

SUMI INK PARTY: EXPLORING THE CREATIVITY, COMMUNITY, AND CONNECTION
OF SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

By

MIRANDA KAY MEEKS

A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS OF THE
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ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
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Miranda Kay Meeks

August 2016

Chair: Jodi Kushins

Committee Member: Craig Roland

Major: Art Education

Abstract

For my capstone project, I developed and researched arts-based professional development (PD) that targets creativity, builds a culture of community, increases connection amongst teachers, and builds staff morale and emotional intelligence. Using action research methods, I conducted a PD session rooted in Sumi Ink Club practices, the Johari Window method of self-evaluation, as well as the educational and cultural development philosophies of Sir Ken Robinson, Julie Burstein, Marina Abramovic, Joe Gebbia, Alice Arnold, Megan Culp, and research from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Participating staff members from my school collaboratively created a large mural with ink and tempera paint. During the hands-on and arts-based activity I observed participants' behavior, mannerisms, dialogue, and their written responses on pre- and post-surveys. This Capstone paper describes my research process, findings and recommendations. First I discuss the absence of arts-based PD and need for it among teachers and school staff in all areas of education. Then, I describe the importance of building a culture of trust, transforming

PD from a meeting to an experience, the concept of less is more, eliciting a curiosity mentality rather than a soldier mentality, the potential of collaborative play, and the concept of buying in rather than selling out. Finally, I share the reactions and responses I observed stemming from the three-hour Sumi Ink Party I conducted with ten staff members from Caldwell County Middle School. I conclude with recommendations for how art teachers can serve as a resource in their schools beyond their classroom walls.

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Changing Our Approach towards Professional Development

In education, we use a lot of labels; the teachers are adults and the students are kids. While understanding that line of separation, authority, and responsibility is important, it is equally important that we not forget what we have in common, our humanity. Though our levels of learning, social understanding, and life experience are different, we share and experience the same emotions and potential for creativity—emotions and creativity that deserve to be acknowledged and developed.

We flood schools with professional development workshops and meetings about reading strategies, math enhancements, special education interventions, and new mandates. However, tending to the creativity, emotional needs, and the well-being of not only the students, but the staff are often left out as part of the planning process for professional development and enrichment.

If ever there was a job with a need for creative and emotional health activities it would be teaching. The highs and lows of teaching each day take more sudden dips and turns than the world's most exciting roller coaster. Decisions are often not within an educator's control and budgets don't allow for needed resources and opportunities; the ramifications of which often take extreme emotional tolls on us. Striving to get every child performing on grade level and prepared for end of the year standardized exams is nearly an impossible task when so many contributing variables to a student's success are not within a teacher's control such as home-life, parents, medications, changing hormones, students' social lives, and their health situations. As we strive to strengthen our abilities and be better equipped educators, we must first strive to be better equipped human beings. The role of educator requires one to be a leader, creatively solve problems with no obvious or easy solutions, and the ability to withstand the constant emotional

tug-of-war that emerges over a career in education. This requires intentional development. Meaningful education is filled with heart, passion, compassion, creativity, and connection. You cannot develop these things through statistical and mechanical professional development. It requires a more creative and *human* approach. If each school would buy-in to the incorporation of arts-based PD, we might achieve the version as mentioned in the TED Talk by Gebbia (2016), who seeks, "...a future of shared ideas and experiences that bring us a culture of community and connection instead of isolation and segregation".

Statement of the Problem

As a practicing art educator, I have a major concern with the lack of school-embedded professional development (PD) opportunities for teachers regarding creativity, community, and emotional intelligence in the majority of K-12 schools today. It has become acceptable to expect both students and teachers to operate as robots within a mechanical factory rather than as human beings. All focus is concentrated on the *task* of assessing learning, leaving no room to instill in our students the *joy* of learning. There is a great need for programs and time within school districts dedicated to the development of emotional intelligence. Skills such as self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship skills serve a vital role in the overall functionality and wellbeing of the educator, and thereby, the student (Goleman, 2015). As Robinson (2011) suggests, "...everyone has huge creative capacities as a natural result of being a human being. The challenge is to develop them. A culture of creativity has to involve everybody, not just a select few" (p. 3). If we are to take care of the future of education, we must first take care of our teachers in the present. Robinson (2013) speaks to the impact education's current, data-driven culture is having on teachers and the field of teaching:

One of the effects of the current culture here, if I can say so, has been to de-professionalize teachers. There is no system in the world or any school in the country that's better than its teachers. Teachers are the lifeblood of the success of schools, but teaching is a creative profession. Teaching properly conceived is not a delivery system. You're not just there to pass on received information. Great teachers do that, but what great teachers also do is mentor, stimulate, provoke, engage; you see in the end, education is about learning. If there's no learning going on, there's no education going on; and people can spend a lot of time discussing education without discussing learning. The whole point of education is to get people to learn (Robinson, 2013).

Robinson speaks of what great teachers do, but what great *schools* do is mentor, stimulate, provoke, and engage their teachers. For learning to truly thrive in schools, there must be an atmosphere of curiosity, creativity, and community. The attitudes and culture of a school's staff set the tone for its students and cause a ripple effect, impacting learning for better or worse.

Purpose and Goals of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop an art-based professional development program for educators of all disciplines in my school rooted in community, connection, play, and creative exploration that would allow teachers and staff to develop better relationships with each other and boost staff morale. My goal was to create a setting for organically produced brainstorming, collaboration, and the exploration and development of emotional intelligences and creative practices. As a result, during the process participants also produced a large, Sumi Ink mural. I used the Sumi Ink Club mural making technique (Rara & Fischbeck, 2015) as a framework for visually representing the desired culture of our school.

Research Questions

My research project was guided by the following two questions:

1. What types of dialogue and collaboration are generated amongst teachers and co-workers during an arts-based, creative activity?
2. What impact can arts-based professional development sessions have on staff members' morale, emotions, and creativity?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Working in the field of education is a lot like being a professional athlete. The athlete's body must go into strict training and be taken care of as one would a machine. It must be fueled right, exercised right, and monitored to understand its current potential and growth. However, no topnotch athlete has ever accomplished true greatness without heart and drive. Teachers are the heart and drive of education. If the only thing our education system is attempting to develop is its mechanics, then the heart, drive, creativity, and pure joy of education and learning will be disappear. The workshop I developed for this Capstone Project aimed to provide schools with the opportunity to take care of their heartbeat (the teachers), and contributes to the already existing supportive research regarding the need of creativity, community, and emotional intelligence development by people such as Sir Ken Robinson, Alice Arnold, and the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

The growth of creativity, community and emotional intelligence cannot be accomplished through academic, policy, and data-based professional development alone. There is still much research and development to be done regarding the importance of impact of emotional intelligence skills in particular. Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence is one group at the forefront of this mission (Amani, 2015). The history of the Yale Center for Emotional

Intelligence began over twenty-five years ago and “conducts rigorous research on the power of emotions.” They “create programs that teach emotional intelligence to children and adults so that they have the skills they need to succeed at home, at school, at work, and in their communities” (Yale, 2015, p. 1). What and how we feel directly impacts decisions we make and how we interact with others on a day-to-day basis. Gaining a better understanding of ways to develop and explore creativity, community, and emotional intelligences can impact the way teachers and staff members interact with each other and the students.

Assumptions

My pre-existing assumptions for this research project were rooted in my experience as a teacher. Over the course of the past five years, I have taken part in school-mandated professional development and rarely heard any of the staff leave feeling inspired. I have witnessed staff members day in and day out who are exhausted, overworked, and stressed out to the point of rethinking their career choice. I have witnessed teachers’ thoughts and ideas being dismissed and a lack of scheduled time to really connect with each other as a team to develop collaborative plans. I have witnessed a lack of confidence in incorporating creativity into lessons as a result of too many required standards to teach before testing time rolls around. I assumed some of this exhaustion and stress could be alleviated through an arts-based, Sumi Ink Club inspired professional development. I assumed arts-based PD would allow teachers’ emotions to be acknowledged as valid and provide teachers with a collaborative project, unifying them as a team.

Definition of Terms

Caldwell County Middle School, which is where the participants of this study stem from, defines *professional development (PD)* as something that “improves our teachers’ ability to educate its students” (C. Lane, personal communication, May, 1, 2016).

According to Senn (2014), “*Sumi ink brush painting* is a 2,000 year old tradition in Chinese, Korean and Japanese cultures. Early practitioners were rooted in Zen Buddhism and were highly disciplined in the art of concentration, clarity and simplicity” (p. 3).

When commenting on the origin of the *Sumi Ink Club*, Senn (2014) states, “Originally born as a brain child of artistic team Sarah Rara and Luke Fischbeck of local band Lucky Dragons, *Sumi Ink Club* has spread across the world as a collaborative self-starting program to engage communities and open up dialogues among strangers, while creating a community-owned largescale sumi ink painting” (p. 4).

Ken Robinson defines *creativity* as “the process of developing original ideas that have value” (Robinson, 2011, p. 2-3). Though complex, creativity is influenced by factors such as knowledge, motivation, and environment (Seelig, 2011).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined by Mayer (2009) as “the capacity to reason about emotions and emotional information, and of emotions and emotional information, and of emotions to enhance thought” (p. 1).

Macro is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary (2003) as “being large, thick, or exceptionally prominent” (p. 745). *Micro* is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary (2003) as “very small” (p. 783).

A *wash* is the process of applying a single layer of ink or paint to a surface. The ink or paint is often diluted with water (Jelbert & Sidaway, 2004).

Though people regularly use the following words, it is important to understand their individual meanings in the context of this ‘Sumi Ink Party’ inspired PD. According to Merriam-Webster (2003) *morale* refers to “the mental and emotional condition (as of enthusiasm,

confidence, or loyalty) of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand” (p. 807).

Connection refers to feelings of togetherness and relationships amongst staff (Merriam-Webster, 2003).

Merriam-Webster (2003), defines *culture* as a “set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization” (p. 304).

Study Limitations

This research project was limited by the number of participants and sessions. I conducted this with volunteers drawn from the staff of Caldwell County Middle School at the end of the school year. The session took place on the weekend preceding our end of the year PD sessions. Even though it’s designed to be easily duplicated, the scope of my research was small and concentrated. This session was also only three hours long and did not focus on how to *incorporate* creativity and emotional intelligence into other subjects, but how to *inspire* the teachers of those subjects to feel more at ease with connecting to creativity, emotions, each other, and a unified vision for their school.

Literature Review

Education is constantly changing. As educators, we must be ready and prepared to evolve with those changes. Data and procedural-based PDs are not designed to enhance a teacher’s ability to handle change; they are only designed to teach what changes are happening. Arts-based PDs require participants to become aware of their inner thoughts, hopes, fears, and ideas. As Eisner (2002) suggests, “Indeed, at their best, we use the arts to remake ourselves” (p. 112). Why not use an in-house resource, the art teacher, to help shape the overall culture and community of school staff?

Building Culture and Trust

“Education is not a mechanical system; it’s a human system. It’s about people. The culture of the school is absolutely essential. Culture is an organic term” (Robinson, 2013). How can we expect to grow culture and community in our schools and amongst our teachers with only mechanically orchestrated, data-driven, and department segregated professional development? That type of PD certainly has its place and is valid, but it cannot be arranged as the only type of PD provided for teachers. Teachers deal with more than content. Education, by nature, is an emotional roller coaster. Teachers must be given the mental and social tools needed to deal with the emotional side of teaching. Content-based PDs are important to partake in, but building trust within a school and amongst staff is equally as important. “You can take components for trust, and you can design for that” (Gebbia, 2016).

Creating a PD inspired by Sumi Ink Club practices can function as a therapeutic exercise for teachers and staff. Senn (2014) explains by stating, “With a more focused conversation, no judgments, and a busy hand in painting pattern, it can be a personally relaxing experience as well as an expressive way to create something for the community, by the community” (p. 9). Community is the key word here, and *community* is always in great need of development. In schools, the teachers and staff members are critical players and leaders of the education community. They are not helpless; they are trained experts in their field and content. The art teacher is no different. Using him/her as an in-house resource to lead arts-based PD opens the door for well-designed collaborative play and inclusive art-making such as a sumi ink mural. As Senn (2014) suggests, “There’s a lot more to gain from inclusive art-making like this, and it may or may not be the art itself” (p. 13). During such art-making, there are opportunities for dialogue and sharing of ideas and emotions.

Gates (2010) speaks to the isolation teachers and other school staff members can feel stating, “The culture of isolation in schools leaves many teachers feeling that they are, in a sense, islands” (p. 7). Oftentimes, meetings are scheduled by departments or grade levels while testing results are segregated based on a few select subjects: language arts, math, social studies, and science. This does not instill a sense of community but rather competition amongst the staff as a whole, especially with the push for merit pay based on test scores! Teachers often become territorial with the school schedule regarding how it affects their content only, and the gestalt view of the students and their education is forgotten. With the system of education itself and the dynamics of various teachers and subjects functioning as a constant design problem waiting to be solved, we need arts-based PD.

Collaborative play, and the act of creating, allows for organic development of culture, emotional decompression, creative solution finding, and even trust. Though these components are not part of national standardized tests, they are part of being human and building a strong sense of community. The solution to complex problems within a school cannot always be found through data analysis or by one or two people sitting in a room, making decisions based only on their views and experience, and then *telling* everyone else the solution. Berger (2009) comments on the need for collaboration stating, “To respond to the complexity of design problems today, what’s required is not one person working alone in a studio – it’s more likely to be interdisciplinary terms, and those people need to be able to work effectively together” (p. 39). To build a stronger school community that can effectively work together, we must build trust amongst staff. This includes relationships with each other and the ability to respectfully communicate. Successful collaboration is hard. It requires listening to others views, feedback, and ideas. However, what it also requires, is accountable and intentional practice.

Transforming PD from a Meeting to an Experience

Professional development should be more to teachers than *another meeting*, it should be an experience. According to Cain & Dixon, (2013), “An experience that allows them (teachers) to feel personally involved in professional development might inspire a change in their instructional practices” (p. 265). Most professional development today is like fast food – it’s efficient and consistent at the cost of local and authentic (Gebbia, 2016). Schools are not fast food chains where every “menu option” for professional development should be the same. Lecture-based meetings are important; there is great knowledge and wisdom to be found in them. However, a balance needs to exist between lecture-based and experiential-based presentations. By doing so, our teachers can have a healthy and more balanced diet of PD. What if schools embraced a culture of sharing from within?

Art educators have an ability to be unique leaders in the school. Their artistic and professional training qualifies them to teach and touch on how to connect as human beings, explore personal expression, and develop communication and creative skills. The art teacher can provide more than a list of suggestions on how to combat stress; the art teacher can provide experiences and opportunities to confront and alleviate stress head on and as Arnold (1994) suggests, allow for an “exchange of ideas between all of those present” (p. 50). However, in order for staff members of a school to reap the benefits of what their art educator has to offer, the art teacher must first be given the platform, support, and trust from administration to design a PD rooted in creative practices and play.

Transforming PD from a simple meeting to an experience lead by the art teacher doesn’t just allow the art teacher to help everyone else; it allows everyone else to help the art teacher, thereby developing a professional learning community. As Arnold (1994) states, “There is

overwhelming agreement by educational leaders that a commitment to community is vanishing” (p. 51). Teachers and staff members of all disciplines have something to bring to the table during a collaborative and arts-based PD. Each has an insight the others do not possess and arts-based activities allow for the organic sharing of those insights. Cress-Ackermann & Todorovich (2015) comment on this by stating, “Teachers learn more from each other than from an authorized person such as a content expert or an education specialist and so systematic efforts are necessary to facilitate collegial interaction among teachers beyond those constraints” (p. 35). During the act of playing and creating, less pressure and restraint to solve problems is felt. With the mind and body at ease, discussions and interactions with others can be more pleasant and productive than discussions and interactions done in high-pressure meetings filled with desegregated data. Teachers of other disciplines can share academic, behavioral, and relational struggles they are having with students.

The art room can be a place the art teacher can tag team emotional and behavioral-based issues other teachers are facing with students, but if they are never communicated or discussed, the art teacher cannot help. The organic sharing of such information can also allow the art teacher to be aware of trends and areas where staff members and students are struggling as a whole, allowing him/her the opportunity to combat those struggles through his/her unique and professional insight.

Sometimes Less is More

Just because professional development is not data-driven doesn't mean it can't drive the school towards success and growth. Much of the current PD in schools today is over complicated and over strategized, such as scripted reading instruction and charting student growth. Many problems in school are actually not that complicated and can be resolved through

simply building better relationships amongst teachers, staff, and students. Rather than allowing problems to be solved from within, struggles and issues found in schools are usually outsourced to presenters who have no real understanding of the school's culture. These *outsiders* present cookie cutter solutions that are seldom feasible nor beneficial to teachers, students, or the school. Sometimes, less quantitatively-structured PD will yield more qualitative results.

The answer isn't more systematic professional development sessions, but more creative ones that target the root of the problem. Sometimes, we need to go back to the basics of humanity and the desire to create, identify, and express how we feel. Only offering mechanically engineered PD leaves the heart of the teacher and the landscape of education as a lifeless Death Valley. The thing is, "Death Valley isn't dead, it's dormant. Right beneath the surface are these seeds of possibility, waiting for the right conditions to come about and with organic systems, if the conditions are right, life is inevitable (Robinson, 2013)."

Schools are structured like a community or a family and as Arnold (1994) suggests, "Societal structures of family and community need all the support they can get" (p. 47). In my experience, Arnold was right in her assertion that many PDs are about passively listening to a presentation rather than about supporting "an exchange of ideas between all of those present," which would create a "strong platform for learning" (p. 50). The process of learning, for teachers as with our students, should be transformative, not transactional.

Eliciting a Curiosity Mentality Rather Than a Soldier Mentality

By nature, teaching is a creative act and as Culp suggests "the opportunity to exercise originality is a key component in creativity and an important cognitive ability" (p. 9). If education is the product we are selling, we need a marketing strategy that will generate optimal sales. Using Berger's words (2009), PDs should "orchestrate a designed marketing experience,

one that would surround people instead of shouting at them; one that would wrap a certain culture and intelligence around the product” (p. 152). There is a great absence of professional development that elicits curiosity and emotional intelligence rather than notetaking and procedure following. Robinson (2013) suggests, “In place of curiosity what we have is a culture of compliance. Our children and teachers are encouraged to follow a routine of algorithms rather than to excite that power of imagination and curiosity.”

We must move away from the current system of education that treats teachers as soldiers meant to carry out orders rather than creative problem solvers and designers of educational experiences. There is a need for PD that allows teachers to creatively solve problems within our schools; and those solutions should be given the validity they deserve and then, put into action. As Berger (2009) suggests, “solutions to our problems - are going to come from the ground up, not from the top down” (p. 203). Often times, teachers can see root causes of problems better than outside sources as they are the one’s working with students every day.

Schools are notorious for playing it safe. In an era of standardized testing and data-driven success in education, schools are very hesitant to invest time and money into anything that might appear risky. As the artist, Marina Abramovic (2015) observes, “We are always doing things that we like” [and are used to] “and this is why we are not changing. When you do things in life, nothing happens if you always do things the same way.” This monotonous way of thinking, problem solving, and designing PD leaves schools, students, and teachers feeling aimless.

Feeling there is no purpose in what you do is detrimental to morale and motivation. Those who work in education are building our future society. We cannot afford to continuously attempt building the future with no sense of purpose and no opportunities to explore that purpose

through curiosity and creativity. Teachers and schools are expected to prepare students for a future we know nothing about. We cannot predict what the world will be like in twenty years, nor can we educate students for it through only using data-based strategies. Eisner (2002) states, “Not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that can be measured matters” (p. 178). This study explores how the implementation of collaborative, arts-based PD into all staff members’ training might infuse a sense of curiosity, collaborative play, and a strong sense of purpose into a school community.

The Potential of Collaborative Play

Burstein (2012) states, “The best way to learn about anything is through stories.” A Sumi Ink Party professional development session can allow for just that, storytelling and story making. Through this collaborative, arts-based and hands-on activity, participants can take part in the act of doodling as they paint together and share together. Though there is an organized activity going on which is keeping the hands busy, the mind is still able to multitask in conversation. The activity is prearranged; the conversations are not. This allows for organic discussions and storytelling to take place more easily. As participants share a painting space, they will also share ideas.

Senn (2014) comments on collaborative drawing by stating, “Drawing on a shared space is difficult for many artists, and adults in general as it turns out, but the conversations that come out of the activity seem to be more meaningful than taking home the physical evidence of the experience” (p. 6). Working on individual art pieces fosters individual goals. Participants become more focused on their art piece because that’s what they are literally taking away from the experience. However, group art projects do not belong to any one person; they belong to all participants and require collaborative-making. Senn (2014) also comments, “It’s a completely

different kind of social interaction. There is this way of triangulating the conversation” (p. 7). Rather than create an agenda from the presenter’s singular view, the participants organically create the agenda in the moment.

Implementing the creation of a group mural during a PD session allows for pertinent collaboration and inquiry amongst staff members. Gates (2010) says, “Collaborative inquiry creates dialogic, collaborative spaces, and encourages teachers to problematize and investigate their practice. Inquiry is an attractive model for professional development (p. 13).” From personal experience, the most disappointing thing about current PDs offered within schools is how repetitive, and oftentimes unrealistic and predetermined the information presented is. Teachers may be able to connect with the information presented, but if the information presented doesn’t connect with the school’s reality, it’s pointless. A PD rooted in collaborative play allows the presenter to take on the role of facilitator while the teachers and staff explore issues within their school and design realistic solutions organically.

Buying In, Not Selling Out

Conducting PD grounded in a creative and hands-on art experience will allow for more open-ended discovery rather than fulfilling predetermined objectives (Oreck, 2004). Rather than selling out to the latest robotic and standardized method for school growth and achievement, participants will be allowed the opportunity to buy in to themselves as a team and community. It seems that somewhere along the way, we forgot that teachers are professionals and a vital resource in the grand scheme of education.

According to Oreck (2004), professional development should draw on “the inner resources of teachers; their attitudes toward art, creativity, and innovation; their commitment to personal growth; and their educational and life values all need nurturing within the school and in

professional development programs” (p. 67). The community and self-belief amongst teachers and staff must be continuously developed. If there is no confidence and connection between team members, there is no chance of having a successful team. Allowing for the development of emotional intelligent competencies such as self-awareness (realistic self-confidence and emotional insight), self-management (resilience, emotional balance, and self-motivation), empathy (cognitive and emotional empathy and good listening), and relationship skills (compelling communication and team playing) fosters that confidence and connection (Goleman, 2015). According to Goleman (2015), “Qualities associated with such emotional intelligence distinguish the best leaders” (p. 1).

If we plan to keep strong leaders in education, we must take care of those who are leaders in the classroom, the teachers. Their overall wellbeing is worth investing in through creative and emotionally intelligent professional development. Sumi Ink Club practices allow for such collaboration and growth. According to Senn (2014), “Above all else, Sumi Ink Club facilitates conversation, friendship, discourse, collaboration and creative spirit among strangers and communities” (p. 21). I can think of no other place where a strong sense of culture and community are needed more than in education.

Methodology

I used action research to guide my research in this project (Eisenhardt, 1989). I designed and field tested a professional development session for teachers at my school that was inspired by Sumi Ink Club’s method of collaboration (see Appendix A for complete Sumi Ink Party outline). My inspiration and knowledge of the Sumi Ink Club came about through a Summer Studio course I took with Amy Freeman at the University of Florida. I documented my findings, and will be sharing what I learned at the Kentucky Art Education Association 2016 Conference

for the development of future PDs. My research data stemmed from observation notes regarding conversations and mannerisms of participants, the group mural itself, and a pre- and post-activity survey completed by participants.

In leading this Sumi Ink Party PD, my role was facilitator, not expert. Rather than delivering content, I aimed to support participants' inquiry and activity by creating an emotionally safe space filled with the necessary supplies to create the mural. As the facilitator, I followed Gates' thoughts (2010) and sought to "play a crucial role within group dialogue by paying attention to themes emerging from the group that have not been articulated by any single person" and therefore managed to "extend and expand the group's learning" (p. 15). My job was to be a mirror for the group. With my coworkers I was able to share and reflect back topics and temperaments I observed being discussed and demonstrated during the PD session. Certain staff members stood out as more vocal and others as better listeners. I noticed certain patterns as an observer that I wouldn't have noticed acting as a participant with my fellow staff members.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) advise researchers pay attention to the lavishness in detailed narratives. This worked well for me as I preferred writing about my findings in narrative form. Hyett, Kenny, and Dickenson-Swift (2014) present a great list of guiding questions to ask one's self when conducting a case study. Though this project was guided by action research, these questions encourage clarity, structure, storytelling, empathy, and an overall care and awareness for the subjects of the study's wellbeing. I found this to be applicable and important while working with my subjects.

Subject Selection

Teachers and staff members were recruited through a flyer placed in their mailboxes as well as face-to-face conversations I had with them. Teachers' participation was voluntary and

my prediction of having at least ten participants from various subjects, positions, and levels of experience in education was accurate. There were ten participants total (two were male and eight were female). Five were teachers, four were para professionals (teaching assistants), and one was our school psychologist. Although I conducted my research with real people, I will be using coded participant numbers when commenting on them or their experience to protect their confidentiality.

Research Site

This collaborative and arts-based professional development session took place over the course of one, three hour session in my personal art studio. This location allowed plenty of physical room for mural painting. It also provided a safe space for emotionally-driven dialogue as my studio is not at school (participants' normal place of work). Gates (2010) states, "Collaborative inquiry groups that happen outside a school or district structure can provide teachers a space to voice dilemmas and controversies that the system which they work often silences" (p. 13). It can also provide new inspirations. Providing a setting outside of the schools walls isn't just about avoiding the familiar, but offering something new.

Data Collection Procedures

I collected data through observational notetaking, pre- and post-activity surveys (see Appendix B), a Johari Window survey (see Appendix C), and a collaborative, hands-on mural created during the three-hour session. The pre- and post-activity surveys touched on the participants' opinions regarding creativity, play, staff morale, staff collaboration, and professional development. My observational notes focused on organically generated dialogue amongst the teachers, their attitudes and social interactions with each other, and their expressed concerns, feelings, and inquiries. All brainstorming and visual doodles developed during this

session were also collected and kept as data. Figure 1 shows the six words (and representative lines) collectively chosen by participants from the Johari Window survey to describe the culture they desire our school to have.

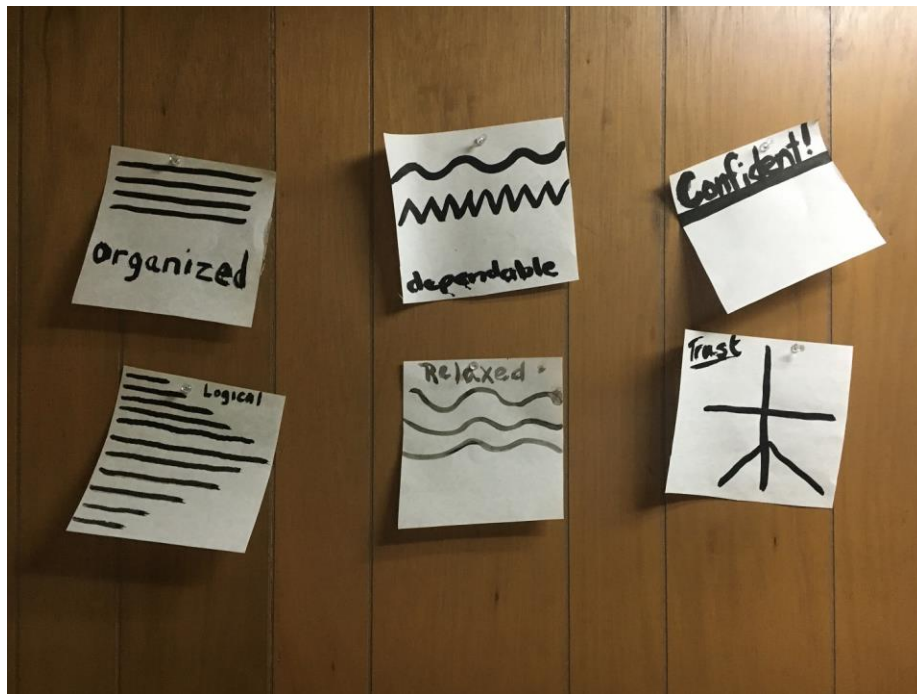


Figure 1. Six words (organized, dependable, confident, logical, relaxed, and trustworthy) chosen by participants to describe desired culture of school staff. Participants assigned and created designs with lines to represent each word. These lines were then used to create the Sumi Ink Party mural. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis for this study uses the hypothetic-deductive method (Eisenhardt, 1989). I began this study with a theory. I believed that by providing teachers with an arts-based professional development session, they would inquire and dialogue about problems and situations they needed and wanted to address rather than ones predetermined by someone not in their classroom. I also believed the culture, morale, and trust of the staff would be strengthened

through interaction, play, and conversation with each other. Activities for this study were designed beforehand (see Appendix A for Sumi Ink Party outline). I collected data prior to, during, and after the three-hour session. Once I had collected all data, analyzed, and interpreted it, using my findings in comparison to my predictions of how this session might impact participants (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2004).

Findings

The purpose of this study was to plan and orchestrate an arts-based PD involving collaborative artmaking and then observe what types of dialogue and collaboration were generated amongst teachers and coworkers. My observations regarding the impact of such a PD on participants' morale, emotions, and confidence in exploring and leading creative activities were also noted and recorded. Major findings from this study were participant-identified benefits of the Sumi Ink Party PD (including a sense of connection and togetherness amongst staff) higher levels of confidence in both the personal exploration of creative activities, and the belief they could lead creative activities in their classrooms.

Participants Found Connections and Togetherness

In the beginning, participants were rather reserved in their mannerisms, dialogue, and level of interaction with each other. While filling out paperwork, such as the pre-activity survey (see Appendix A for complete survey) and the Johari Window survey (see Appendix B for complete survey), staff members were calm and spoke to one another at a low volume level. They remained stationary as they completed their forms and displayed attitudes of annoyance, hesitation, and boredom. Perhaps this could be avoided in the future by not starting an arts-based PD in the same manner of a lecture-based PD; the PDs this group has been use to typically begin with paperwork.

This demeanor changed once the activity began (see Figure 2). While creating the first layer of the mural, a wash of paint that covered the entire surface, participants began to loosen up as the room erupted into singing and laughter. Excitement filled the room and at one point staff members organically began chanting in unison, “One, two, three, go!” Acting together and without conversation, all staff members understood *go* meant to fling paint.



Figure 2. Participant applying wash of watered-down ink. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

Once it was time to move onto the macro-application of paint, where they use large brush strokes, participants began working at a calmer level and more in control. Their dialogue followed suit. There was less talking and lower excitement in their voice than during the wash; their conversation was more focused. While there was some unified chanting during the application of the wash, much of the conversation was very scattered and abrupt. During the

Macro application of paint, participants were listening to each other more and talking over each other less.

Dialogue during this portion of the activity was mostly focused around the mural itself. Staff members began identifying how to accomplish their task at hand. They discussed various painting techniques and where colors and lines should go. Participants also began verbally identifying who were the out loud thinkers and who were the people that were quiet but getting the job done. Though there was lots of sarcasm and joking during this time, participants verbally expressed how each person's approach (no matter how different) was needed to complete the mural. As the macro-painting portion of this activity drew to a close, they began expressing as a group a particular sentiment I had overheard them discussing individually: "We need to do this more often at school with the rest of the staff." Figure 3 shows what the mural looked like after participants collectively felt satisfied with the macro-painting portion of the Sumi Ink Party.



Figure 3. Appearance of mural after completion of the wash and macro portion of painting had been applied by participants. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

As the ten participating staff members moved on to the micro-painting portion of the activity, in which they added very small brushstrokes, their dialogue became even quieter. One participant began verbally expressing explanations for the drops of paint she was adding, “I’m crying tears; there have been tears. When any of our family hurts, we hurt.” As participants continued moving around and adding to the mural, the following were the main topics of calm discussion: concerns about a lack of communication in the building, the schedule regarding PD’s for the following week, plans to celebrate retiring teachers in the building, how stress relieving they found the Sumi Ink Party PD to be, cancer treatments one of our coworkers is scheduled to undergo in the near future, and final touches needed on the mural.

Participants’ responses to the pre- and post-activity surveys (see Appendix B) made it clear that they found the experience to be beneficial. All ten participants’ responses to question

six, “Was this PD beneficial to you in any way?” included words such as: bonded, together, get to know each other, teamwork, with friends, become cohesive, with each other, socialized, better rapport, with coworkers, and count on my coworkers (see Appendix D for complete table).

Participant 2 noted: “I liked being able to work together and getting to know each other even better. I learned several things about my coworkers I didn’t know before like strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes.” Connecting with each other was a commonly noted benefit by participants. Participant 3 stated, “It was fun and I got to get to know people better. We experienced a lot of teamwork.” Participant 7 wrote, “I liked how the staff was able to have FUN with each other, socialize, and build a better rapport.”

Participants’ responses to question seven, “Would you find this type of workshop valuable as part of regularly mandated PD sessions at your school?” Why or why not? – echoed similar sentiments. Responses to question seven included some of the following words and phrases: a great way to bond, learn to help and correct each other in a positive way, fun to work together, builds relationships, brings together people from their separate parts of the school building, relieve some of that stress together, better appreciate one another, collaborate, build culture, morale, and connectedness, communicate with others, and become closer (see Appendix E for complete table).

Participants Became Confident in Exploring Creative Activities

While staff bonding and togetherness was the most frequently mentioned benefit in the post-activity surveys, staff members demonstrated more change in questions about creativity. The only other question charting as much change was the first question, which asked participants to rank staff morale on a scale of 1-10. The results of the pre and post-survey (see Appendix F) showed that both morale and confidence in leading creative activities in the classroom rose on

six out of the ten participants' forms while confidence in exploring creative activities oneself rose on eight participants' forms. Both written and verbal dialogue supported the self-identified, charted growth of participants in the area of confidence in creativity.

When elaborating on his answers for question four, "On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable do you currently feel exploring creative activities and play yourself?" participant 4 went from a seven to a nine and noted the following:

This experience was better than I thought it would be. It's super important to be positive with others. Negative reactions shut people down and it's very difficult to recruit adult volunteers to do artsy or creative stuff. I think the way the activity was structured really helped me feel safe about exploring something creative.

The increase of creative confidence in participants, regardless of their discipline, is possible if the fine line is struck between guided instructions/expectations and free choice. Participant 3 stated, "Ten. I like it and could use more of things like this!" Participant 7 wrote, "Nine after the PD. It really helped me loosen up and see that it's the process that matters; not the end result." Participant 8's response was the most telling. Her ranking on question four went from a three to a seven. This participant noted, "Seven with the safety net (guidance) provided in this PD. I became more confident in trying new and different things."

When elaborating on their rankings for question five, "On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable would you feel leading creative activities and play with your students in your classroom?" participant 4 went from ranking himself as a four to a six. This participant noted, "I haven't done this in years but after this morning, I remember having kids draw in counseling sessions long ago. I may have to start doing that again." Participant 7 explained her jump from a seven to a ten as follows, "This PD helped a lot with my confidence. It seems creative

activities aren't as much about the instructor being an expert as they are allowing those creating to create and make the decisions about what to do.”

The confidence level demonstrated by participants over the course of three hours echoed the charted data. Though the participants were antsy during the beginning paper work portion of the Sumi Ink Party PD, the majority demonstrated a nervous hindrance to apply ink to the crisp, clean mural paper. It took two of the participants stepping forward and starting the application of the ink wash for the others to join in. In the beginning, half of the staff's painting remained hesitant for the first five minutes until they became comfortable painting in the group. A bit of hesitation remained in their gestures until a third of the way through the macro painting portion of the activity. After that, all participants' painting gestures became more confident and strong. Their movement from spot to spot on the mural became more direct. Once the group began working on the micro-painting portion of the activity, they asked their peers for approval of what they had painted less and less (see Figure 4). Critiquing moments slowly shifted from individual conversations about isolated areas to all-encompassing group discussions regarding how the piece looked as a whole.



Figure 4. Participants applying the micro portion of the Sumi Ink Party mural. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

An increase in creative confidence was also evident in participants' dialogue. Together, staff members brainstormed ways to apply this activity in other subjects. Staff members involved in teaching reading discussed incorporating a Sumi Ink Party into character and book analysis. They liked the idea of using a more artistic and abstract way of thinking to create a more concrete understanding of their own content. Staff members involved in teaching social studies talked about incorporating this activity as a way for students to identify different viewpoints and perspectives of the civil war at different moments in history (before and after the war).

Summary Across all Findings

All ten participants stated that this professional development session was beneficial to them and noted that they would find this type of workshop valuable as part of the regularly mandated PD sessions at our school. Every participant also elaborated on the stress relief,

bonding, and togetherness they experienced during the Sumi Ink Party PD. Though question three, “How would you rate the current staff culture on a scale of 1-10?” received the lowest post-survey ranking and growth, the majority elaborated that their answer would have been higher had all the staff been able to attend and participate.

Upon arrival to the Sum Ink Party PD, most participants gravitated towards those they work with the most. A few participants sat quietly, not interacting with anyone. However, by the time participants completed the mural and left, they were all interacting with each other. Those who had been aloof had joined in on group discussions and were no longer sitting off to the side by themselves.

My first research question focused on what types of dialogue and collaboration would be generated amongst teachers and coworkers during an arts-based, artistic activity. This particular art activity and session yielded a wide array of dialogue. Participants organically discussed concerns regarding communication within the building, cross-curricular lesson planning, plans to honor retirees for the year, upcoming PD’s, their confidence and knowledge regarding creativity, things they like and dislike, fears, personal stories, concerns for sick coworkers, encouragement, music, and collaboration. The tone of these conversations was mostly lighthearted, positive, and energetic. Small moments of negative discussion quickly turned into solution suggesting, problem solving, or statements of hope.

My second research question focused on the impact arts-based professional development sessions might have on staff members’ morale, emotions, and creativity. Dialogue I observed during the Sumi Ink Party PD and statements I read on pre- and post-activity surveys suggested growth in these areas. Staff morale, confidence in exploring creative activities, and confidence in leading creative activities showed the most growth. The excitement and electricity level

amongst the group was certainly much higher by the end of the Sumi Ink Party PD than it was in the beginning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The goals of this research project were to create a play-based professional development session and document the impact it had on staff morale, connection, culture, and confidence in exploring and leading creative activities. Though long-term benefits cannot yet be identified, the immediate benefits and results speak volumes to the impact of implementing creative and play-based PD's into the school calendar. It is quite telling that none of the participating staff members teach or have been trained in art (subjects represented were social studies, math, special education, reading, computers, and counseling/psychology), yet all ten found this PD to be beneficial and noted their desire to see creative activities like this become part of the regularly scheduled PD we are mandated to attend.

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

While conducting my research, I realized I have never left a district PD where I didn't hear at least one of my coworkers question if it was worth staying in this profession. "If this is the direction education is going in, I'm out; I don't even feel like I'm a teacher anymore, just a glorified babysitter." Take a moment and let that sink in.

The point of PD is to *develop* our skills and perspective regarding education and the teaching of students. You can be sure that where there is growth, there will be change; and where there is change, there will be struggle. All growth and development requires a bit of a struggle, however, that struggle shouldn't always elicit such negative responses. It is possible to implement beneficial PD's that don't cause teachers to question if teaching is worth it. As educators, we will all have moments of doubt; we chose a tough career. However, strength

comes from not only getting through the day-to-day struggles, but from making each day great and from feeling part of the team. The bond and culture amongst staff members is just as crucial to develop as our knowledge of testing results and data. This has never been clearer to me than it is now. After observing my coworkers' actions, dialogue, and responses to this PD, I am convinced teachers of all disciplines benefit as individuals and as a whole from opportunity to create and play together.

Over the course of this arts-based PD, I observed exhausted and overwhelmed staff members become elated with excitement. Pure joy and laughter filled the room more often times than not. Encouragement and ideas were openly and organically shared amongst participants as a whole without judgement. This was in great contrast to the lecture-based PD's staff members usually attend.

Constant remarks on the post-activity survey noted how stress relieving this PD was. Staff members were able to talk about the topics they wanted to rather than prearranged topics. They were also able to comfortably talk about those topics at the pace they needed to instead of rushing to cover a predetermined list. I witnessed coworkers bond with those they rarely interact with at school due to various reasons (e.g., schedule, personalities, already established clicks). Not all discussion was academic-based, but through creative play, discussion could go anywhere it needed to.

Sometimes what we need in order to grow as educators isn't more data or strategies, it's opportunity to stretch and strengthen our creative muscles and connection to each other. Figure 5 shows participating staff members working together to create a work of art. Isn't that what teaching is all about anyway, working together to create something amazing? As educators, the

greatest masterpieces we will ever create are the students we teach and the tools we give them so they can create their future.



Figure 5. Participants interacting with each other while applying the micro portion of the mural. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

Significance, Implications, and Recommendations

Professional development structured around art, creativity, and play does not have to be about showing other educators how to put more art in their non-art classrooms. Rather, it can be used to develop some of the most crucial aspects of the workplace: morale, connection, and culture. True learning cannot take place in a school where morale, connection, and culture are low; for these things create a foundation with which we teach on.

Perhaps the results from this study can provide evidence needed for administrators to see the benefits of arts-based PD and realize what an untapped resource they have in their art teachers. If nothing else, perhaps it will at least open the door for the discussion of adding arts-

based PD to the yearly calendar; it certainly did in my school. After sharing my research and the results of this study with my principal, he decided added a Sumi Ink Party session to our school PD addenda for the upcoming year. Knowing we will be having several new staff members in the building, my principal became very interested in the teambuilding and bonding capabilities the Sumi Ink Party offers. Figure 6 shows the completed mural displayed at the Caldwell County Board of Education where it hung after being displayed at Caldwell County Middle School.



Figure 6. Completed mural hanging at the Caldwell County Board Office of Education. Photograph by Miranda Meeks.

Moving forward, I recommend all schools utilize what their art teachers have to offer; they can do more than teach children about the primary colors. I would encourage art educators

to see themselves as a potential morale booster for their staff, while being careful not to allow themselves to be pigeonholed or labeled. As art teachers, we have many important roles to fill. It's crucial that we not allow ourselves or others to tunnel vision our capabilities and potential. We are often so focused on showing our students how art and creative play can help them feel better and understand each other, that we forget how important it is to share those things with our coworkers; they need it just as much as the students, and art can facilitate this endeavor. More information regarding this research can be found on my website, www.ccmsstudio266.weebly.com. I have also submitted a manuscript on this subject to *SchoolArts*.

Conclusion

It's amazing what a few hours of collaborative art-making can do. My fellow staff members that attended the Sumi Ink Party are backing art in our building more than ever as they have begun initiating art-centered dialogue. They speak up about the importance of protecting students' time in arts classes at the Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) council meetings more than they used to. I now have more staff members asking me how they bring more creativity and arts-based activities into their content. They have even voiced their desire to have at least one arts-based PD during the year. My principal is seeking to incorporate a Sumi Ink Party into the agenda for next year because he sees the foundational importance of teambuilding and the benefits this creative and play-based PD has to offer. I will not only be leading a Sumi Ink Party as part of our school-wide PD at the start of the 2016-2017 school year; I will also be leading and presenting it at the Kentucky Art Education Association conference to art educators from across the state. One participant said it best, "I believe strongly that multiple PD's would build on the

positive momentum started by this PD.” I’m happy to know that this PD created positive momentum and I look forward to building on it!

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Appendix A

Sumi Ink Party PD Outline

Length of PD: 3 hours

Special Note

*It is advised to not exceed 10 participants per mural. If more than 10 people are expected to attend and participate, it is highly recommended to divide participants into groups of 10 or less and provide each group with their own paper for mural creating and other needed supplies. It is also advisable to not allow multiple groups hear or see other group's murals until the Sumi Ink Party is fully over.

Supplies Needed

- tempera paint
- black ink
- mixed media paper (I recommend Canson 90 lb Drawing Paper Roll measuring 36 inches by 10 yards)
- brushes
- cups or water basins
- paper towels
- access to water and soap
- Johari Window survey/activity
- pre- and post- Sumi Ink Party survey

Setting the Scene Prior to Sumi Ink Party PD

- paper being used to paint the mural on should be secured to the wall
- extra precautions to protect exposed wall and floor space should be taken
- supplies should be visible, labeled, and easily assessable
- copies of Johari Window survey should be easily assessable and labeled
- copies of pre- and post- Sumi Ink Party survey should be easily assessable and labeled
- rules should be posted in an easily visible area

Rules

- Everyone adds to the same painting.
- Keep moving around; don't spend too long in one area.
- No words or numbers.
- Use the lines you came up with as a group to represent the 6 main words from the Johari Window.
- Have fun!

Hour One (broken down)

30 minutes

- meet and greet
- complete Johari Window survey *original Johari Window found at www.kevan.org/Johari
- complete Sumi Ink Party pre-survey

-as a group, choose 2 neutral colors of tempera paint and 1 primary or secondary color of tempera paint to use on the mural

30 minutes

- participants will create a wash using diluted ink
- facilitator will tally results of the Johari Window survey
- facilitator will share the top 6 choices from the bottom Johari Window (desired culture)
- as a group, participants will create line designs out of ink to represent each of the 6 desired culture words (place these 6 separate designs someplace everyone can see and refer to them)

Hour Two (broken down)

15 minutes

-break

30 minutes

-Using ink and chosen colors of tempera paint, participants will paint their created line designs representing each of the 6 “desired culture” words. This painting time is for Macro (large brush movement) painting only.

15 minutes

-break

Hour Three (broken down)

15 minutes

-discussion time

30 minutes

-Using ink and chosen colors of tempera paint, participants will paint their created line designs representing each of the 6 “desired culture” words. White tempera paint will be added as an extra color to use and dots will be added as extra marks to make. This painting time is for Micro (small brush movement) painting only.

15 minutes

- clean up
- discussion time

Appendix B

Art Workshop/Professional Development Survey
3-Hour Sumi Ink Party



Name: _____ Subject(s) You Teach: _____ Date: _____

Please Circle: Pre-Workshop Survey or Post-Workshop Survey

1. How would you rate the current staff morale on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best)? Please elaborate on your answer.
2. How would you rate the current connection amongst staff members on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best)? Please elaborate on your answer.
3. How would you rate the current staff culture on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best)? Please elaborate on your answer.

*There are no direct benefits, risks, or compensation to you for participating in this study. All images, artwork, and other data collected will be coded to protect your identity to the extent provided by law. No one else at the school will have identifiable access to your results, thoughts, and written comments on this survey.

Appendix C

*There are no direct benefits, risks, or compensation to you for participating in this study. All images, artwork, and other data collected will be coded to protect your identity to the extent provided by law. No one else at the school will have identifiable access to your results, thoughts, and written comments on this survey.

Instructions: Please circle the six words you think best describe the <u>current</u> culture and atmosphere amongst Caldwell County Middle School staff.				
Able	Accepting	Adaptable	Bold	Brave
Calm	Caring	Cheerful	Clever	Complex
Confident	Dependable	Dignified	Energetic	Extroverted
Friendly	Giving	Happy	Helpful	Idealistic
Independent	Ingenious	Intelligent	Introverted	Kind
Knowledgeable	Logical	Loving	Mature	Modest
Nervous	Observant	Organized	Patient	Powerful
Proud	Quiet	Reflective	Relaxed	Religious
Responsive	Searching	Self-assertive	Self-conscious	Sensible
Sentimental	Shy	Silly	Spontaneous	Sympathetic
Tense	Trustworthy	Warm	Wise	Witty

Sumi Ink Party *Art* Workshop/Professional Development
 Johari Window Survey

*This is being offered as part of Miranda Meeks' Capstone Project for the Art Education Graduate Program at the University of Florida.



*There are no direct benefits, risks, or compensation to you for participating in this study. All images, artwork, and other data collected will be coded to protect your identity to the extent provided by law. No one else at the school will have identifiable access to your results, thoughts, and written comments on this survey.

Instructions: Please circle the six words you <i>most desire</i> the culture and atmosphere amongst Caldwell County Middle School staff to be.				
Able	Accepting	Adaptable	Bold	Brave
Calm	Caring	Cheerful	Clever	Complex
Confident	Dependable	Dignified	Energetic	Extroverted
Friendly	Giving	Happy	Helpful	Idealistic
Independent	Ingenious	Intelligent	Introverted	Kind
Knowledgeable	Logical	Loving	Mature	Modest
Nervous	Observant	Organized	Patient	Powerful
Proud	Quiet	Reflective	Relaxed	Religious
Responsive	Searching	Self-assertive	Self-conscious	Sensible
Sentimental	Shy	Silly	Spontaneous	Sympathetic
Tense	Trustworthy	Warm	Wise	Witty

Sumi Ink Party *Art* Workshop/Professional Development Johari Window Survey

*This is being offered as part of Miranda Meeks' Capstone Project for the Art Education Graduate Program at the University of Florida.



Collective Johari Window Results	
Current Culture	Desired Culture
Able	Confident
Adaptable	Dependable
Dependable	Logical
Friendly	Organized
Helpful	Relaxed
Religious	Trustworthy
Tense	

Collective results of participants view of <u>current</u> culture and atmosphere amongst Caldwell County Middle School staff...	
Words	Number of Total Votes
Able	4
Accepting	2
Adaptable	7
Bold	0
Brave	0
Calm	0
Caring	2
Cheerful	1

Clever	0
Complex	1
Confident	1
Dependable	3
Dignified	0
Energetic	0
Extroverted	0
Friendly	3
Giving	2
Happy	0
Helpful	3
Idealistic	2
Independent	1
Ingenious	0
Intelligent	1
Introverted	0
Kind	1
Knowledgeable	2
Logical	0
Loving	1
Mature	0
Modest	0
Nervous	1
Observant	2

Organized	0
Patient	1
Powerful	0
Proud	1
Quiet	0
Reflective	0
Relaxed	1
Religious	3
Responsive	0
Searching	0
Self-assertive	0
Self-conscious	2
Sensible	1
Sentimental	0
Shy	0
Silly	1
Spontaneous	1
Sympathetic	1
Tense	3
Trustworthy	2
Warm	1
Wise	0
Witty	0

Collective results of participants most <i>desire</i> to be the culture and atmosphere amongst Caldwell County Middle School staff...	
Words	Number of Total Votes
Able	0
Accepting	1
Adaptable	1
Bold	1
Brave	2
Calm	1
Caring	1
Cheerful	0
Clever	0
Complex	0
Confident	4
Dependable	3
Dignified	1
Energetic	2
Extroverted	0
Friendly	0
Giving	0

Happy	2
Helpful	1
Idealistic	1
Independent	0
Ingenious	0
Intelligent	1
Introverted	0
Kind	0
Knowledgeable	1
Logical	3
Loving	2
Mature	1
Modest	0
Nervous	0
Observant	0
Organized	7
Patient	1
Powerful	1
Proud	1
Quiet	0
Reflective	1
Relaxed	3
Religious	0
Responsive	2

Searching	1
Self-assertive	0
Self-conscious	0
Sensible	2
Sentimental	0
Shy	0
Silly	0
Spontaneous	1
Sympathetic	1
Tense	0
Trustworthy	6
Warm	1
Wise	1
Witty	0

Appendix D

Results from Sumi Ink Party PD Post-Survey Question 6

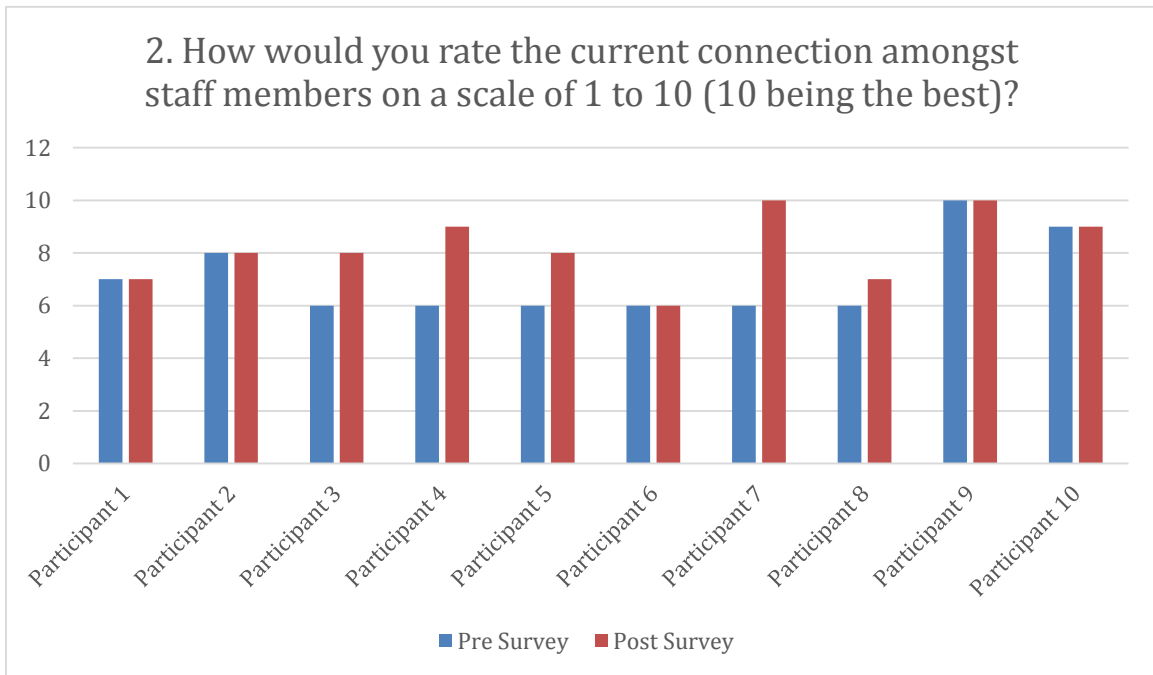
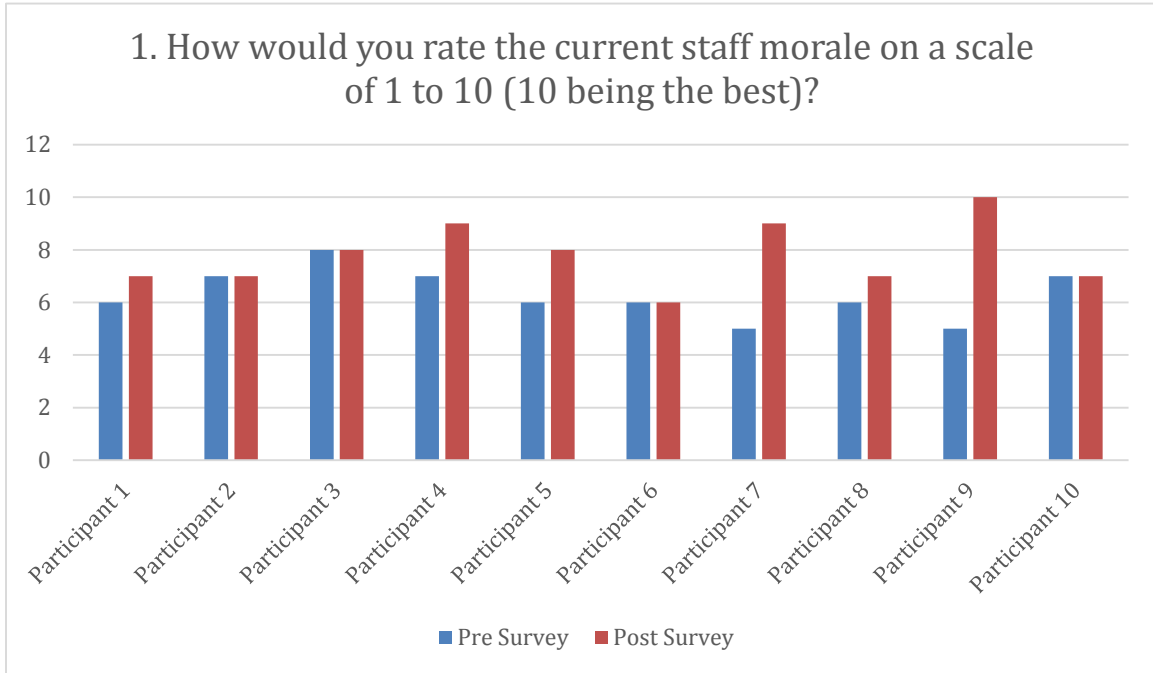
6. Was this PD beneficial to you in any way?	
Participant	Response
1	“Yes. I feel we bonded and it was stress relieving.”
2	“Yes. I liked being able to work together and getting to know each other even better. I learned several things about my coworkers I didn’t know before like strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes.”
3	“Yes. It was fun and I got to get to know people better. We experienced a lot of teamwork.”
4	“Yes. Getting together at a time when we are NOT locked into our jobs or schedules was nice.”
5	“Yes. I enjoyed the stress relief and the fun I had with friends.”
6	“Yes. I think the teachers became more cohesive, explored ideas, and had conversations that weren’t defined by an agenda. Teachers could be creative and not corrected.”
7	“Yes. I liked how the staff was able to have FUN with each other, socialize, and build a better rapport.”
8	“Yes. It was fun, relaxing, and we felt we had accomplished a work together. Having the six types of lines provided a great safety net so I could relax during the activity and not stress over it too much.”
9	“Yes. It was so nice to enjoy some stress free fun with coworkers I don’t get to interact with outside of work.”
10	“Yes. I have learned I can always count on my coworkers to have my back.”

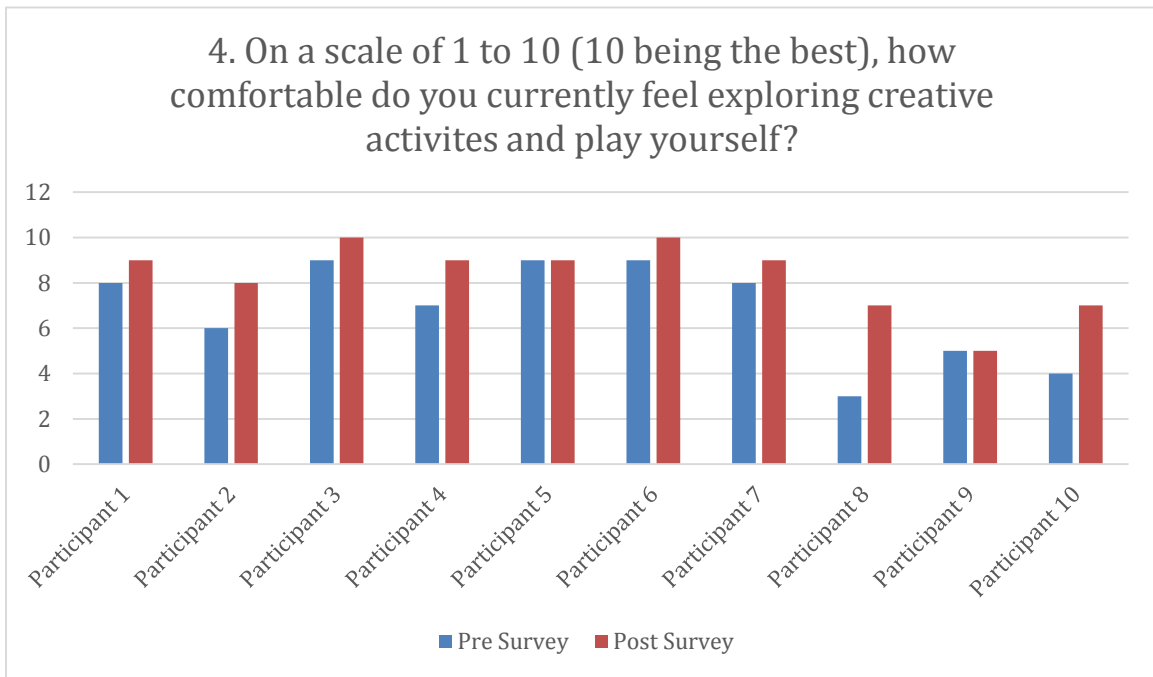
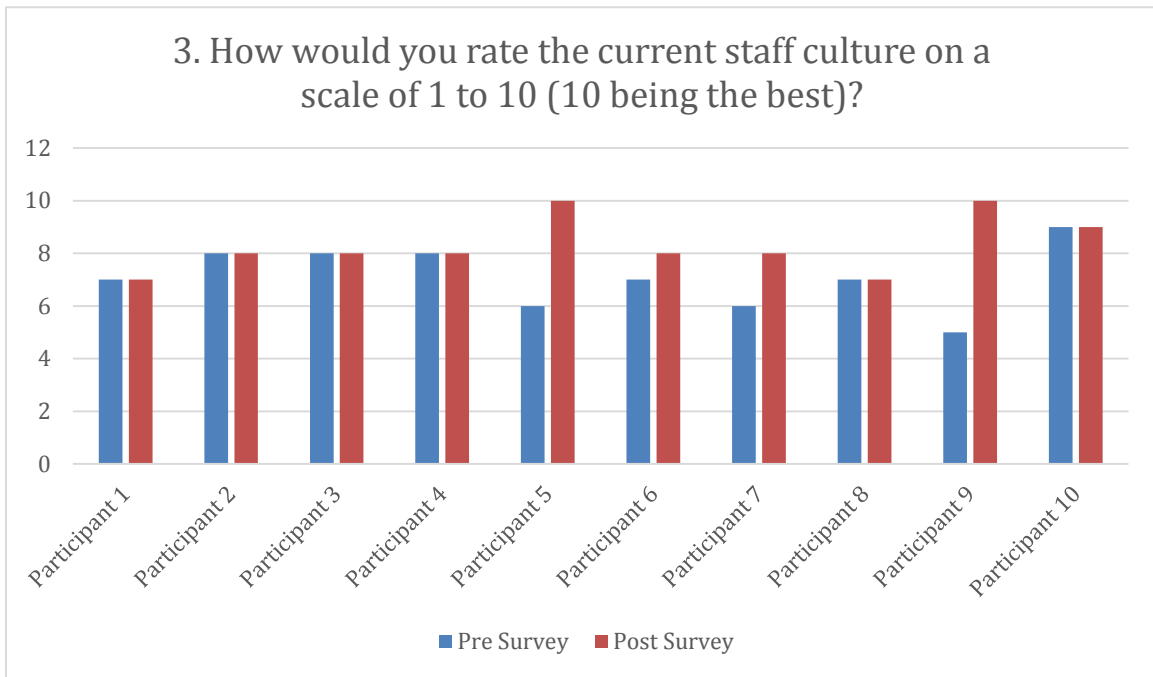
Appendix E

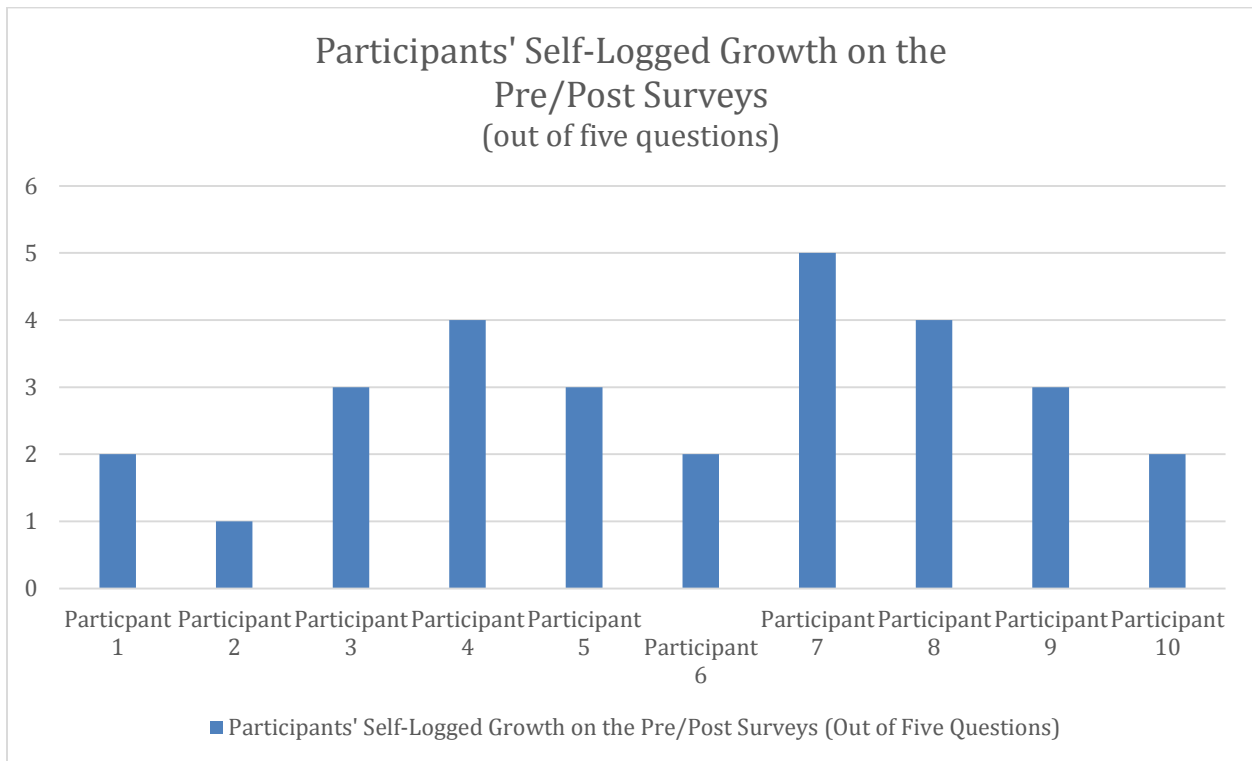
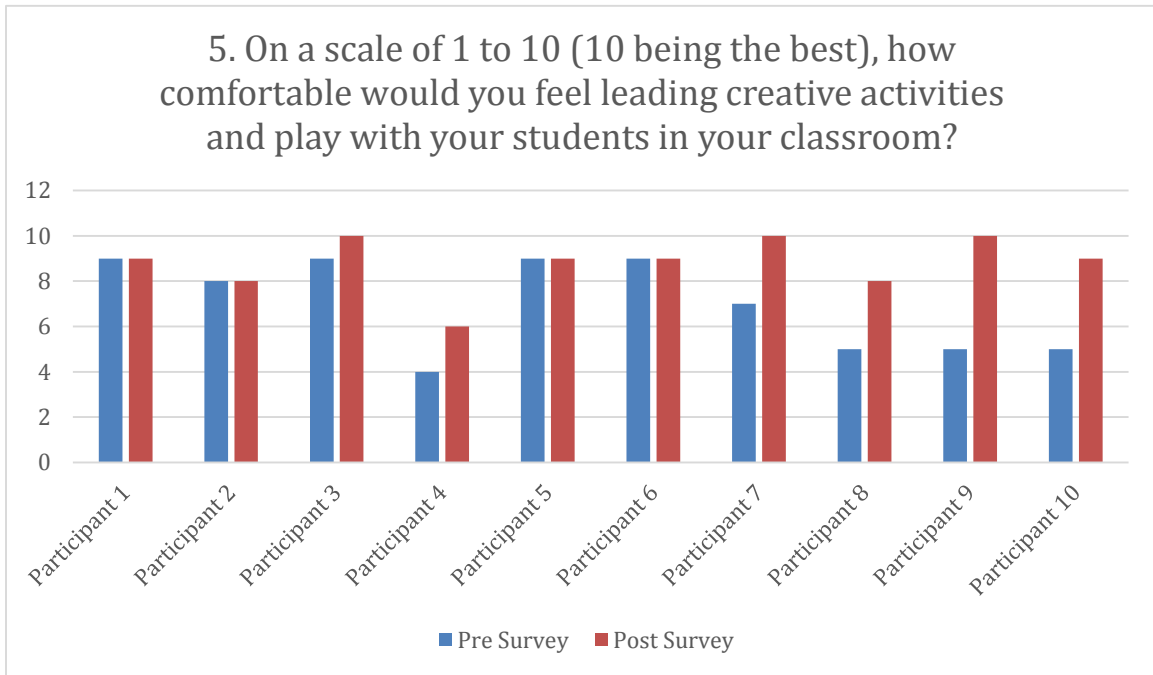
Results from Sumi Ink Party PD Post-Survey Question 7

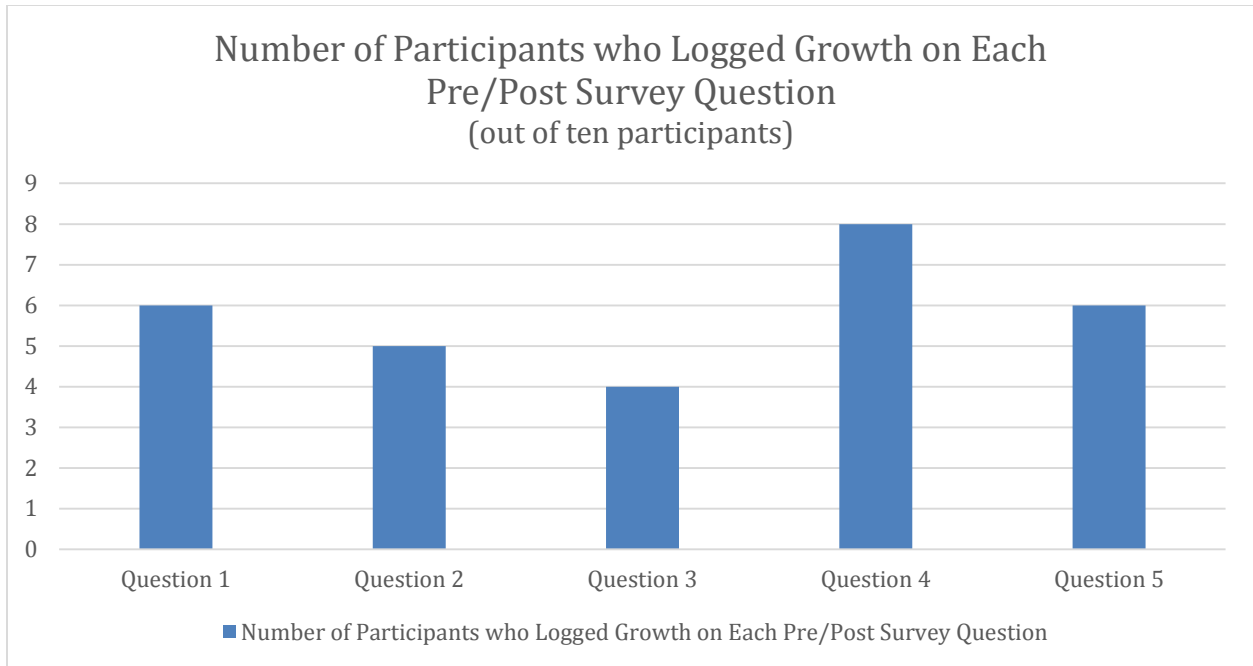
7. Would you find this type of workshop valuable as part of the regularly mandated PD sessions at your school? Why or why not?	
Participant	Response
1	“Yes, especially if our answers to previous questions on this survey would always remain anonymous. These types of questions are helpful to discuss but you can’t always be honest with the administration and get positive results or be heard. I would love for us to do activities like this more often! It’s such a great way to bond and relieve stress; and man is this job stressful!”
2	“Yes. We can learn to help and correct each other in a positive way. It was also really fun to work together to create something.”
3	“Yes. It’s fun. There’s no pressure. You felt comfortable to express yourself. It builds relationships and it’s not boring. I think this would be a great way for administration to get input from staff in a nonthreatening way.”
4	“It brings together people from their separate parts of the school building and our daily routines that go with it. After participating today, I believe strongly that multiple PD’s would build on the positive momentum started by this PD. We were able to identify and acknowledge what we desire our culture at school to be. Teachers feel lots of pressure due to state accountability standards and the task of getting lots of kids to meet those standards in nine months of school is incredibly stressful. It would be nice if we had a chances in the year to relive some of that stress together.”
5	“Yes. People need to be made to work together like this to better appreciate on another.”
6	“Absolutely! Instead of telling teachers what to think and say and read, they can collaborate across the board.”
7	“Yes. We need to wind down and enjoy ourselves so we can be prepared to begin again with instruction.”
8	“Yes. I think it would build culture, morale, and connectedness if the <u>entire</u> staff was present. Times like this let you see your fellow workers in a new light.”
9	“Yes. You can communicate with others outside of grade levels.”
10	“Yes. Stuff like this allows the staff to become closer!”

Appendix F









Survey Question	Question Topic	Participants Who Logged Growth
1	Staff Morale	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
2	Staff Connection	3, 4, 5, 7, 8
3	Staff Culture	5, 6, 7, 9
4	Exploration of Creative Activities	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10
5	Leading Creative Activities in the Classroom	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10

Appendix G

Consent for Participants

Sumi Ink Party: Exploring the Creativity, Community, and Connection of School Staff Members

You all know me as Ms. Meeks, your co-worker, but I'm also a student. I'm studying art education at the University of Florida to help me get even better at my job here at Caldwell County Middle School. I'm currently working on a project to explore creative and play-based professional development sessions.

For this study, I created a professional development in the style of an art and play-based workshop. I would love for you to participate. I would also love to record your experiences during this workshop and include your artwork in my project, which I will share with my professors and classmates at UF as well as other art educators around the world.

You don't have to participate in the study unless you want to. It is voluntary. You won't get any special rewards or PD credit for participating, but you will be helping me with my schoolwork for which I will be very grateful. There is also no cost or penalty for not participating. If you say yes and then change your mind, that's okay too. There are no risks associated with participation in this project. And you will remain anonymous in all my reports on the project.

Your Co-Worker,

Ms. Meeks

Agreement:

I have reviewed the statement above with Ms. Meeks and I understand that my participation in this study is not required. I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

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Figure 6 “Completed mural hanging at the Caldwell County Board Office of Education.”39

Author Biography

I received a Bachelors of Science degree in Art with teaching certification from Campbellsville University in 2009, where I received the Senior Art Award and have a piece hanging in their permanent collection, and will graduate with a Master's degree in Art Education with the University of Florida in 2016. I became a certified life coach and speaker with The John Maxwell Team in 2013. I'm not only a member of KyAEA and NEAE, but I serve on the board for the Kentucky Art Education Association as the Special Needs Representative. I've been teaching art at Caldwell County Middle School since 2011. In 2015, I was named the KyAEA Middle School Art Educator of the Year and my art work placed first in the Teacher's Exhibit. One of my student's works also placed first in the 2D, 4th-6th grade category. Most recently, my personal artwork has been shown at Galleria 107 in Princeton, Kentucky.