Exploring Family Heritage and Personal Space to Find Meaning and Content in Student Art

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Abstract

As an art educator, I found student art lacking in meaning and students lacking personal engagement. I sought a way to engage students in more meaningful art-making in the classroom by exploring family heritage and personal spaces. This case study searched the family heritage and personal spaces of students in a junior high art class to engage students and find deeper meaning and context for student art-making. The research was informed through an arts-based inquiry with a/r/tographic influence. It was a qualitative inquiry, mining the familiar for development of a curriculum rich in context and personal significance for students. This inquiry examined the influences of family through art-making and research into the visual culture of student homes and heritage. We curated our personal spaces and made art that reflected our findings, keeping reflexive journals of our experiences, and exhibiting our art in a culmination of our research. The results were meaningful content in student art as well as more enthusiastic engagement in the art making process. This experience gleaned more than just student art rich in meaning, but in a deeper understanding of one another in our classroom.

Degree

MA

College and Department

Fine Arts and Communications; Art

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