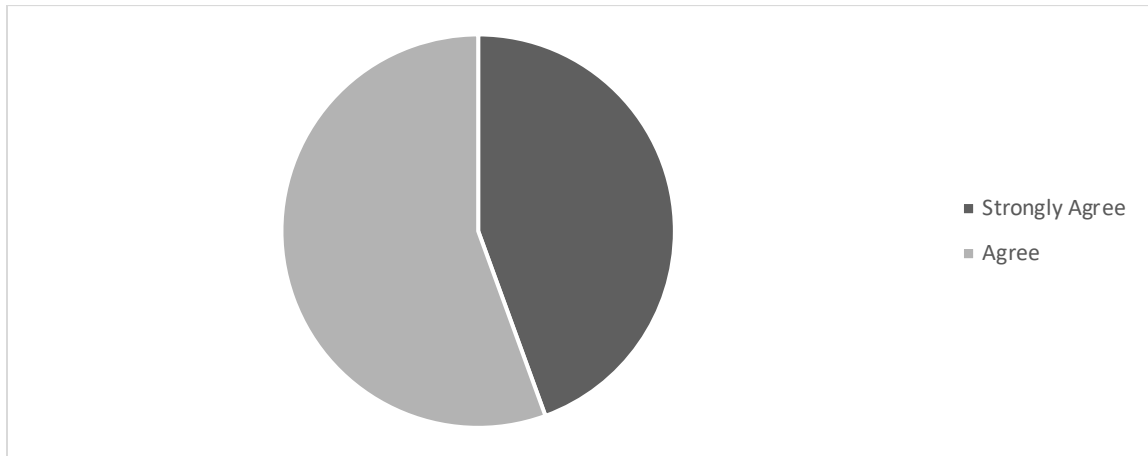
Furthermore, when asked if artistic expression opens doors that conventional methods cannot do, seven out of eight either strongly agreed or agreed, and one out of eight answered neither agree nor disagree. This statistic is supported by the transcribed participants' interviews, where P2 felt free while doing this activity, and P4 said they could express themselves in the classroom. In contrast, a traditional lecture-style classroom may not allow students to express themselves this way. All interviewee participants agreed they were able to make a deeper connection with their classmates and learn from their experiences to help them better understand the course material. Edgar Degas, a famous French artist, would support the interviewee's responses with his quote, "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." (Thompson, 2018, para. 2).

Impact of Artistic Expression in the Classroom

Figures 1 and 2 visually represent participants' responses to two survey questions that show the impact of using artistic expression in the classroom.

Figure 1

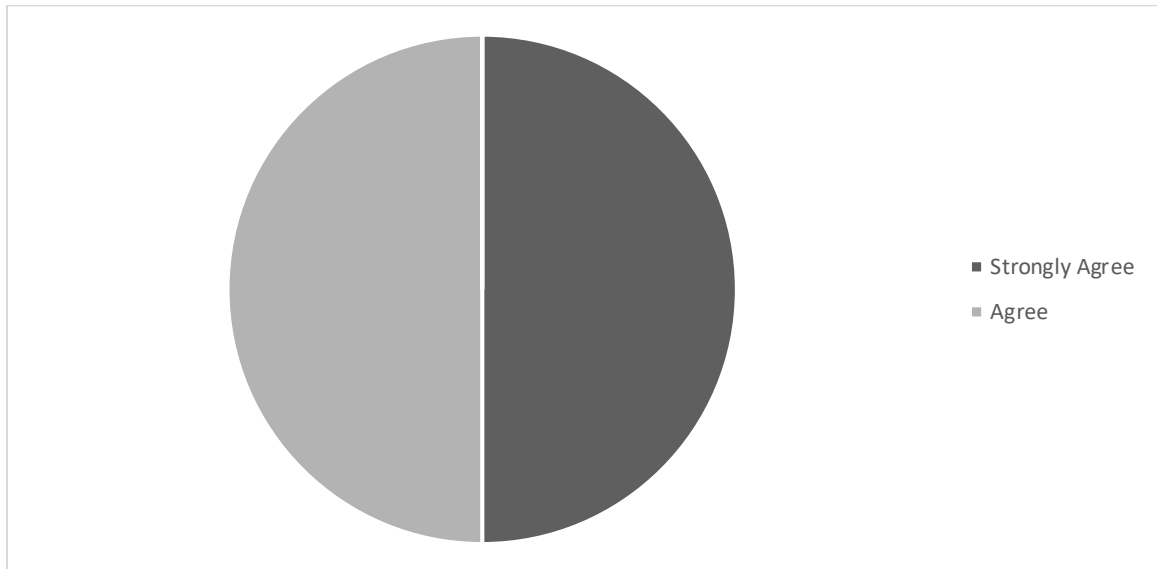
Survey Question 1: Artistic Expression (Painting) Allowed Me to Understand Course Material Differently



Note. One hundred percent of survey respondents strongly agree or agree that artistic expression allowed them to understand course material differently.

Figure 2

*Survey Question 10: I Am Going to Remember This Art Activity and How It Connects
With Course Material Over an Essay*



Note. One hundred percent of survey respondents strongly agree or agree they would remember this art activity and how it connects with course material over an essay.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussion of Findings

As you can see, using artistic expression in a classroom profoundly impacted the study participants. As some stated in the interviews, it will be different for everyone as some may enjoy a traditional lecture-style classroom, and some may not, but having multiple teaching pedagogies is crucial to meeting the needs of all students. All the participants felt safe, supported, and valued in the classroom when completing the artistic expression activity in class. This finding in my research supports the information presented in the Chapter 2 literature from Andrechek and Schmitt (2014), Eisner (2003), and Hanley and Noblit (2009): the ability to be themselves in the classroom and have a sense of belonging and validation in their contributions to the class discussion while also enhancing their critical thinking.

Moreover, participants in this research had a greater understanding of their classmates and their experiences, such as that found in Lai (2012), which enhanced their comprehension of the reading material. The freedom associated with artistic expression in the classroom the interview participants in this study discussed connects with the work of Gibson & Larson (2007) and understanding the different perspectives applied to the same painting prompt gave them a rich experience. Lastly, a common theme that was presented in this study was the critical thinking and imagination artistic expression brought out in the participants and was also found in the work of Simons & Hicks (2006).

Regarding this research study and the interview participants' experiences, P4 said it was a pleasant environment, and P1 and P5 said this activity made them feel good. P3 said it was a groundbreaking and raw experience, and P2 felt excited. Combining all these aspects into a classroom has been shown in this qualitative study to impact students' learning and comprehension of course material.

Research Question & Hypothesis

Everyone is a different learner, and traditional lectures may fail to impact students. What benefits can creative arts (painting) help provide students with unique learning opportunities? (Simons & Hicks, 2006).

The data from the survey and interview responses in Chapter 4 present the following learning benefits. (1) A deeper connection with their classmates, understanding others' experiences and how they related to the readings in different ways allowed other participants to understand the readings better. (2) Sparked their critical thinking, creativity, and imagination when making an artistic connection to the course material. (3) Stepping outside one's comfort zone, allowing them to grow as a student. (4) Stress relief and mindfulness while continuously learning. (5) Viewing the course material fun and engagingly differs from a traditional lecture-style classroom. (6) The ability to express oneself in the classroom without competing to be heard or valued in the conversation. (7) Offering a different approach to teaching and learning that can benefit a diverse student population in the classroom.

These findings support the hypothesis that using artistic expression – painting, in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course

material because it allows them to think critically, be creative, and learn from the experiences of their classmates.

Conclusions

The concept of windows and mirrors presented in Geroski, Okech, and Kraus (2021) correlates with the findings presented in Chapter 4 during the interview portion on participants' experiences in this research study. It should be considered for future practice and research.

Creating windows in a group refers to the creation of experiences that help group members see and respect multiple lifestyles (a window to see through to the life of others) and multiple perspectives of others. Windows expose group members to the lived experiences of students who are not like them with the intent of enhancing perspective taking, empathy, and creating a basis for developing genuine relationships across differences. (Geroski et al., 2021, p. 12).

One of the inherent benefits of this study was that it allowed the sharing of stories and experiences and enabled the student to look through a window and understand the experiences of others, which is supported by the transcribed quotes in Chapter 4 from the interview participants. Additionally, giving the participants a mirror to represent their lives and experiences in connection with their paintings and weekly readings gives them feelings of validation and a positive contribution to the class discussion.

New teaching pedagogies are crucial in meeting all students' needs, as some may be visual, kinesthetic, or auditory learners. Universities must ask themselves if their university is student ready vs. are students college ready (McNair et al., 2016). That is

why utilizing artistic expression in the classroom is so important. It provides additional learning opportunities to encourage relationship-building, critical thinking, imagination, and creativity. Students engage with the course material differently and grow as learners in the process.

Recommendation for Future Practice and Research

This research study utilized a qualitative approach to examine how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material. Future researchers should consider using a quantitative approach by quizzing students on the course material following the artistic expression activity to see if there is a direct correlation between their experiences with the activity and the improvement of test scores post-activity. Secondly, expanding the research into different fields of study, such as business and liberal arts, and mainly focusing on the benefits of artistic expression on undergraduate student achievement.

Limitations

This research study has limitations that future researchers should consider. First, the population only consisted of graduate students in the Masters of Arts in Higher Education program. Other Master's programs at Rowan University and undergraduate students across various majors were not a part of this research, so it is unknown how they could have benefited from using artistic expression in the classroom.

Secondly, the sample size of the survey and interview responses could also be a limitation since they only captured a small scope of the participants' experiences, and all the interview participants were female. Thirdly, the painting session length was roughly

an hour, which means that some participants may not have been able to add everything they wished to their paintings.

Lastly, the time between the in-class painting activity and the interviews was also a limitation. Conducting an interview a few days after the painting activity instead of a couple of weeks would have been ideal as the information would have been fresher in the participants' minds.

Final Remarks

So, I will leave you with a challenge. Whether you are a professor, administrator, or student, I challenge you to step outside your regular learning routine and be open to embracing an artistic expression approach into your classroom, work life, or learning journey – and it could be for a week. The flower that can blossom from this experience may alter your learning or pedagogical approach. Artistic expression is a variety of things. Painting, poetry, dance, etc., artistic ability is within all of us – whether you can see it or not. Our goal is not to be Picasso but to think differently about our actions. Our artistic expressions share a story, and we can articulate that story better than when words sometimes fail to do so. You will see things differently, you will connect with others more deeply, and you will develop a new learning style that can change the way we go about our educational journey. Artistic expression opens doors that conventional methods fail to do. Your challenge, your journey, and your success.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

12/5/23, 2:02 PM

Rowan University Mail - [EXTERNAL] PRO-2023-392 - Initial: Approval Letter - Expedited (Initial)



Marrazzo, Jake <marraz95@students.rowan.edu>

[EXTERNAL] PRO-2023-392 - Initial: Approval Letter - Expedited (Initial)

1 message

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>
To: marraz95@students.rowan.edu, tinnin@rowan.edu

Wed, Nov 29, 2023 at 9:04 AM



DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111
Rowan IORG/IRB: Glassboro/CMSRU
IRB Chair Person: Dr. Ane Johnson
IRB Director: Eric Gregory
Effective Date: November 29, 2023

Notice of Approval - Initial

Study ID: PRO-2023-392
Title: Artistic Expression
Principal Investigator: Drew Tinnin
Study Coordinator: Jake Marrazzo
Co-Investigator(s): Jake Marrazzo
Sponsor: Internal
Study Sites: Rowan University, Glassboro

Submission Type: Initial
Submission Status: Approved

Approval Date: November 28, 2023
Expiration Date: November 27, 2024
Approval Cycle: 12 months
Continuation Review Required: Yes
Closure Required: Yes

Review Type: Expedited
Expedited Category: 6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Pregnant Women, Human Fetus, and Neonates Code: N/A
Pediatric/Children Code: N/A
Prisoner(s) – Biomedical or Behavioral: N/A

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ik=abc09b451d&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f:1783907413830949532&siml=msg-f:17839074138309495...> 1/2

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer

Artistic Expression in the Classroom

Are you interested in participating in a research study examining how artistic expression in the classroom increases students' academic performance and understanding of course material? Participation in this study is voluntary. You must be a Rowan University student enrolled in the M.A. in Higher Education Program and enrolled in one of the following courses – Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, and The College Student.

As a volunteer participant, you will complete an in-class painting activity in connection with your course readings for that week for two and a half hours. You will be asked to complete a short online survey, which will take 5-10 minutes. Responses will be kept confidential on a password-protected site (Qualtrics). You will also be asked to participate in a focus group interview that will last around 1 hour. Your responses will be kept confidential on a password-protected Rowan Google Drive Cloud that will only be accessible to the researcher. During the interviews, you will choose a pseudonym name, which will be used to keep your anonymity when the data is analyzed and reported.

Are you between 18 and 65 years of age? Are you male/female? Are you a Rowan University student enrolled in the M.A. in Higher Education Program and enrolled in the following courses – Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, and The College Student?

This study will take place at Rowan University James Hall via an in-person or online Zoom interview, and will be asked to complete an online survey.

https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d5wuwXs8AbCEmCa

Participants will receive no compensation for participating in this research study, but our study's results may help enhance our ability to develop some guidelines concerning different learning styles and teaching pedagogies that would benefit students and teachers within and across education.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research-related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

Drew Tinnin, Ed.D.
Educational Leadership, Administration, and Research
856-256-4909

Or Co-Investigator:

Jake Marrazzo
Marraz95@rowan.edu
856-419-7927

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

Office of Research Compliance
(856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU

This study has been approved by Rowan University's IRB (Study # Pro-2023-392)

Appendix C

Online Survey Consent and Questions



ONLINE SURVEY (ALTERNATE CONSENT)

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled Examining How Artistic Expression in the Classroom Increases Students' Academic Performance and Understanding of Course Material. You are included in this survey because you are enrolled in the M.A. in Higher Education Program at Rowan University and are enrolled in either the Grief Counseling, Higher Education in America, or The College Student. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 10-30.

The survey may take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

The purpose of this research study is to understand how art (painting) can impact a student's learning by using their weekly course readings and incorporating an art activity to enhance their learning. As well as develop a new and creative teaching pedagogy different from traditional lectures and essays. The total number of participants in this study is 10-30. This is a required course assignment, and you could choose whether to participate in the research. You still have to do the assignment if you do not participate in the research.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may benefit from this study by adopting a fun, creative, new learning style to help you better comprehend and retain information in your future classes. Professors may benefit from this study by utilizing artistic expression activities in class to engage with their students.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact the Principal investigator. Drew Tinnin, Ed.D. tinnin@rowan.edu

Dr. Drew Tinnin
tinnin@rowan.edu
856-256-4909

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at (856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU.

This study has been approved by the Rowan IRB, PRO-2023-392

Please complete the checkboxes below.

To participate in this survey, you must be enrolled in the M.A. in Higher Education Program at Rowan University, and enrolled in either the Grief Counseling, Higher Education in America, or The College Student courses. Place a check box here ☐

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey ☐

Qualtrics link: https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/survey-builder/SV_d5wuWxs8AbCEmCa/edit

Survey Questions

Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree.

1. Artistic expression (painting in particular) allowed me to understand course material differently.
2. I was able to comprehend the weekly readings better.
3. I see myself painting and/or doodling to help me understand and retain what I learn in the future.
4. Given the choice to do a traditional essay style assignment or utilize artistic expression instead, I would choose the essay.
5. I was comfortable doing this activity.
6. I am open to this new style of learning.
7. I felt like I needed an artistic background to do this activity.
8. I can see the benefit of using artistic expression in the classroom to understand what I am learning.
9. I am going to remember this art activity and how it connects with the course material over an essay.
10. I felt fully focused during this activity.
11. Artistic expression opens doors that conventional teaching methods cannot do.
12. What is your email address?

Appendix D

Consent In-Person and Interview Script



VERBAL SCRIPT FOR INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Agreement to participate:

Thank you in advance for taking the time to speak with me today. Before we begin, I want to provide you with information about this study and answer any questions you may have.

I am Jake Marrazzo, from Rowan University's Department of Educational Services and Leadership; I am a current Master's student working on my thesis. I am conducting a research study on how artistic expression in the classroom increases students' academic performance and understanding of course material. The research will help me understand the ways students comprehend and retain information and develop a new teaching pedagogy that can impact students learning.

Today you will be asked to participate in a focus group, which should take approximately one hour. Your participation is voluntary. There are minimal risks associated with this focus group, but I will do my best to limit them. Risks of this study may include [discomfort with interview questions and past experiences that may bring discomfort. You can skip any question or ask to stop the focus group at any time without any consequences.

Your responses will be anonymous and only your pseudonym will be identified, if mentioned at all, during the final write-up. With your permission, the focus group will be audio recorded. The audio files will be stored in a password-protected Rowan Google Drive Cloud that will only be accessible to the researcher.

During the focus group, I will not be able to guarantee confidentiality because we will be discussing information as a group. Therefore, please do not share anything that you would feel uncomfortable being shared with others in or outside the group.

There are no costs or compensation to participate in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, now, during, or after study participation, please let me know or feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Drew Tinnin. If you'd like to speak to someone outside of the research team, you can contact the Rowan University's Office of Research Compliance.

Do you have any questions?

[IF YES: take time to answer all questions.]

[IF NO: proceed.]

Do you agree to participate in this focus group?

[IF YES: proceed.]

[IF NO: thank them for their time.]

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Drew Tinnin. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape (record sound) as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the research team

The recording(s) will include the subjects chosen/assigned pseudonyms when they are referred to as such

The recording(s) will be stored in a secure, password-protected Google Drive Cloud provided by Rowan University and will be destroyed upon the completion of the thesis project.

Do I have your permission to audio record this [activity]?

[IF YES: proceed.]

[IF NO: ask if they would like to continue without being recorded, or thank them for their time.]

Interview Questions:

1. Did creating art in connection with your readings positively or negatively impact your learning?
2. Do you think most students learn best from a traditional lecture-style classroom or a classroom that allows you to be creative in the ways you comprehend information? Why?
3. Did using art spark your critical thinking, creativity, and imagination when analyzing what you read? How so?
4. What do you think the benefits are, if any, of using artistic expression in the classroom to increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material?

5. Were you able to make an artistic connection to your readings? If so, how did you make a connection to your readings?
6. How did this activity make you feel?

Conclusion:

Is there anything else you would like to share before we conclude the focus group?

Once again, thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Do you mind if I contact you again if I have any questions or need clarification about the things we have discussed today?

As a reminder, you can reach out to me or the Principal Investigator, Drew Tinnin, at any time if you have any additional questions. If you'd like to speak to someone outside of the research team, you can contact Rowan University's Office of Research Compliance. If you'd like to take down contact information, I can give it to you now:

Jake Marrazzo (me): marraz95@rowan.edu

Drew Tinnin, Ed.D.: tinnin@rowan.edu

Office of Research Compliance: (856) 256-4078

Appendix E

Consent 2



KEY INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

ADULT CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY: Examining How Artistic Expression in the Classroom Increases Students Academic Performance and Understanding of Course Material (PRO-2023-392)

Co-Investigators: Drew Tinnin, Ed.D. & Jake Marrazzo

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide key information that will help you decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study.

Please carefully read the key information provided in questions 1-9 and 14 below. The purpose behind those questions is to provide clear information about the purpose of the study, study-specific information about what will happen in the course of the study, what are the anticipated risks and benefits, and what alternatives are available to you if you do not wish to participate in this research study.

The study team will explain the study to you and they will answer any questions you might have before volunteering to take part in this study. It is important that you take your time to make your decision. You may take this consent form with you to ask a family member or anyone else before agreeing to participate in the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask the study team and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

The Principal Investigator, Dr. Drew Tinnin, or another member of the study team will also be asked to sign this informed consent.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this research study is to examine how artistic expression in the classroom can increase students' academic performance and understanding of course material. This study is for thesis research and data collection.

The specific aims of the study are:

- How art (painting) can impact a student's learning using their weekly course readings and incorporating an art activity to enhance their learning.
- Develop a new and creative teaching pedagogy different from traditional lectures and essays.

2. Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are enrolled in either Crisis Management, Higher Education in America, or The College Student Course.

3. What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?

1. You will be asked to read your weekly course readings and/or watch a video in preparation for class.
2. Following your readings/videos you will be asked to take part in an artistic expression activity to demonstrate your understanding of what you read/watched.
3. I will ask open-ended questions in an interview style about the activity.
4. You will be asked to complete a survey about your experience.

4. Who may take part in this research study? And who may not?

The study population will consist of graduate students enrolled in the M.A. in Higher Education Program. Students are from a class focused on Grief Counseling, Higher Education in America, or The College Student. Undergraduate students not enrolled in the specified program are excluded from this study.

5. How long will the study take and where will the research study be conducted?

This study will be conducted in the College of Education: M.A. in Higher Education Program at Rowan University. This study will take one class during your fall semester. This study will take 2 and a half hours to complete an in-person interview or via Zoom.

6. How many visits may it take to complete the study?

You will be asked to participate one to two times in this research for approximately 2 and a half hours. There is no impact on your grade if you do not participate in this research, but you are required to do the assignment in class.

7. What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?

There is minimal risk in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. During the interviews, you will choose a pseudonym name which will be used to keep your anonymity when the data is analyzed and reported.

Since you will be discussing your experiences during the in-person or virtual interview, there is a potential that you will experience some emotional stress based on your life experiences in connection with the course material.

8. Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?

There may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study or benefits to others or society in general. You may benefit from this study by adopting a fun, creative, new learning style to help you better comprehend and retain information in your future classes. Professors may benefit from this study by utilizing artistic expression activities in class to engage students in higher education.

9. What are the alternatives if you do not wish to participate in the study?

Your alternative is not to participate in the study. You will still need to do the course assignments.

10. How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?

There will be approximately 10-30 subjects enrolled in this study

11. How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?

During the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

12. Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?

Participants will need to purchase a painting canvas for the artistic expression activity in class.

13. Will you be paid to take part in this study?

You will not be paid for your participation in this study

14. Are you providing any identifiable private information as part of this research study?

Your identifiable information will not be used in any of the future research projects or disclosed to anyone outside of the research team.

15. How will information about you be kept private or confidential?

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your name and other personal information.

All data collected during the interview will be stored through Rowan University's password-protected computer. Only the researcher will have access to the information and they can only access it using their university credentials. Interviews and survey responses will also be stored in the drive. Only your pseudonym will be displayed to maintain anonymity.

16. What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to Dr. Drew Tinnin (Tinnin@rowan.edu)

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

17. Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research-related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

Drew Tinnin, Ed.D.
Educational Leadership, Administration, and Research
856-256-4909

Or Co-Investigator:

Jake Marrazzo
Marraz95@rowan.edu
856-419-7927

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

Office of Research Compliance
(856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU

18. What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the entire information about the research study, research risks, benefits and the alternatives, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed.

All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered and I agree to volunteer to participate in the study.

Subject Name:

Subject Signature:

Date:

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: Jake Marrazzo

Signature: _____

Date _____
