

i am asking you to do something  
anything  
everyday to change  
the way that we as a culture  
have been dealing  
with difference.

- k. bornstein -



a curriculum resource for elementary school classrooms

lee hicks © 2011 ♥

# thanks and acknowledgements

I began this project in 2009 for one specific, fantastic, both/and kid.

I continued it for the rest of us.

I would like to send this curriculum document off into the world with the same blessing as I gave the video:

**this is for small and big people who are both/and.**

♥ lee

*The video itself could not have been completed without the generous time and talents of several people other than myself, including;*

**Carol Culhane**, who composed, played and recorded all of the music that is much, much more than background. Thank you for this, and also for being the best friend in the history of ever.

© 2009 *with gratitude for a rainy sunday afternoon* by Carol Culhane

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Many thanks to everyone at **7 Stories Press** for facilitating the legal use of this material, and especially of course to the magnificent **Kate Bornstein** for generously allowing me to work directly from her words and ideas for this project.

**This document was made to be shared.**

**Feel free to share it.**

**Please share often.**

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**more  
than anything else  
we want to  
love  
and be loved.**

- the Skills and Principles of Loving -  
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SACRED RETREAT CENTRE

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## introduction

When I started this project in the spring of 2009, it was in response to an actual situation happening for a student at the elementary school where I was teaching. She was 6 years old and in grade 1 and already experiencing the terror associated with public washrooms that those of us who present in any way interpreted as **\*gender queer** know all too well. Having now graduated from kindergarten with its single stall, self-contained washroom, she found herself forced to choose which washroom to use and as such, to play the game of identifying clearly for everyone else as either male OR female. In doing so, she was also immediately subjected to the fierce opinions of every other washroom goer who thinks they know what a “boy” or a “girl” is *supposed* to look like. Speaking from personal experience, this is an awful choice to have to make several times a day in order to protect yourself physically and emotionally when really – *you just want to pee.*

Although I really should have known better, I was initially surprised that the same sort of bullying and harassment I experienced the previous year as a teacher at a TDSB middle school in a very divisive and conservative community was happening here at this socially liberal, and purportedly “**\*queer** friendly” elementary school... But here’s the thing – the thing that really hit home and painfully deep for me when I saw all of these experiences that I have had mostly as an adult played out in the life of a 6 year old child; being “ok” with, or even accepting of, *or even identifying as* lesbian, gay, bisexual or any other form of “queer” in regards to sexuality does not mean that a person understands, supports, or even wants to THINK about queering **\*gender**... About the fact that *we live in a world where there are way more than two genders.*

In my own experience, I have found that the queer community at large is at best *equally* dragged down by the systemic effects of sexism in our society as those who do not self-identify as a part of it. When we talk about whether a person, regardless of age, looks or acts “male enough” or “female enough” to be “normal”, what we are really talking about is which of two genders we have been taught to believe exist has an innate right to greater power and WHO by extension is crossing the line in either direction and deserves to be brought down as a result. What we often don’t acknowledge, even to ourselves, is that we are *also* talking about the intersections between race, class, ability, sexuality and gender identity... *but we are.* As teachers and/or parents and/or adults who have been through the school system ourselves, we cannot deny knowing that a good deal of this “bringing down”, denial and glossing over begins in classrooms and schoolyards.

Frankly, I don’t give a moment’s credibility to anyone who dismisses the need for us as adults in society today to critically assess our progress in facilitating positive change for the next generation. Any naïveté or reluctance to stand up that I *had* around that reality changed the day that I saw those other 6 year old girls tell the one with the short hair, cargo pants and basketball t-shirt that she couldn’t be a girl and go into the girl’s washroom unless she had her “pink”... This conviction further solidified and then stuck way-deep-down in my gut later that year when her mother told me that she still didn’t go to the bathroom all day at school because individual interventions that had *not* been framed by widespread preventative education across the board at the primary grade levels were not making an ounce of difference in her kid’s life... *Did you know that the rates of school drop out, self-harm, homelessness,*

*underemployment and attempted suicide for people who identify somewhere along the spectrum of **\*gender variant** are well above the national average in Canada?... So please do not tell yourself that all the work has been done.*

That is why I made this video. Partially I did it because art is something that I know how to do and it made ME feel better. It was comforting to use the only language that I know solidly in my bones to let out all of my own rage and hurt and longing as a 6-year-old small person and put it into something active and beauty-full. Partially I did it because I really believe that it is not only “ok”, but actually essential to teach very young kids about what **\*sexism** is and how that informs all sorts of oppressions in our society, including (but certainly not limited to) **\*homophobia** and **\*transphobia**... How we ALL – *no matter how young or how socially conscious* – are complicit in the perpetuation of stereotypes unless we continuously and actively challenge the way that they play out inside of and around us every day.

This is where I'd like to call particularly to those among us – *and I readily include myself in this invitation* – who are already committed to teaching through an anti-oppression framework; ***the fact that we are aware that it is indeed possible to teach the government legislated curriculum through an anti-oppression framework is a really good thing... Using the knowledge of our own awareness as an excuse to talk about what we learned in the way that we understood it ten years ago and to neither ACT on what we know nor to continue to challenge ourselves to learn more – to know deeper and broader – is much less good.*** For example, we need first to have an honest discussion with our private selves about our own stereotypes concerning **\*gender presentation** before we can even begin to understand that we may not actually know a whole lot about a person's experience with **\*gender identity** just by looking at them. Similarly, I cannot purport to have any lived experience of how a trans person who must also deal with racism directed towards them on a daily basis experiences transphobia, but I *can*, for starters, invite the awareness of this gap in deep understanding to directly inform the place that I DO speak from... It is not everything and it is not in any way *enough*, but it is way better than not starting at all. I say this because all of this personal work can seem terribly disheartening and perhaps even adequate reasoning to throw up your hands and choose to do nothing at all...ever. This is of course an option, but allow me to suggest alongside that possibility that our role as educators is never to understand *all* of everything we aim to “teach” our students. In fact, the belief that this complete knowing is even possible is most likely to become the place where a well-intentioned anti-oppression framework becomes disingenuous.

A couple of years ago, I was teaching a grade 5 math class and was half way through my first long division example on the blackboard before I realized that I actually had no recollection of how to DO long division. My knee-jerk reaction was to scramble internally and figure out how I could possibly cover up my ignorance and what I believed to be a massive faux pas in my role as “teacher”. Luckily, the gap in my knowledge was actually SO great that the only thing I could realistically do was to sheepishly let my students know that I didn't understand as much about the topic as I thought that I had... that I was going to need a few minutes figure it out myself before working through the next steps with them. I say *luckily* because that accidental experience was probably one of the most useful moments of teaching/learning that I have ever had. It was the acknowledgement of what I didn't know and the demonstration of actively choosing to fill my own gaps in knowledge with no significant shame attached to the action that my students later told me helped to build trust between us. Please believe me when I say that

the same can be true for teaching about sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, **\*classism** and/or **\*ableism**.... **You do not have to be an expert on anything other than the dialogue that is going on inside of your own brain in regards to the material you are presenting.** As I am sure you already know, kids are remarkably intuitive and it is their perception of how genuine the person presenting the lesson IS that will end up overshadowing the content itself if fear and shame is left unchecked.

This video does nothing close to directly addressing all of those complicated intersections referred to above. Actually, watched in isolation, particularly with the absence of discussion, it may not hit on any of them for some folks. It really depends on the personal experiences of those watching it, which will be affected and enriched as much by the discussion that the content sparks as by the video itself. I made this video so that elementary school teachers would have something concrete at their disposal that would help them to START and facilitate such a discussion amongst their students. As a teacher myself, I have been frustrated by the lack of resources dealing with homophobia, transphobia and even gender stereotypes for this age group... For example, we are often warned off of going anywhere near words containing the syllable “sex” when teaching the primary/junior grades, even if it is referring to an aspect of gender identity as opposed to the act of intercourse. **Case and point:** the fact that the newly revised Sex Education Curriculum that a provincial task force spend over a year developing in order to introduce to Ontario public schools in 2010 lasted all of 2 days before Premier Dalton McGuinty caved to the pressure of conservative special interest groups and recalled it for “serious rethinking.”<sup>1</sup> Apparently it is ok for 6-year-old kids to act out socially and aggressively on the belief that you are not actually a girl if you don’t like pink, but it is NOT ok for them to learn what sexism, homophobia and transphobia *are* and how they actually hurt people. Despite the lack of support and leadership that we have seen repeatedly on a policy reform level, we as teachers are innately creative and resourceful individuals who have a responsibility to challenge the status quo. As such, I created a teacher resource to accompany the **both/and** video that very clearly links to specific points in the health education, language and visual arts curriculums for Kindergarten to Grade 6 (*such as they are*).<sup>c.2011</sup>

I don’t know if this resource made any difference at all in the short term for the child whose struggle inspired me to develop it, but I sincerely hope that as it is dispersed it will become part of a growing call among educators to stand UP, engage, and reject complacency. There is no doubt in my mind that if these ideas and images are shared with diverse groups of young people they will be taken up, discussed, and then radically re-formed *by* that audience in a way that I as a white, middle class, able-bodied, **\*transgendered** adult could not even hope to anticipate. That is the way that it should be. Positive and sustainable social change through education begins with trust. Primarily, this should be the genuine trust that teachers have the power to give to their students that not only “allows,” but also *empowers* them to think and act for themselves in reference to the reality of their own lives. All that is required to begin down this path is to sit softly and deeply in ourselves – ***and then listen to them.***

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<sup>1</sup> Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario, CBC News, Friday, April 23, 2010



# curriculum

# connections



- ♥ overview
- ♥ easy guide to grade specific links to the Ontario Curriculum

## curriculum connections:

# overview

**“Young children begin their personal and social development by learning about themselves, about themselves in relationship to others, and about themselves in relation to the world”<sup>2</sup>**

This quote concisely describes how teachers can present a social issue to kindergarten-aged students in a developmentally appropriate context. I chose it to begin the overall introduction to curriculum connections for all primary-junior grades because it also provides a very relevant framework for how human consciousness learns and grows at any age. The role of the teacher here is one of organizing and facilitating followed by watching, learning and responding to the needs that arise for the specific group of learners in front of them. When someone is able to gently guide us in understanding more of ourselves, the increased ease and comfort that results from that knowing in turn opens up the emotional space needed to feel genuine empathy and compassion for others. I have therefore organized the lesson plans for each of the early learner, primary, and junior sections of this curriculum into three steps that are intended to mirror the way that self-acceptance facilitates one’s deep belief in the right of any individual to *“imagine a world where anyone can safely, and even joyfully, express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.”*<sup>3</sup> The content of the lesson plans for all grade levels are quite similar in process and intention. I have adjusted the methodology, timing, project extensions, and in some cases the nature of the preparatory work in order to ensure that activities are age appropriate. The subject matter naturally brings up different topics and qualities of conversation with each age group, which can be especially interesting if many teachers in a school team get together to compare and contrast experiences. I have had success with variations of these ideas at many grade levels. **\*Each of the three lesson plan sections contains all of the same explanatory materials.** Therefore, if you wish to just print off the section that pertains to the grade level you teach, this can be more easily accomplished. **My basic approach to planning lessons at each developmental level is as follows;**

- 1) Introduce a core aspect of the issue that kids can begin to relate to from an egocentric view of the world. Help to develop their personal connection to that idea through an individual, arts-based activity.
- 2) Use the results of that creative activity to start a discussion among students. Employ the personal artwork that they have created as a visual and conceptual aid to highlighting similarities and differences between individual experiences.
- 3) Facilitate a transition in the style of interaction so that talk between and about individuals can open up into more of a group planning session as to how a community can use collective commitment to make positive social change happen in the world around them. Re-engage with arts-based approaches in order to articulate the group’s collective vision for positive social change.

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<sup>2</sup> from the Ontario Ministry of Education **Full Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program** document, 2010-2011, *draft version*, Personal and Social Development Overview, p.48.

<sup>3</sup> from **101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws**, Kate Bornstein, 7 Stories Press, 2006 – *used by Lee Hicks with permission of the author and the publisher, both/and*, ©2010

Each of these 3-part lesson sets is intended to assist a class community in moving towards greater personal awareness in the interest actual social action. That action itself is not something that I can write about in good conscience or with any authority because to do so would feel akin to pre-cutting a class set of bunny ears, whiskers and paper plates and then using my own example version of said paper-plate-bunny to impress upon 5 year-olds what their own paper-plate-bunny “*should*” look like...*you know?*

As I stated in my introduction, “*there is no doubt in my mind that if these ideas and images are shared with diverse groups of young people they will be taken up, discussed, and then radically re-formed **by** that audience in a way that (I) could not even hope to anticipate. That is the way that it should be.*” I will suggest at the end of each of the Early Learning – Kindergarten, Primary and Junior lesson plan sections how one *might* choose to enter into further discussion with their students in a way that would facilitate collective planning of a social action that is based on their specific response to this video resource. The role of each educator at that point will be to listen closely in order to discern what is truly igniting the passions of their class, and then to assist their students in forming a plan that will honour their optimism manageably and ethically.

# guide to grade-specific curriculum links <sup>\*</sup> Ontario specific

early learner - kindergarten	subject	lesson reference points	overall expectations	specific expectations
	<b>PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will directly address the way that they and others are affected by stereotypes, and work together to imagine a better world.</li> </ul>	<b>3. demonstrate a beginning understanding of the diversity in individuals, families, schools, and the wider community.</b>	<b>3.1</b> develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to feelings. <b>3.2</b> demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences / points of view.
	<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<i>Throughout the process of watching the both/and video and responding to it with arts-based approaches;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will work together to practice articulating their ideas verbally; actively listen to others in order to give relevant feedback; respond with comments/questions.</li> <li>students will discuss the connections between content in video media, picture books, and their own experiences.</li> </ul>	<b>1. communicate by talking and by listening and speaking to others for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.</b>	<b>1.2</b> listen and respond to others for a variety of purposes. <b>1.5</b> use language in various contexts to connect new experiences with what they already know. <b>1.9</b> describe personal experiences, using appropriate vocabulary and details.
			<b>5. demonstrate a beginning understanding and critical awareness of media texts.</b>	<b>5.1</b> begin to respond critically to animated works. <b>5.2</b> communicate their ideas verbally and non-verbally about a variety of media materials.
	<b>MATH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will learn and practice methods of <b>sorting</b> and <b>classification</b> through the practical necessity of organizing the quantity of found objects that they collect and use as a medium for visual expression.</li> </ul>	<b>G3. describe, sort, classify, and compare 2D shapes and 3D figures.</b>	<b>G3.1</b> explore, sort, and compare traditional and non-traditional 2D shapes and 3D figures. <b>G3.5</b> investigate the relationship between two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures in objects that they have made.
			<b>DM5. sort, classify, and display a variety of concrete objects.</b>	<b>DM5.1</b> sort, classify, and compare objects and describe the attributes used.
	<b>PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topics of bullying and stereotypes in relation to gender and other assumptions about identity are confronted and re-thought.</li> </ul>	<b>1. demonstrate an awareness of health and safety practices for themselves and others and a basic awareness of their own well being.</b>	<b>1.4</b> discuss what action to take when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, and how to seek assistance in unsafe situations. <b>1.5</b> discuss what makes you happy or unhappy, and why.
	<b>VISUAL ART</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will use drawing to express their understanding of themselves; referring to both their own imaginations and a 3D construction that they create.</li> </ul>	<b>V1. demonstrate an awareness of themselves as artists.</b>	<b>V1.1</b> demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in the arts.
			<b>V5. communicate their ideas through various visual art forms.</b>	<b>V5.1</b> communicate their understanding of something through visual media.

primary - grades 1 to 3	subject	lesson reference points	overall expectations	specific expectations
	<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will work together to practice articulating their ideas verbally; actively listen in order to discuss/respond relevantly with others.</li> <li>students discuss connections between content in video media, picture books, and their own experiences.</li> </ul>	<b>O1. Listen in order to understand and respond appropriately to a variety of situations.</b>	<b>1.2</b> demonstrate an understanding of appropriate listening behaviour by using active listening strategies.
			<b>M1. demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.</b>	<b>1.3</b> express personal thoughts and feelings <b>1.5</b> begin to identify whose point of view is expressed.
	<b>MATH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will learn/practice methods of <b>sorting</b> and <b>classification</b> as they find and organize objects for use as a medium for visual expression.</li> </ul>	<b>GS1. identify common 2D shapes and 3D figures and sort and classify them by attributes.</b>	Sort and classify objects by their attributes using a combination concrete materials and pictorial representations.
	<b>HEALTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topics of bullying and stereotypes in relation to gender and other assumptions that restrict positive identity development are confronted, analyzed critically and re-thought.</li> <li>strategies for safe and effective social action are discussed.</li> <li>plans are made for activism and change.</li> </ul>	<b>HEALTHY LIVING:</b> <b>C2. demonstrate the ability to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health/well-being;</b> <b>C3. demonstrate the ability to make connections; how their choices/behaviours affect themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others' health and well being.</b>	<b>GRADE 1 - C2.3</b> demonstrate the ability to recognize caring behaviours and exploitive behaviours and describe feelings associated. <b>GRADE 2 - C2.3</b> looking at the importance of standing up for oneself. <b>GRADE 3 - C3.2</b> explain how the portrayal of fictional violence in media can create an unrealistic view of the consequences of real violence.
	<b>ART</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will use drawing and other media to express their understanding of themselves; referring to both their own imaginations and an actual 3D construction that they create.</li> <li>discuss understanding of visual media presented to them and incorporate their understanding into their personal arts-based response.</li> </ul>	<b>D1. produce a variety of 2D and 3D art works using visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understanding.</b>	<b>D1.1</b> create 2D and 3D works of art that express and explore feelings ideas and issues from a variety of points of view.
			<b>D2. communicate feelings ideas and understandings in response to a variety of artworks and experiences.</b>	<b>D2.1</b> interpret a variety of art works and identify feelings, issues, themes and social concerns that they convey. <b>D2.2</b> explain how meaning is created and communicated in their own and others' artwork.



junior – grades 4 to 6	subject	lesson reference points	overall expectations	specific expectations
	<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will work together to practice articulating their ideas verbally;</li> <li>they will actively listen in order to discuss and respond relevantly to others.</li> <li>students will discuss connections between content in video media, picture books, and their own experiences.</li> <li>students will begin to consider bias in the media and how the agenda of the author affects the quality and accuracy of the message portrayed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>O1. Listen in order to understand and respond appropriately to a variety of situations including group work</b></p> <p><b>O2. use speaking skills and strategies to communicate with different audiences.</b></p> <p><b>M1. demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.</b></p>	<p><b>1.2</b> demonstrate an understanding of appropriate listening behaviour by using active listening strategies.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> demonstrate appropriate speaking behaviour in paired sharing and small- and large-group discussions</p> <p><b>1.3</b> express opinions about ideas and issues in media</p> <p><b>1.5</b> identify whose point of view is presented or reflected, suggesting how the text might change from a different point of view and whose perspective is missing</p>
	<b>HEALTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topics of bullying and stereotypes in relation to gender and other assumptions that restrict positive identity development are confronted, addressed and re-thought.</li> <li>strategies for safe and effective social action are discussed.</li> <li>plans are made for activism and change.</li> </ul>	<p><b>HEALTHY LIVING:</b></p> <p><b>C2. demonstrate the ability to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health/well-being;</b></p> <p><b>C3. demonstrate the ability to make connections; how their choices and behaviours as well as factors in the world affect themselves and others.</b></p> <p><b>GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:</b> Describe physical, emotional, and interpersonal changes associated with puberty. Identify the major parts of the reproductive system.</p>	<p><b>GRADE 4 – C1.3</b> describe various types of bullying and abuse (e.g., social, physical, verbal) and identify appropriate responses.</p> <p><b>GRADE 2 – C1.1</b> identify people and supportive services that can assist with bullying + abusive situations.</p> <p><b>GRADE 6 – C3.2</b> Learning about responsibilities and risks in caring for oneself and others.</p> <p><b>GRADE 5</b> Describe the physical changes at puberty.</p> <p><b>GRADE 6</b> Relate the changes at puberty to the reproductive organs and their functions;</p>
	<b>ART</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students will use drawing and other media to express their understanding of themselves; referring to their own imaginations and a 3D construction that they create.</li> <li>discuss understanding of visual media presented to them and incorporate their understanding into their personal arts-based response.</li> </ul>	<p><b>D1. produce a variety of 2D ,3D and multi-media art works using visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understanding.</b></p> <p><b>D2. communicate feelings ideas and understandings in response to a variety of artworks and experiences.</b></p>	<p><b>D1.1</b> create 2D and 3D works of art that express personal feelings and ideas inspired by their own experiences and incorporate the community around them.</p> <p><b>D2.1</b> express their feelings and ideas about art works and art experiences.</p> <p><b>D2.2</b> explain how meaning is created in their own and others’ artwork.</p>

# lesson plans



- ♥ **general introduction**
- ♥ **first things first** – building a classroom community worth trusting
- ♥ **early learner** – kindergarten program
- ♥ **primary** – grades 1 to 3
- ♥ **junior** – grades 4 to 6

# lesson plans

## general introduction



### step one: the video

#### watching, listening and discussing:

This video runs 13.5 minutes in duration. It takes approximately the same amount of time to watch in its entirety as it would to read a medium-length picture book aloud. I am aware however that it can be very tempting as a classroom teacher to capitalize on the benefits of a medium that you do not need to personally help “come to life”. What I mean by this is that a video, unlike a storybook, is something that you could conceivably press “play” to begin and then sit quietly off to the side breathing in a few minutes of sanity while your students enjoy the show...

No one who has been there – least of all me – would blame you for this. At the same time, I am also going to both suggest and apologize for the fact that *this is not that kind of video*. It is not fast moving. There are no fancy visual or sound effects. The text-based message is small and appears both on screen and in audio, but the content in its entirety is not so simple or straightforward. These are the pieces that make it challenging... At the same time, it has built in pauses in “action” that allow for discussion and ambiguities in the characters’ presentation that inspire it. These are the pieces that make it different and – I hope – effective in opening up a unique reflective space for students and teachers to engage safely with issues of stereotyping, labeling, loneliness, bullying, sexism and transphobia at the elementary school level.

In many ways, this “video” actually has many more similarities to a traditional storybook than it does to new media. I am a painter not an animator and as such, the transition of images often reads like the turning of digital pages... *the voice over as a story read aloud*. As a classroom teacher, I have found that my time is best spent observing and listening to the students as they interact with the video because it gives me real and relevant ground to stand on later when attempting to facilitate intentional group discussion. I will often take notes of to remind myself of their comments and behaviour... **This is where the learning is**. Overall, in screening this resource with Junior Kindergarten classes right up to Grade 6 over the past two years, I have noticed that when the students are allowed to follow their natural tendency towards voicing their thoughts during the pauses, they are more able to stay focused on the storyline and later have an easier time organizing their ideas both visually and orally.

Javier Davila of the Office for Gender Based Violence Prevention at the Toronto District School Board has also been using **both/and** in workshops with elementary aged students and has observed the way that children themselves are deciding the resource should be used;

***“The thoughtful musical interludes were a perfect opportunity for small student discussions throughout. For example; “The person must be a girl because of their long eyelashes”... “No some boys have long eyelashes and some girls don’t, so we don’t know”... “Maybe the person can’t read the bathroom sign?”... “No, they can read it, they just don’t want to be bullied for picking the one they want to go in.”***

- Javier Davila and the students of a TDSB grade 2 class, 2011



## ♥ first things first

### taking the time to build a classroom community worth trusting

Respect is something that every-thing on earth innately deserves due to the very significant fact of its existence... *Trust* on the other hand can and should be earned. It has been my experience, especially with junior grades, that the two must go hand-in-hand if you as an educator have any desire to build authentic, sustainable, loving community with your students. In other words, this dynamic can never be laid out as a one-way street, i.e. *“you should trust me because I am your teacher but you, as the student, need to EARN my trust.”*

When I speak of “loving community” in the classroom, I am thinking about the kind of love – *and more importantly, the kind of **explicit teaching** of love* – that Bell Hooks writes so accessibly about in her book *All About Love*;

*“Imagine how much easier it would be for us to learn how to love if we began with a shared definition. The word “love” is most often defined as a noun, yet all the more astute theorists of love acknowledge that we would all love better if we used it as a verb... M.Scott Peck (echoing Erich Fromm) defines love as “**the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth**”... Had I been given a clear definition of love earlier in my life, it would not have taken me so long to become a more loving person. Had I shared with others a common understanding of what it means to love it would have been easier to create love.”<sup>4</sup>*

I am writing about trust and love in the “**students’ prior knowledge**” section of this curriculum because the way that this material plays itself out in your particular classroom will have a lot to do with how safe your students feel about sharing aspects of their most genuine selves with one another and with you. This is especially true with older kids because unfortunately, by the time they get to you way too many of them have already been hurt deeply and personally within the education system. I always spend at least three weeks at the beginning of a new school year working through intentional community building and *trust* based activities with my students... This often shocks colleagues who fear *“wasting time when there is so much **else** that we have to cover as classroom teachers”*... I have two quick points in response to this concern, and will leave the rest up to your discretion;

- 1. However you personally choose to go about it, the intentional and collaborative construction of loving community in your classroom will save you immeasurable amounts of time attempting to fix what is not working with classroom dynamics if you *don’t* do this.**
- 2. Taking care to consider the interior lives, social dynamics, and feelings of your students is not something “*else*” to find time for in addition to the “regular” curriculum... They are one and the same... *really and truly*... I promise.**

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<sup>4</sup> ALL ABOUT LOVE: New Visions, Harper Perennial, Bell Hooks, 2000, pages 4-11

## early learner – kindergarten program<sup>5</sup>

### general introduction

**“Four- and five-year-old children move beyond an egocentric view of the world and can learn to resolve conflicts and make decisions collaboratively and can develop a sense of community... As children learn about themselves and their culture, they also begin to understand that all people share similar needs, feelings and aspirations... They begin to develop understanding of the concepts of equality, fairness, tolerance, and justice...”<sup>6</sup>**

I used the above quote from the Ministry of Education Early Learner-Kindergarten Program document to introduce this section because I think it does a good job of honouring what children of this age are in fact developmentally capable of understanding and internalizing when it comes to issues of social justice. I cut it off where I did because the next line reads as follows; “...in relation to the treatment of minority groups, **individuals of both sexes**, people with special needs and those with diverse family structures.”

I have often heard adults justify their support of gender stereotyped teaching practices at the kindergarten level with statements like, “but that’s when children are figuring out whether they are a boy or a girl.” Essentially, this perspective is a full-out defense of why it is ok to not only *stereotype* children, but to stereotype them based on our perception of their gender identity as opposed to their own. *I find this argument counter-intuitive at best.* What I mean by this is that we still live in a society where common language and practices assume that boys are always born in bodies that we recognize and “male” and girls are always born in bodies that we recognize as “female”. If we as educators continue to focus children as “girls **and** boys” as opposed to **people sharing similar needs, feelings and aspirations**, it doesn’t actually matter how progressive our ideas are in regards to the kinds of activities we think will be of interest to either gender because our practice and the language with which we impart it will remain entrenched in the belief that there *are* only two genders.

A language reflects the perceptions of the culture in which it develops and vice-versa, which is why the idea of completely reforming the way that we as a culture think and speak about gender is daunting, at best. What better place to *try* though, than Kindergarten? Those of us who have taught this age group in particular understand how quickly young children learn and how magnificently open and receptive they are to challenging and changing their own perceptions. Imagine an entire class of 4-5 year olds who see, accept and love one another for who they actually are as human beings... Now imagine an entire school, 6-8 years later, with this class and every one thereafter having built a sense of themselves and others on the foundation of this early education...

*Now imagine a future built by these children....*

Change takes time.

***Why not start now?***

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<sup>5</sup> The Early Learner – Kindergarten Program was revised to respond to the needs of the new full-day kindergarten initiative in Ontario. When I finalized this curriculum in the summer of 2011, the most recent version available online was the 2010-2011 *draft version* from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

<sup>6</sup> from the Ontario Ministry of Education **Full Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program** document, 2010-2011, *draft version*, Personal and Social Development Overview, p.50.

# early learner – kindergarten program

## overview of curriculum

**Part One** of this lesson set involves 3 pieces of preparatory work that should be completed before the video is screened. These are intended to establish prior knowledge. There are then 3 more lessons for the class to work through after they have watched the video together. These lessons start at the place of “self” and are designed to help children develop a personal connection to the concept of pride, self-identity, and the celebration of differences through an individual, arts-based activity.

**Preparatory work** is described as an overview in “**students prior knowledge**” and all sources used are detailed in “**resources.**” The 3 lessons following the video screening will be referred to as **lesson a)**, **lesson b)** and **lesson c)** and will be looked at in greater detail under the headings “**lesson summaries**”, “**materials list**”, “**preparation**” and “**methodology and timing.**”

**Part Two** consists of one lesson in which the personal artwork that the students completed in Part One becomes a starting place for conversation in response to the **both/and** video resource. The discussion progresses more deeply into what the students are thinking about the similarities and differences between the individual experiences and identities among them.

**Part Three** is an opportunity to facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals to more of a group planning session that addresses how we as a community can make positive social change happen in the world around us. It involves 2 initial lessons that will support planning and open up space for individualized activities to develop. I will describe an example of how this *might* occur, but encourage individual teachers to watch and listen to the unique discussions in their own classrooms so as to move into action and activism with authenticity and increased potential for sustainability.

**Documenting images** referred to throughout the lesson plans are labeled accordingly and can be viewed at the end of the curriculum section on pages 58 – 62.

grades: Junior and Senior Kindergarten

## RESPONSE TO both/and students' prior knowledge

### 1. BEAUTIFUL STUFF:

My approach to portrait making as a self-reflective process with kids has been inspired partially through ideas from a book called **BEAUTIFUL STUFF: Learning With Found Materials**. The actual *beautiful stuff* (aside from what the kids themselves create) refers to all manner of found, re-used and recycled items that everyone in the class community collects and brings to school with the intention of sharing. Further details on that philosophy and related projects can be found in this book, which is by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini. In this section I will summarize what I did with my kindergarten class to collect, sort, and create with found materials and will focus on planning for a self-portrait project in response to the **both/and** video.

Approximately two weeks prior to actually needing a good supply of found materials to work with in class, I introduced the idea of “beautiful stuff” to the class as basically, **“any kind of small object or materials that you can find which is not living, is not belonging to anyone else, and is not already being used for something that it is essential to....”** *“Beautiful”* on the other hand, has few restrictions. *It is whatever that idea means to you... You may like to look or the size or the shape or the feel of it... It may make you feel happy, or just feel something in a way that you find beautiful... No one else gets to decide what is beautiful to you.”* We had an introductory class discussion about this, and I demonstrated the idea of beauty being subjective and individual by showing the students a few found objects from *my* collection and explaining why I like them... Students then volunteered to share their own past experiences with having found and/or saved interesting and “beautiful” objects. At the end of this day, I sent each child home with a large, sturdy paper bag and a letter to families explaining what we were aiming to do over the next couple of weeks, why, and the date that we would need to have the materials collected and delivered to the classroom by.

### 2. THE SORTING OF THE STUFF:

On the day that the beautiful stuff collection was completed and delivered, we had an “*Opening of the Bags*” ceremony in the classroom. We began with a bit of fun and mock-seriousness with a, *“please-repeat-after-me-I-will-not-forget-myself-completely-and-dive-IN-to-the-pile-of-beautiful-stuff-no-matter-HOW-amazingly-beautiful-it-is”* pledge. This worked well.

Each student in turn came to the center of the big circle we were seated in to dump the contents of their careful collection out for all to see and exclaim over... If they chose to, they pointed out a couple of particularly amazing items and told the details of how they had found them and why they loved them. When each student had contributed their stash and their stories to the pile, we began to talk about HOW we would sort them.

We did the sorting itself rather “organically” (*and by this, I mean quite seriously that I had no idea how it was going to go before we actually did it*). The trial and error DID work though, and took place essentially like this;

- lay out all of the empty containers in a row of sorts;
- someone suggests a category and takes an example item from the big pile to “file” into a new container;
- the process is repeated until all categories that the class suggests have been assigned to their own container;
- individuals or small groups work to find and collect all of the items from the pile that fit into a certain category
- once the initial sorting is complete, there are inevitably overlapping categories that can be sorted out through discussion, consensus, and/or any other semi-democratic method that works for you and your class.

***\*Prior to this day, the class had been working on sorting and categorizing objects in a variety of contexts, so they were already familiar with different ways that “stuff” could be organized in relation to one another.***

At the time that I first did this project with Kindergarten-aged kids, I had both a morning and an afternoon class. We managed to work very amiably and seamlessly together to share all the materials and collaborate on organizational tasks because right from day one, all of the students understood that anything they chose to bring in would be something that they wanted to SHARE... *and that this sharing would extend to the whole kindergarten community, not just their own classmates*. Surprisingly (even to me) this resulted in a pretty chilled-out approach to use of this magnificent collection by all students. For example, on the day of the bag-opening ceremony, my

morning class decided on 17 categories to sort and categorize their items... When the afternoon class arrived and it was time to sort *their* materials, they decided that they would like to keep these same categories and mix all of the “stuff” together but that a few things needed to be adjusted for the different items they had brought. Their solution was then to add 5 more categories for a total of 22 that would accommodate all the materials from both groups together.

### **3. LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself**

When teaching about self-portraiture, regardless of the age group, I start by suggesting that as human beings, we all have things that we know about ourselves that seem similar to other people as well as things that seem very different. Humans generally like at least *some* of the “same” things about ourselves, and *some* of the “different” things, but there may also be parts that we spend time not liking at all. Often, we spend time *not* liking certain parts because we are under the impression that they are either TOO much the same, or TOO different from other people that we want to be accepted by. The very funny truth of all this is that every other human around us is struggling with the same worries.... *every single one*... and the thing that they really want most of all is to be celebrated for who they are most naturally. **Just like you.** So, the thing is then that this one similarity – *this key vulnerability about being human and living well in community* – is really the only thing we need to worry about knowing when we take the risk of showing ourselves fully to other people;

It means that the way that YOU do it is exactly perfect, exactly now **for you, and** the way that *they* do it is exactly perfect for them....

That goes for drawing,  
and for BEing.

#### **“MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE**

**we want to love  
and be loved.”<sup>7</sup>**

This doesn’t mean fear of being rejected is not scary.... it means that in THIS group at the very least, we are going to try to remember that EVERYONE – even you – is being the very best self that they can be and that it is an honour to have someone share their best self with you. **I then ask everyone to please remember to *accept* this honour with thanks and respect for themselves and each of their classmates.**

The truth is that I begin facilitating the development of this language of positive, supportive community building in the classroom on day one of the school year because it really can’t happen all at once. Before you can expect kids to share honestly about themselves with others, there needs to be a clear expectation of care and safety that we all hold one another to. With younger children, you as the classroom teacher start out doing a lot of the “holding” so to speak... As kids get older though, a very beautiful thing can occur whereby they start to expect love and acceptance within their community and can actually call *each other* out when an individual acts in ways that go against that expectation. It is an incredible moment to witness as an educator.

Risking showing more of ourselves to others is what self-portraiture *does* essentially – and that is why I have found learning about self-portraits to be a good way of opening peoples’ brains wide enough to see and experience the **both/and** video in a different way. As I will detail in **PART ONE** of the lesson plan; going through the process of making and then sharing a self-portrait with classmates can help build a language through which even the youngest learners can consolidate and articulate an understanding of how important it is for **everyone** to be seen and accepted as themselves in the world... For me, a significant goal here is to help more children experience acceptance and celebration of their true selves *consistently*, and early in life. Among other obvious benefits, I have hope that a basic infusion of genuine love to this generation of 3, 4 and 5 year-olds will support the development of a future adult population that is much more likely to put energy into fostering deep, loving community for others.

Perhaps this seems like a lot of theoretical preamble but, just as I think it is essential for kids to understand WHY they are doing something in order for them to actually be invested in learning from it, it is important for me as an educator to be clear on why I am teaching the content that I do. The grand majority of preparation that I do as a classroom teacher is the work of unpacking my own intentions for myself. *As in, “why am I personally invested in planning this particular lesson in the way that I am planning it and, why is it that I am choosing to teach this concept with this process in the first place?”* As elementary school teachers, we know through much experience

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<sup>7</sup> From THE SKILLS AND PRINCIPLES OF LOVING, Shalom Mountain Sacred Retreat Centre.

that “The Best Laid Plans” for the *step-by-step/how-to* of something can mean very little in practical terms when you don’t have money for the right kind of paper or your lesson is interrupted by a fire drill. It is way easier to get back on track and not even worry about all that however, if you know *why* it is that you began and *where* you are heading. **That being said;**

### “the potential step-by-step”:

1. I use an OLIVER JEFFERS book – *my favourite is **Lost and Found*** – to introduce self-portraiture to young children because in the back of every one of the magnificent stories that he both writes and illustrates, there is an old photograph of Jeffers himself between the ages of about 3 and 6... Aside from the fact that he is brimming over with impish magnificence, these photos generally bear a striking resemblance to the small human protagonist in the story (*and often he is wearing some sort of fantastic outfit that I wish came in my size*). The outfit IS important to the project beyond my own fashion sense however, because I then show the class a picture of little Oliver beside the character that he has drawn in reference to himself so that we can notice and discuss the similarities. The best thing about his drawing style is that it is often simple shapes that are easy to break down and to demonstrate. In ***Lost and Found***, he wears a very similar toque in both images and has drawn himself in an enviable stripey t-shirt.
2. I then talk about a favourite t-shirt of mine, picking one that I feel expresses something about myself I would like to share with others. **For example**, I once chose a black t-shirt that I had sewn a puffy, pink-striped giraffe on to – transplanted from another shirt that I did not like. I explained that I like it because sometimes people say that “*pink is a girl colour,*” but I identify as male, and I **like** pink.... I also like it because I sewed it myself (another non-traditional but perfectly awesome pastime for men). I used my creativity to make something that works for *me* and that helps me to feel most “*myself*” when I wear it..
3. As I describe my shirt for the class, I am also drawing it onto chart paper that I have set up so that everyone can see. When I am done drawing the t-shirt itself with all of the pertinent details, I ask the class to help in drawing the *rest* of me by asking what other pieces are missing to make the picture look “like” me... what shapes they think those pieces should be... what placement in relation to one another – *right down to 8 visible piercings and 3 tattoos*. They are often *very* concerned about these details in particular!  
**By doing this part of the process collaboratively, you are giving the kids a low-pressure opportunity to witness someone drawing a self-portrait step-by-step, and to begin participating in that process themselves to whatever degree they feel comfortable at first.**
4. Once the demonstration self-portrait of myself is done, I ask the class members to all take a minute, close their eyes, and think carefully about the outfit that they either have or *wish* they had to best describe their true self... We will save the sharing of these ideas for the next day, just before watching the **both/and** video and commencing the self-portrait creating.
5. Directly after the idea of “*what do you most want to draw yourself wearing*” has been suggested into the students’ brains, I read them **10 000 Dresses** by Marcus Ewert. This book is about a kid named Bailey who happens to be born in a body that people read as “boy”. She dreams of all of the dresses that she would wear if she could make what she saw in her head.... *and if her family would realize that actually – she is a girl on the inside*. Following this reading, there are lots of different directions that the discussion may go, all of which can provide a helpful segway into watching **both/and**. For example;  
- **which of the dresses that Bailey imagines in the story would YOU most like to wear, and why?**  
*(definitely NOT a discussion that is just for female-bodied kids... it should be clear to male-bodied people in the class that it is perfectly fine and good and encouraged for them to have an opinion about this as well).*  
- **how do you think that the different people in this book are feeling?...**  
**why do you think that they have these feelings?**  
*i.e. why do you think that Bailey’s brother is being so mean to her?*  
- **how do you think the story would be different if Bailey really WAS a boy on the inside as well as the outside and he STILL liked to wear and design dresses? why do you think this?**
6. \* I recommend doing this introduction to self-portraiture the DAY BEFORE watching the **both/and** video as a class, and then beginning the actual experience of *creating* the next day with a quick review of what was learned and discussed here.

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART ONE . self portraits

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- The **Watching, Listening and Discussing** section of the General Introduction to Lesson Plans describes my approach to sharing this video with students in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and may be helpful in thinking through how to start out... \* *Launching into things based entirely on your own ideas and intuition is also fully acceptable of course.*
- The **Students' Prior Knowledge** section of the Lesson Plan outlined the basics of 3 lessons that you may choose to work through with your class prior to watching and discussing **both/and**. The last of these is an introduction to self-portrait-making that I recommend doing the day directly before watching the video and responding with individual portrait creation.
- I have chosen to create self-portraits with my students through a self-reflective process that includes gathering, sorting and using many of our own re-used objects as art materials, spending time thinking about and discussing how we see ourselves, how we would *like* to walk through the world most authentically, and why or why not our desires and intentions match the way that we actually **DO** move through the world... This is not the only way to go about self-portrait making or to respond as a class to **both/and**. I do it this way because I find that it leaves a lot of room for challenging stereotypes of all sorts that restrict us from fully **BEing** ourselves in the world. This video was developed mainly in response to my frustration over gender stereotypes, sexism and transphobia, but if it also opens up space for your class to talk about other layers of identity such as race, religion, beauty standards, socio-economics and/or ability... fantastic!... None of these oppressions ever exist in isolation.
- If you are interested in learning more about the pedagogical perspectives that inform my practice, I have studied both the **Reggio Emilia approach to emergent curriculum** and a variety of **community building and peaceful conflict-resolution practices**... cobbling this and more together on an ongoing basis through readings and actual experiences – some of which are listed in the resources section of this document.

#### lesson a) DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES

This lesson includes **step one: the video - watching, listening and discussing** as detailed on page 16.

It begins where **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself** (pages 21-22) left off the previous day by checking in with students and asking them to share their ideas for the ways that they wish to draw themselves in their self-portraits today. The experience of actually **DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES** will come after viewing the **both/and** video. This is a preliminary pencil and black pen outline sketch that invites students to draw the “self” in the way that they have been thinking and talking about. *Tomorrow*, this drawing will become the model for making a 3D image of themselves constructed from the *beautiful stuff* collection.

#### lesson b) MAKING ME – 3D

**MAKING ME – 3D** employs the line drawing that students completed the previous day as a model for creating a 3D image of themselves using found objects from the “beautiful stuff” collection. This image is developed on a piece of 12”x18” coloured construction paper where the objects are placed but **not** glued down. One reason for this choice is that by taking away glue as an option, we can help free kids up to explore and try things conceptually that they may take the time to experiment with if permanence is an “option” (*because it is often read as “an expectation”*)... **Small details matter – kids notice** – and if we are asking them to stretch outside of social boxes and try on different, more authentic ways of **BE-ing** with one another and in the world, asking them to glue a version of themselves to a piece of paper and keep it like that forever can (rightly) be experienced as counter-intuitive at best. Students will need to be able to refer to this 3D image the next day when they work on part c) of their self-portrait experience, so there are a couple of ways that you can help make this happen;

1. Plan **this** lesson at the end of one day and **lesson c)** at the very beginning of the next day so as to prevent disturbance to the un-fixed 3D image constructions and to avoid covering all available surfaces in your classroom for any longer than necessary.



2. Use a **digital camera** to take a picture of each student's 3D portrait as they finish it and then have them disassemble it and put back / re-sort all of the *beautiful stuff* that they used to create it that same day. Prior to the next lesson, print off a small (i.e. 3.5"x5") **colour photo** of each self-portrait and give these to the students to refer to.

**\*IF YOU HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND OPTION 2 ...**

In addition to other practical benefits, it is really nice to have a record of all stages of the portrait-making process. This is especially true for JK/SK students because I have found that the developmental leap that often occurs as a **result** of handling the objects they are drawing before trying to recreate them in 2D can be quite astounding and is definitely worth documenting.

### **lesson c) PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES: drawing 2D with 3D experience**

"DRAWING 2D WITH 3D EXPERIENCE" is in reference to the fact that the process of translating oneself from the 3D body to a 2D line drawing, to a creative representation by beauty-full objects, and then back to a much-changed 2D drawing *cannot* be a strictly linear experience... This is intentional. Figuring out who we really are as human beings without all the layers of social expectations – particularly in relation to stereotypes of gender, race, religion, ability, etc. – is neither linear, nor static, nor easy. It would seem disingenuous to me as an educator to design the process of telling the story of one'SELF to the world as a quick sketch. By introducing this as a many-step journey with several translations and points of reflection, we are building a space for kids to *create* the specific language of authentic self-description inTO the lesson plan ... (i.e. "*scaffolding*" in edu-speak).

In **lesson c)**, students are asked to draw themselves again by referring directly to the photograph (or actual objects) of the 3D image that they created the previous day. Two things generally happen at this point;

1. The technical quality of kids' rendering skills improve through the simple act of having *handled* the objects that they are attempting to draw.
2. Some of the found objects that individuals have used to represent special parts of themselves are melded and morphed into a beauty-full and completely unique symbolism of the self.

THIS is the art piece that students will be completing with full colour and will be preparing to speak about with the rest of the class community in **PART TWO** of the lesson plan; **visual show and share**.

#### **materials list:**

##### **PREPARATORY LESSONS:**

- Letter to Families explaining "beautiful stuff" collection *\*please see sample letter on pages 63 – 64*
- class set of large, sturdy paper bags. (*handles are useful*)
- 20-30 medium sized containers to house the various categories of "stuff"
- **Lost and Found** picture book by Oliver Jeffers
- unlined chart paper
- pencil and/or large black marker
- **10 000 Dresses** picture book by Marcus Ewert

**\*both/and video** can be viewed online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca)

##### **SELF PORTRAITS:**

- 8.5" X 11" white copier paper
- class set of sharp pencils and erasers.
- thin, black felt-tip pens
- pencil crayons
- 12" x 18" construction paper of a darker yet festive tone (*i.e. turquoise blue or forest green seem to work well*)
- an extensive and impressive collection of kid-found "beautiful stuff"

\*digital camera

\*access to a colour printer

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\* all items are technically "optional" but starred items are particularly so.



### preparation:

You will require internet access to your classroom computer in order to watch both/and online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca).

If you are having trouble accessing the material, please feel free to contact me at [leehicks30@gmail.com](mailto:leehicks30@gmail.com).

### lesson a)

For this first portrait, each student will need one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser** and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen**.

It will also be useful to some students to have the visual examples produced at the previous day's **LEARNING ABOUT SELF-PORTRAITS** lesson posted and accessible for reference.

**\* With arts based activities in particular, I find that there are always kids who very legitimately finish in 15 minutes... and then others who could very legitimately spend the entire day on the task. For this reason I generally give a moderate estimate for completion time, and then suggest having a variety of other optional activities on hand for early finishers so as not to stress out the meticulous or bore the more definitive among us.**

### lesson b)

I have found it useful at this stage of the process to have an area of the classroom – *perhaps a stretch of floor at one side of the room* - where the many containers of *beautiful stuff* can be housed in a way that is available to several kids at a time. The students will need to browse the contents of the collection often throughout this class, and it is way more likely to stay in a reasonable state of order if it is easily accessible. Other than that, all that is required is one piece of coloured 12" x 18" construction paper per student. If you are planning to take pictures of each completed 3D portrait with a digital camera, it is a good idea to establish a plan with your students before beginning as to how they will let you know that they are finished and ready for their "photo op". If you not doing photo documentation, you will need to figure out how to have the students working on surfaces where they can leave their creations undisturbed until the next day.

### lesson c)

The materials for this stage of the process are also minimal; one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser**, pencil crayons and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen** for each student. The real preparation is for those teachers who chose to photo document the 3D self-portraits from the previous lesson. You will need to print off colour versions of these photos for your students to work from today. In order to preserve ink and paper, I generally print these at a ¼ page size, which is quite sufficient for reference.

### methodology and timing: \*

#### lesson a)

1. This lesson begins where the previous day's discussion about *imagining dressing ourselves and walking through world the way that we feel most authentic* left off after reading **10 000 DRESSES**. Begin in a discussion circle and ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts regarding how they would like to draw themselves in their self-portraits today... Make time and space for whoever would like to share to participate.
2. WATCH VIDEO – as outlined on page 16, "**watching, listening and discussing**" (*or whatever works for you*)
3. The discussion that takes place after the video will again be dependent on the particular composition and collective experiences of your classroom.... *the important point is simply to **make time for it**.*
4. Before the individual art making begins, refresh your students' memory of examples and ideas discussed the previous day in **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS** by re-posting your chart paper examples and making the Oliver Jeffers book(s) accessible. For this portrait, I ask the kids to draw in pencil, and then go over their final outline in fine-tipped black pen... There are two reasons for this – **a) it gives the drawing a more professional look of completion**, and **b) it is an excellent way for young children to practice fine motor skills**. Personally, I find it easier to work with kids' artwork in digital form later on if they all have the same orientation on the paper... *Also, doing self-portraits on vertically oriented paper sneakily encourages kids to draw their entire body as opposed to just their head or their big toe...* Taking these factors into consideration, I highly recommend asking all your kids to work on vertical (long-ways-up) paper for this project.

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. CHECK-IN           | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. WATCH THE VIDEO    | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| 3. DISCUSS            | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 4. INDIVIDUAL DRAWING | <b>30 minutes</b> |

### lesson b)

1. \* **Please see the visual documentation section of this curriculum for examples of what a 3D self-portrait may end up looking like.**

Over the past few days of working through this project with your class, you as the classroom teacher will have already created a 2D self-portrait that you can use to refer to when demonstrating the translation of line drawing to 3D *beautiful stuff* image. With younger children, I find that it is more engaging and useful for everyone when the kids help you to search the class collection for objects that you can use in your representation. *This way, you can also surreptitiously model respectful care for materials.*

**\* BE SURE TO PHOTODOCUMENT OR OTHERWISE PRESERVE YOUR OWN 3D IMAGE so that you have it available for reference at the start of lesson c)**

2. Basically, this class is the jurisdiction of your students and their own creative interpretation of the task at hand. In terms of *practical* considerations, you have 20 to 30 bins of magnificent found objects and 20 to 30 small children. *Let us acknowledge that the potential for chaos is present...* HOWEVER, believe it or not, I have found that by the time the project gets to this stage, the kids have developed a sense of respect for and connection with the materials (and one another) that actually supersedes what we as classroom teachers might expect would happen... In other words; briefly demonstrate... point your students in the direction of the materials... *relax, and enjoy.*

**\* If you are photo documenting** the 3D images you will need to take a picture of each child's work as they complete it. **\*SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME** on the image-processing side of things and frame your shots so that you are taking in only the objects that the student has used to create their image and a thin coloured border around them... *this way you can just select "print" for all images as opposed to having to crop and cut bits here and there on the computer.*

3. Once you have a good photo of the 3D image, the student can begin to put away the *beautiful stuff* from their project for later re-use by sorting it back into the appropriate containers. If you are not photo documenting, simply ensure that all of the non-fixed 3D images are safe on stable surfaces until the next stage of the project commences tomorrow.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION     | <b>15 minutes</b>  |
| 2. 3D IMAGE CREATION | <b>45 minutes</b>  |
| 3. CLEAN-UP          | <b>10 minutes</b> * if you are putting the <i>beautiful stuff</i> away today |

### lesson c)

1. I also recommend starting this lesson out with a brief demonstration of moving from 3D image into a different sort of 2D drawing (using either the 3D image that you preserved from yesterday's class or your colour photo to refer to)... ***This time, you are different yourself though,*** as you now contain the experience of these actual shapes, lines and colours ***in*** your hands, informing your knowledge and your use of them as a medium. Basically, all you are demonstrating at this point is a combination of careful attention to shape, colour and form in the objects that you chose to combine, as well as a willingness to change your plan based on intuition; *(to pay careful attention to self).*

**\* The visual documentation section also has examples of this stage of the self-portrait process.**

2. This final version of the self-portrait begins with a pencil drawing and then, as with **lesson a)**, I would encourage kids to go over their final outline in black pen before moving on to developing the image in coloured pencil. I have observed that this process also encourages more concentrated attention to the size, shape and line of the objects being rendered. With the coloured pencils, kids are then freed up to express additional thoughts and feelings while some semblance of the original form is maintained through the black outline.

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION  | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. FINAL PORTRAIT | <b>50 minutes</b> |

\*timing is always approximate

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART TWO . visual show and share

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- With primary grades including Junior and Senior Kindergarten, the major source that I look to in learning how to help children gain the confidence and skill to speak their ideas to one another – *and to really listen and reflect on the ideas of others in return* – is **TALKING, DRAWING WRITING: Lessons For Our Youngest Writers** by Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe.
- In general preparation for this type of activity, I begin on the first day of school by working in short, daily periods in different contexts where students as young as Junior Kindergarten practice telling **their** stories orally. The goal of the audience in each of these instances is to learn how to listen actively and respond with relevant comments, compliments or questions.
- I would recommend re-watching the **both/and** video after the portraits are done and *before* the show and share as a refresher – particularly for younger students.

#### lesson a) visual show and share

This is more of a celebration of accomplishment than a “lesson” really; an opportunity for each individual student to share a part of themselves that they have worked hard to articulate; *to talk about their process and to be honoured for their bravery in doing so*. In the context of **both/and**, it is an opportunity to revisit the subject matter in a reflection 2-3 days after the initial viewing. In the interim, the potential for discussion has become richly and deeply informed by a class-full of people who have been actually thinking about and working through what it means to “*imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.*”<sup>8</sup>

### materials list:

**The only materials required for this part of the process are those that you already have on hand;**

- your students’ self-portraits, particularly #3
- a digital camera if you have one and wish to document this part of the process for your own records

### preparation:

- students should all have been given sufficient time to complete stage 3 of their self-portrait before the class moves on to this portion of the process.

### methodology and timing: \*

#### lesson a)

1. The introduction today is a time for you to welcome the whole class back together and to set the tone for what will be a celebration of personal creative work accomplished and a general willingness to share our expressions. Also during the introduction, it is a good idea to have students volunteer to remind the class of “rules of engagement” when it comes to maintaining a safe community space for sharing personal feelings and ideas without fear of judgment or rejection.
2. The basic format of the show and share for this age group is a maximum of 2 minutes per student (*so as to take into account wandering attention spans*)... Depending on your group of kids, you may even choose to spread this lesson over 2 days. Each participant can begin by showing their #3 self-portrait to the class and pointing out parts of it that they particularly like and why. For the early learner group, I would not

<sup>8</sup> from **101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws**, Kate Bornstein, 7 Stories Press, 2006 – used by Lee Hicks with permission of the author and the publisher, **both/and**, ©2010

recommend setting any specific questions to work from and would instead make time for a few positive comments, compliments or questions posed to each artist from classmates with their hands up. As the teacher facilitator, you can also insert your own comments or questions from time to time so as to bring the discussion back around to the themes of the video (*stereotypes, bullying, changing the way that we deal with "difference", imagining and working towards a world where everyone can express themselves in the way that they most authentically ARE – including gender expression, attraction, race, religion, ability, etc.*)

3. The “**appreciation round**” is an opportunity for all participants in the circle share briefly what they most valued about this experience and/or to thank the group for their contributions.

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. INTRODUCTION       | 5 minutes  |
| 2. SHOW AND SHARE     | 30 – 40 minutes ( <i>approximately 2 minutes per kid</i> ) |
| 3. APPRECIATION ROUND | 5 minutes  |

\*timing is always approximate

#### lesson extensions / modifications:

1. For Kindergarten Children who are already writing (in whatever manner, *with or without actual letters or proper spelling*) you can encourage them to describe certain pieces of their self-portraits in words and to write these into or around the existing drawing.
2. You as the teacher may choose to either take word-for-word notes or videotape what the children say about their own work when they are presenting it to the class. This can become something that you can scribe and display with the art pieces themselves, the basis of a future writing activity, and/or an assessment tool.
3. For students who are struggling with English and/or public speaking in general, it is very possible to include them in this process without making it too painfully obvious that they are not speaking. For example;
  - **if you have access to technology** – you can work with the artist before hand one-on-one to find out what they like best about their picture and why, and then record either your voice or theirs as a voice-over to video close-ups on various parts of their image.
  - **without technology** – the same sort of effect can be done “live” with either you or a student buddy providing the “voice-over” while the artist points to their favourite parts of their own work.
  - you can have the artist point to the aspects of their work that they like best and rely on other students in the class to give *them* positive comments and compliments in response to this sharing.

grades: Junior and Senior Kindergarten

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART THREE . planning for action

#### lesson summaries:

PART TWO of this lesson plan is designed to encourage conversation that will help kids make connections between their own experiences of identity and those of their classmates. **PART THREE** consists of two lessons that will facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals towards something more like a group planning session addressing how we as a community can make positive social change *happen* in the world around us. **Lesson a)** is a chance for younger children to use images to articulate their thoughts about “*imagining a world*” prior to sharing these ideas orally with their classmates. **Lesson b)** is the equivalent of “brainstorming” in junior classes – using the visual templates from lesson a) to aid the flow of conversation for the collaborative action plan. I have given one example under the **possible extensions / modifications** heading in this section as to the direction that one of my own classes did end up heading to begin arts-based social action in response to similar subject matter. I will not however take these lesson plans any further than helping to set the stage for child-directed activism. As I touched on in the general curriculum introduction, I feel that the specific

form that this work takes should be the sole domain of students and their teacher. *The role of each educator at that point will be to listen closely in order to discern what is truly igniting the passions of their class, and then to assist students in forming a plan that honours their optimism in a way that is manageable **and** socially conscious.*

#### materials list:

- “**imagine a world**” template
- class set of sharp pencils and erasers.
- thin, black felt-tip pens
- pencil crayons
- chart paper and markers

#### preparation:

For **lesson a)**, print off the “**imagine a world**” template and make a class set of copies. Each student will also need a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser** and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen**. Everyone should also have access to pencil crayons. Preparation for **lesson b)** basically consists of having some sort of visual idea ready from the previous lesson to share with the class. I have found that oral brainstorming in “**planning for action**” is facilitated by first articulating ideas in visual form.

#### methodology and timing:\*

##### lesson a)

1. I suggest that young children in particular may want to re-watch the **both/and** video at this point because there is a lot to take in, both visually and conceptually, and I find that this also helps to refocus the discussions that are going on in conjunction to the arts-based response.
2. After watching the video for a second time, it is often possible to have a more focused discussion with young children. Try going back to the point in the video where the young person asks “**can you imagine a world like that?**” ... *pause it* - and ask the kids if they can **actually** imagine that...  
**IF THEY CAN** – ask them to share specifics about what it would *look, sound, feel* like...  
**IF THEY CAN'T** – *find out why*... continue to discuss to see if there is any way they could access that hope...
3. On the templates provided, ask students to draw themselves into the place of the person doing the imagining... *encourage them to draw and colour themselves as much like they actually look as possible so that they are beginning to put themselves in the place of the person making active steps towards positive social change*... In the thought bubble, ask students to draw what that *imagined* world would be like for them...*what is happening there to make it the way it is?*

\* **If you have time, sit with the students one-on-one to scribe some of their ideas on the paper for them so that you can more easily prompt them in the discussion later if necessary.**

\* It is not terribly crucial *how much* drawing gets done on this template, or how completely drawn, outlined or coloured it is (unless you are planning to assess and/or display it in some way and that is important to you)... Basically, this sheet is intended to help kids organize and articulate their thoughts around the idea of “**imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.**” This is so that in **lesson b)**, they can more confidently talk about their ideas with their classmates.

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. RE-WATCH VIDEO     | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| 2. DISCUSS AND INTRO. | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 3. “IMAGINE” DRAWING  | <b>35 minutes</b> |

##### lesson b)

1. The “**share and scribe**” of this lesson is basically what “brainstorming” would be with a junior grade class. With younger children, I find that giving them a template first to work through their own ideas visually helps to promote discussion. First, go around the circle and get as many children as are able to share some ideas about what this “imagined” world where everyone is safe to express themselves the way they have always

wanted to. Some children will have lots to say, while others may just hold up a drawing and you + classmates can help by suggest how you feel when you look at it. As new ideas are shared, you can record them in drawing and/or writing on a large piece of chart paper or whiteboard for the class to see. Once everyone has shared, take a moment to review and celebrate all of the ideas that you have come up with together.

2. If you have never worked collaboratively with very young children to come up with an idea for social action, the concept of it *may* seem rather daunting. Just remember that it does not need to be something hugely ambitious or groundbreaking... Above all, you are trying to create an association between **wanting** things to be different... thinking through how they **could** be different...and then **actually doing something to help change things for the better**. With the early learner age group, this can be as simple as making a collaborative art piece that combines and showcases your class' magnificent hope-full ideas. You can work with to find ways to share this work and these ideas with the rest of your school and the surrounding community. The activism here is that your message is being shared beyond the walls of your classroom and your students get a taste of how positive change starts to happen when individuals speak up for what they believe in.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."** – *Margaret Mead*

1. SHARE AND SCRIBE      **20 minutes**

2. GENERAL DISCUSSION      **15 minutes**

\*timing is always approximate

**lesson extensions / modifications:**

One example of an experience that I have had working through material on a similar topic with this age of students culminated in the collaborative planning and creation of a mural. This mural was then shared with the rest of our school community during a concert, and told the class' interpretation of the lyrics to a song called **PEACEFUL DREAM** by TDSB teacher Tom Bennett.



# primary – grades 1 to 3

## general introduction

The newly revised (*and then promptly recalled*) Ontario Sexual Education Curriculum of 2010 *was* set to include specific anti-homophobia education for grade 3 students. The wave of conservative opposition to the plan took particular exception to “teaching eight-year-olds about homosexuality,” saying that “*it is unconscionable to teach eight-year-old children same-sex marriage, sexual orientation and gender identity.*”<sup>9</sup> Hmm... SO much I could say about that, but for the moment I will stick with the facts of what the proposed curriculum *actually* said;

**C3.3 - describe how visible differences (e.g., skin, hair, and eye colour, facial features, body size and shape, physical aids or different physical abilities, clothing, possessions) and invisible differences (e.g., learning abilities, skills and talents, personal or cultural values and beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, family background, personal preferences, allergies and sensitivities) make each person unique, and identify ways of showing respect for differences in others.**

In my opinion, what is actually “*unconscionable*” behaviour as an educator is to witness the perpetuation of societal oppressions among children and NOT challenge them directly with age-appropriate education. Sexism translated into homophobia and transphobia does not wait to happen until kids know exactly what the word “faggot” means or exactly why they are saying it... Gender-based violence starts much earlier than grade 6 and so I have a hard time reconciling the idea of waiting until the age of 12 to teach kids what that *is* and why it is not ok.

I have witnessed a kindergarten student call another child in his class a “*faggot*” because he had expressed an interest in playing dress-up. Almost everyone who I have told that story to reacts in shock and dismay but really; *who among us has never steered a child into or out of certain activities because of our “good intentions” for their well-being and “gender appropriate” existence?* THIS is how that 5 year old learned to connect the word “faggot” with a boy who likes to play dress-up. This is also why I am so concerned about the influence that teachers have when it is not paired with conscious and ongoing self-analysis.<sup>10</sup>

For the time being, our provincial government has decided that the political path-of-least-resistance is worth more to them than the health and safety of *all* kids in Ontario, which has unfortunately also discouraged even more teachers from addressing transphobia in their classrooms. I have hope that this will not always be the case, but in the interim, here’s how you can still teach this content *and* connect directly to Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents in their current state of publication...

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<sup>9</sup> Charles McVety, head of the Canada Christian College, CBC News, Friday, April 23, 2010

<sup>10</sup> *Why “I didn’t mean it like that” Means Nothing to Gender Open Kids*, Lee Hicks, ©2010

# primary – grades 1 to 3

## overview of curriculum

*\* The content of the primary lesson plans are very similar to that of the early learner-kindergarten program. I have adjusted the “methodology and timing” in particular to make the activities age appropriate. The content works differently with each grade of course, but I have had success with variations of these ideas at many age levels.*

**Part One** of this lesson set involves 3 pieces of preparatory work that should be completed before the video is screened. These are intended to establish prior knowledge. There are then 3 more lessons for the class to work through after they have watched the video together. These lessons start at the place of “self” and are designed to help children develop a personal connection to the concept of pride, self-identity, and the celebration of differences through an individual, arts-based activity.

**Preparatory work** is described as an overview in “**students prior knowledge**” and all sources used are detailed in “**resources.**” The 3 lessons following the video screening will be referred to as **lesson a)**, **lesson b)** and **lesson c)** and will be looked at in greater detail under the headings “**lesson summaries**”, “**materials list**”, “**preparation**” and “**methodology and timing.**”

**Part Two** consists of one lesson in which the personal artwork that the students completed in Part One becomes a starting place for conversation in response to the **both/and** video resource. The discussion progresses more deeply into what the students are thinking about the similarities and differences between the individual experiences and identities among them.

**Part Three** is an opportunity to facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals to more of a group planning session that addresses how we as a community can make positive social change happen in the world around us. It involves 2 initial lessons that will support planning and open up space for individualized activities to develop. I will describe an example of how this *might* occur, but encourage individual teachers to watch and listen to the unique discussions in their own classrooms so as to move into action and activism with authenticity and increased potential for sustainability.

**Documenting images** referred to throughout the lesson plans are labeled accordingly and can be viewed at the end of the curriculum section on pages 58 – 62.



grades: 1 to 3

## RESPONSE TO both/and students' prior knowledge

### 1. BEAUTIFUL STUFF:

My approach to portrait making as a self-reflective process with kids has been inspired partially through ideas from a book called **BEAUTIFUL STUFF: Learning With Found Materials**. The actual *beautiful stuff* (aside from what the kids themselves create) refers to all manner of found, re-used and recycled items that everyone in the class community collects and brings to school with the intention of sharing. Further details on that philosophy and related projects can be found in this book, which is by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini. In this section I will summarize what I do with primary classes to collect, sort, and create with found materials and will focus on planning for a self-portrait project in response to the **both/and** video.

Approximately two weeks prior to actually needing a good supply of found materials to work with in class, I introduced the idea of "beautiful stuff" to the class as basically, **"any kind of small object or materials that you can find which is not living, is not belonging to anyone else, and is not already being used for something that it is essential to...."** *Beautiful* on the other hand has few restrictions. *It is whatever that idea means to you... You may like to look or the size or the shape or the feel of it... It may make you feel happy, or just feel something in a way that you find beautiful... No one else gets to decide what is beautiful to you.*" We had an introductory class discussion about this, and I demonstrated the idea of beauty being subjective and individual by showing the students a few found objects from *my* collection and explaining why I like them... Students then volunteered to share their own past experiences with having found and/or saved interesting and "beautiful" objects. At the end of this day, I sent each child home with a large, sturdy paper bag and a letter to families explaining what we were aiming to do over the next couple of weeks, why, and the date that we would need to have the materials collected and delivered to the classroom by.

### 2. THE SORTING OF THE STUFF:

On the day that the beautiful stuff collection is completed and delivered, we have an "Opening of the Bags" ceremony in the classroom. We begin with a bit of fun and mock-seriousness with a *"please-repeat-after-me-I-will-not-forget-myself-completely-and-dive-IN-to-the-pile-of-beautiful-stuff-no-matter-HOW-amazingly-beautiful-it-is"* pledge. This works well.

Each student in turn comes to the center of the big circle we are seated in to dump the contents of their careful collection out for all to see and exclaim over... If they chose, they point out a couple of particularly amazing items and tell the details of how they had found them and why they love them. When each student had contributed their stash and their stories to the pile, we begin to talk about HOW we will sort them.

We do the sorting itself rather "organically" (*and by this, I mean quite seriously that I had no idea the first time how it was going to go*). The trial and error DID work though, and took place essentially like this;

- lay out all of the empty containers in a row of sorts;
- someone suggests a category and takes an example item from the big pile to "file" into a new container;
- the process is repeated until all categories that the class suggests have been assigned to their own container;
- individuals or small groups work to find and collect all of the items from the pile that fit into a certain category
- once the initial sorting is complete, there are inevitably overlapping categories that can be sorted out through discussion, consensus, and/or any other semi-democratic method that works for you and your class.

### 3. LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself

When teaching about self-portraiture, regardless of the age group, I start by suggesting that as human beings, we all have things that we know about ourselves that seem similar to other people as well as things that seem very different. Humans generally like at least *some* of the "same" things about ourselves, and *some* of the "different" things, but there may also be parts that we spend time not liking at all. Often, we spend time *not* liking certain parts because we are under the impression that they are either TOO much the same, or TOO different from other people that we want to be accepted by. The very funny truth of all this is that every other human around us is struggling with the same worries.... *every single one*... and the thing that they really want most of all is to be celebrated for who they are most naturally. **Just like you**...

So, the thing is then that this one similarity – *this key vulnerability about being human and living well in community* – is really the only thing we need to worry about knowing when we take the risk of showing ourselves fully to other people; It means that the way that YOU do it is exactly perfect, exactly now **for you, and** the way that *they* do it is exactly perfect for them.... That goes for drawing, and for *BE-ing*.

**“MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE  
we want to love  
and be loved.”<sup>11</sup>**

This doesn't mean fear of being rejected is not scary.... it means that in THIS group at the very least, we are going to try to remember that EVERYONE – even you – is being the very best self that they can be and that it is an honour to have someone share their best self with you. **I then ask everyone to please remember to *accept this honour with thanks and respect for themselves and each of their classmates.***

The truth is that I begin facilitating the development of this language of positive, supportive community building in the classroom on day one of the school year because it really can't happen all at once. Before you can expect kids to share honestly about themselves with others, there needs to be a clear expectation of care and safety that we all hold one another to. With younger children, you as the classroom teacher start out doing a lot of the “holding” so to speak... As kids get older though, a very beautiful thing can occur whereby they start to expect love and acceptance within their community and can actually call *each other* out when an individual acts in ways that go against that expectation. It is an incredible moment to witness as an educator.

Risking showing more of ourselves to others is what self-portraiture *does* essentially – and that is why I have found learning about self-portraits to be a good way of opening peoples' brains wide enough to see and experience the **both/and** video in a different way. As I will detail in **PART ONE** of the lesson plan; going through the process of making and then sharing a self-portrait with classmates can help build a language through which even the youngest learners can consolidate and articulate an understanding of how important it is for *everyone* to be seen and accepted as themselves in the world... For me, a significant goal here is to help more children experience acceptance and celebration of their true selves *consistently*, and early in life. Among other obvious benefits, I have hope that a basic infusion of genuine love to this generation of young people will support the development of a future adult population that is much more likely to put energy into fostering deep, loving community for others.

Perhaps this seems like a lot of theoretical preamble but, just as I think it is essential for kids to understand WHY they are doing something in order for them to actually be invested in learning from it, it is important for me as an educator to be clear on why I am teaching the content that I do. The grand majority of preparation that I do as a classroom teacher is the work of unpacking my own intentions for myself... As in, ***“why am I personally invested in planning this particular lesson in the way that I am planning it and, why is it that I am choosing to teach this concept with this process in the first place?”*** As elementary school teachers, we know through much experience that “The Best Laid Plans” for the *step-by-step/how-to* of something can mean very little in practical terms when you don't have money for the right kind of paper or your lesson is interrupted by a fire drill. It is way easier to get back on track and not even worry about all that however, if you know *why* it is that you began and *where* you are going. **That being said;**

**“the potential step-by-step”:**

1. I use an OLIVER JEFFERS book – *my favourite is **Lost and Found*** – to introduce self-portraiture to primary-aged kids because in the back of every one of the magnificent stories that he both writes and illustrates, there is an old photograph of Jeffers himself as a kid... Aside from the fact that he is brimming over with impish magnificence, these photos generally bear a striking resemblance to the small human protagonist in the story (*and often he is wearing some sort of fantastic outfit that I wish came in my size*). The outfit IS important to the project beyond my own fashion sense however, because I then show the class a picture of little Oliver beside the character that he has drawn in reference to himself so that we can notice and discuss the similarities. The best thing about his drawing style is that it is often simple shapes

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<sup>11</sup> From THE SKILLS AND PRINCIPLES OF LOVING, Shalom Mountain Sacred Retreat Centre.

- that are easy to break down and to demonstrate. In ***Lost and Found***, he wears a very similar toque in both images and has drawn himself in an enviable stripey t-shirt.
2. I then talk about a favourite t-shirt of mine, picking one that I feel expresses something about myself I would like to share with others. **For example**, I once chose a black t-shirt that I had sewn a puffy, pink-striped giraffe on to – transplanted from another shirt that I did not like. I explained that I like it because sometimes people say that “*pink is a girl colour*,” but I identify as male, and I **like** pink.... I also like it because I sewed it myself (another non-traditional but perfectly awesome pastime for men). I used my creativity to make something that works for *me* and that helps me to feel most “*myself*” when I wear it..
  3. As I describe my shirt for the class, I am also drawing it onto chart paper that I have set up so that everyone can see. When I am done drawing the t-shirt itself with all of the pertinent details, I ask the class to help in drawing the *REST* of me by asking what other pieces are missing to make the picture look “like” me... what shapes they think those pieces should be... what placement in relation to one another – *right down to 8 visible piercings and 3 tattoos*. They are often *very* concerned about these details in particular!... **By doing this part of the process collaboratively, you are giving the kids a low-pressure opportunity to witness someone drawing a self-portrait step-by-step, and to begin participating in that process themselves to whatever degree they feel comfortable at first.**
  4. Once the demonstration self-portrait of myself is done I ask the class members to all take a minute, close their eyes, and think carefully about the outfit that they either have or *wish* they had to best describe their true self... We will save the sharing of these ideas for the next day, just before watching the **both/and** video and commencing the self-portrait creating.
  5. Directly after the idea of “*what do you most want to draw yourself wearing*” has been suggested into the students’ brains, I read them **10 000 Dresses** by Marcus Ewert. This book is about a kid named Bailey who happens to be born in a body that people read as “boy”. She dreams of all of the dresses that she would wear if she could make what she saw in her head.... *and if her family would realize that actually – she is a girl on the inside*. Following this reading, there are lots of different directions that the discussion may go, all of which can provide a helpful segway into watching **both/and**. For example;
    - **which of the dresses that Bailey imagines in the story would YOU most like to wear, and why?**  
*(definitely NOT a discussion that is just for female-bodied kids... it should be clear to male-bodied people in the class that it is perfectly fine and good and encouraged for them to have an opinion about this as well).*
    - **how do you think that the different people in this book are feeling?...**  
**why do you think that they have these feelings?**  
*i.e. why do you think that Bailey’s brother is being so mean to her?*
    - **how do you think the story would be different if Bailey really WAS a boy on the inside as well as the outside and he STILL liked to wear and design dresses? why do you think this?**
  6. \* I recommend doing this introduction to self-portraiture the DAY BEFORE watching the **both/and** video as a class, and then beginning the actual experience of *creating* the next day with a quick review of what was learned and discussed here.

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART ONE . self portraits

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- The **Watching, Listening and Discussing** section of the General Introduction to Lesson Plans describes my approach to sharing this video with students in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and may be helpful in thinking through how to start out... \* *Launching into things based entirely on your own ideas and intuition is also fully acceptable of course.*
- The **Students' Prior Knowledge** section of the Lesson Plan outlined the basics of 3 lessons that you may choose to work through with your class prior to watching and discussing **both/and**. The last of these is an introduction to self-portrait-making that I recommend doing the day directly before watching the video and responding with individual portrait creation.
- I have chosen to create self-portraits with my students through a self-reflective process that includes gathering, sorting and using many of our own re-used objects as art materials, spending time thinking about and discussing how we see ourselves, how we would *like* to walk through the world most authentically, and why or why not our desires and intentions match the way that we actually **DO** move through the world... This is not the only way to go about self-portrait making or to respond as a class to **both/and**. I do it this way because I find that it leaves a lot of room for challenging stereotypes of all sorts that restrict us from fully **BEing** ourselves in the world. This video was developed mainly in response to my frustration over gender stereotypes, sexism and transphobia, but if it also opens up space for your class to talk about other layers of identity such as race, religion, beauty standards, socio-economics and/or ability... fantastic!... None of these oppressions ever exist in isolation.
- If you are interested in learning more about the pedagogical perspectives that inform my practice, I have studied both the **Reggio Emilia approach to emergent curriculum** and a variety of **community building and peaceful conflict-resolution practices**... cobbling various influences together on an ongoing basis through readings and actual experiences – some of which are listed in the resources section of this document.

#### lesson a) DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES

This lesson includes **step one: the video - watching, listening and discussing** as detailed on page 16.

It begins where **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself** (pages 21-22) left off the previous day by checking in with students and asking them to share their ideas for the ways that they wish to draw themselves in their self-portraits today. The experience of actually **DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES** will come after viewing the **both/and** video. This is a preliminary pencil and black pen outline sketch invites the students to draw the “self” in the way they have been thinking and talking about. *Tomorrow*, this drawing will become the model for making a 3D image of themselves constructed from your class’ *beautiful stuff* collection.

#### lesson b) MAKING ME – 3D

**MAKING ME – 3D** employs the line drawing that students completed the previous day as a model for creating a 3D image of themselves using found objects from the “beautiful stuff” collection. This image is developed on a piece of 12”x18” coloured construction paper where the objects are placed but **not** glued down. One reason for this choice is that by taking away glue as an option, we can help free kids up to explore and try things conceptually that they may not take the time to experiment with if permanence is an “option” (*because it is often read as “an expectation”*)... **Small details matter – kids notice** – and if we are asking them to stretch outside of social boxes and try on different, more authentic ways of **BE-ing** with one another and in the world, asking them to glue a version of themselves to a piece of paper and keep it like that forever can (rightly) be experienced as counter-intuitive at best. Students will need to be able to refer to this 3D image the next day when they work on part c) of their self-portrait experience, so there are a couple of ways that you can help make this happen;

1. Plan **this** lesson at the end of one day and **lesson c)** at the very beginning of the next day so as to prevent disturbance to the un-fixed 3D image constructions and to avoid covering all available surfaces in your classroom for any longer than necessary.

2. Use a **digital camera** to take a picture of each student's 3D portrait as they finish it and then have them disassemble it and put back / re-sort all of the *beautiful stuff* that they used to create it that same day. Prior to the next lesson, print off a small (i.e. 3.5"x5") **colour photo** of each self-portrait and give these to the students to refer to.

**\*IF YOU HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND OPTION 2 ...**

In addition to other practical benefits, it is really nice to have a record of all stages of the portrait-making process. This is especially true for JK/SK students because I have found that the developmental leap that often occurs as a **result** of handling the objects they are drawing before trying to recreate them in 2D can be quite astounding and is definitely worth documenting.

### **lesson c) PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES: drawing 2D with 3D experience**

"DRAWING 2D WITH 3D EXPERIENCE" is in reference to the fact that the process of translating oneself from the 3D body to a 2D line drawing, to a creative representation by beauty-full objects, and then back to a much-changed 2D drawing *cannot* be a strictly linear experience... This is intentional. Figuring out who we really are as human beings without all the layers of social expectations – particularly in relation to stereotypes of gender, race, religion, ability, etc. – is neither linear, nor static, nor easy. It would seem disingenuous to me as an educator to design the process of telling the story of one'SELF to the world as a quick sketch. By introducing this as a many-step journey with several translations and points of reflection, we are building a space for kids to *create* the specific language of authentic self-description inTO the lesson plan ... (i.e. "*scaffolding*" in edu-speak).

In **lesson c)**, students are asked to draw themselves again by referring directly to the photograph (or actual objects) of the 3D image that they created the previous day. Two things generally happen at this point;

1. The technical quality of kids' rendering skills improve through the simple act of having *handled* the objects that they are attempting to draw.
2. Some of the found objects that individuals have used to represent special parts of themselves are melded and morphed into a beauty-full and completely unique symbolism of the self.

THIS is the art piece that students will be completing with full colour and will be preparing to speak about with the rest of the class community in **PART TWO** of the lesson plan; **visual show and share**.

#### **materials list:**

##### **PREPARATORY LESSONS:**

- Letter Home to Families explaining "beautiful stuff" collection *\*please see sample letter on page 63 – 64*
- class set of large, sturdy paper bags. (handles are useful)
- 20-30 medium sized containers to house the various categories of "stuff"
- **Lost and Found** picture book by Oliver Jeffers
- unlined chart paper
- pencil and/or large black marker
- **10 000 Dresses** picture book by Marcus Ewert

**\*both/and video** can be viewed online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca)

##### **SELF PORTRAITS:**

- 8.5" X 11" white copier paper
- class set of sharp pencils and erasers.
- thin, black felt-tip pens
- pencil crayons
- 12" x 18" construction paper of a darker yet festive tone (i.e. turquoise blue or forest green seem to work well)
- an extensive and impressive collection of kid-found "beautiful stuff"

\*digital camera

\*access to a colour printer

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\* all items are technically "optional" but starred items are particularly so.

### **preparation:**

You will require internet access to your classroom computer in order to watch both/and online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca).

If you are having trouble accessing the material, please feel free to contact me at [leehicks30@gmail.com](mailto:leehicks30@gmail.com).

### **lesson a)**

For this first portrait, each student will need one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser** and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen**.

It will also be useful to some students to have the visual examples produced at the previous day's **LEARNING ABOUT SELF-PORTRAITS** lesson posted today and accessible for reference.

**\* With arts based activities in particular, I find that there are always kids who very legitimately finish in 15 minutes... and then others who could very legitimately spend the entire day on the task. For this reason I generally give a moderate estimate for completion time, and then suggest having a variety of other optional activities on hand for early finishers so as not to stress out the meticulous or bore the more definitive among us.**

### **lesson b)**

I have found it useful at this stage of the process to have an area of the classroom – *perhaps a stretch of floor at one side of the room* - where the many containers of *beautiful stuff* can be housed in a way that is available to several kids at a time. The students will need to browse the contents of the collection often throughout this class, and it is way more likely to stay in a reasonable state of order if it is easily accessible. Other than that, all that is required is one piece of coloured 12" x 18" construction paper per student. If you are planning to take pictures of each completed 3D portrait with a digital camera, it is a good idea to establish a plan with your students before beginning as to how they will let you know that they are finished and ready for their "photo op". If you not doing photo documentation, you will need to figure out how to have the students working on surfaces where they can leave their creations undisturbed until the next day.

### **lesson c)**

The materials for this stage of the process are also minimal; one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser**, pencil crayons and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen** for each student. The real preparation is for those teachers who chose to photo document the 3D self-portraits from the previous lesson. You will need to print off colour versions of these photos for your students to work from today. In order to preserve ink and paper, I generally print these at a ¼ page size, which is quite sufficient for reference.

### **methodology and timing:\***

#### **lesson a)**

1. This lesson begins where the previous day's discussion about *imagining dressing ourselves and walking through world the way that we feel most authentic* left off after reading **10 000 DRESSES**. Begin in a discussion circle and ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts regarding how they would like to draw themselves in their self-portraits today... Make time and space for whoever would like to share to participate.
2. WATCH VIDEO – as outlined on page 16, "**watching, listening and discussing**" (*or whatever works for you*)
3. The discussion that takes place after the video will again be dependent on the particular composition and collective experiences of your classroom.... *the important point is simply to make time for it.*
4. Before the individual art making begins, refresh your students' memory of examples and ideas discussed the previous day in **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS** by re-posting your chart paper examples and making the Oliver Jeffers book(s) accessible. For this portrait, I ask the kids to draw in pencil, and then go over their final outline in fine-tipped black pen... There are two reasons for this – **a) it gives the drawing a more professional look of completion**, and **b) it is an excellent way for young children to practice fine motor skills**. Personally, I find it easier to work with kids' artwork in digital form later on if they all have the same orientation on the paper... *Also, doing self-portraits on vertically oriented paper sneakily encourages kids to draw their entire body as opposed to just their head or their big toe...* Taking these factors into consideration, I highly recommend asking all your kids to work on vertical (long-ways-up) paper for this project.



- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. CHECK-IN           | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. WATCH THE VIDEO    | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| 3. DISCUSS            | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 4. INDIVIDUAL DRAWING | <b>30 minutes</b> |

### lesson b)

- \* Please see the visual documentation section of this curriculum for examples of what a 3D self-portrait *may* end up looking like.**

Over the past few days of working through this project with your class, you as the classroom teacher will have already created a 2D self-portrait that you can use to refer to when demonstrating the translation of line drawing to 3D *beautiful stuff* image. With younger children, I find that it is more engaging and useful for everyone when the kids help you to search the class collection for objects that you can use in your representation. *This way, you can also surreptitiously model respectful care for materials.*

**BE SURE TO PHOTODOCUMENT OR OTHERWISE PRESERVE YOUR OWN 3D IMAGE so that you have it available for reference at the start of lesson c)**

- Basically, this class is the jurisdiction of your students and their own creative interpretation of the task at hand. In terms of *practical* considerations, you have 20 to 30 bins of magnificent found objects and 20 to 30 young children. *Let us acknowledge that the potential for chaos is present...* HOWEVER, believe it or not, I have found that by the time the project gets to this stage, the kids have developed a sense of respect for and connection with the materials (and one another) that actually supersedes what we as classroom teachers might expect would happen... In other words; briefly demonstrate... point your students in the direction of the materials... *relax*, and **enjoy**.

**If you are photo documenting** the 3D images you will need to take a picture of each child's work as they complete it. **\*SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME** on the image-processing side of things and frame your shots so that you are taking in only the objects that the student has used to create their image and a thin coloured border around them... *this way you can just select "print" for all images as opposed to having to crop and cut bits here and there on the computer.*

- Once you have a good photo of the 3D image, the student can begin to put away the *beautiful stuff* from their project for later re-use by sorting it back into the appropriate containers. If you are not photo documenting, simply ensure that all of the non-fixed 3D images are safe on stable surfaces until the next stage of the project commences tomorrow.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION     | <b>15 minutes</b>  |
| 2. 3D IMAGE CREATION | <b>45 minutes</b>  |
| 3. CLEAN-UP          | <b>10 minutes</b> * if you are putting the <i>beautiful stuff</i> away today |

### lesson c)

- I also recommend starting this lesson out with a brief demonstration of moving from 3D image into a different sort of 2D drawing (using either the 3D image that you preserved from yesterday's class or your colour photo to refer to)... ***This time, you are different yourself though***, as you now contain the experience of these actual shapes, lines and colours **in** your hands, informing your knowledge and your use of them as a medium. Basically, all you are demonstrating at this point is a combination of careful attention to shape, colour and form in the objects that you chose to combine, as well as a willingness to change your plan based on intuition; *(to pay careful attention to self)*.

- The visual documentation section also has examples of this stage of the self-portrait process.**

- This final version of the self-portrait begins with a pencil drawing and then, as with **lesson a)**, I would encourage kids to go over their final outline in black pen before moving on to developing the image in coloured pencil. I have observed that this process also encourages more concentrated attention to the size, shape and line of the objects being rendered. With the coloured pencils, kids are then freed up to express additional thoughts and feelings while some semblance of the original form is maintained through in the outline.

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION  | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. FINAL PORTRAIT | <b>50 minutes</b> |

\*timing is always approximate

grades: 1 to 3

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART TWO . visual show and share

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- With primary grades, the major source that I look to in learning how to help children gain the confidence and skill to speak their ideas to one another – *and to really listen to and reflect on the ideas of others in return* – is **TALKING, DRAWING WRITING: Lessons For Our Youngest Writers** by Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe.
- In general preparation for this type of activity, I begin on the first day of school by working in short, daily periods in different contexts where students practice telling **their** stories orally. The goal of the audience in each of these instances is to learn how to listen actively and respond with relevant comments, compliments or questions.
- I would recommend re-watching the **both/and** video after the portraits are done and *before* the show and share as a refresher – particularly for younger students.

#### lesson a) visual show and share

This is more of a celebration of accomplishment than a “lesson” really; an opportunity for each individual student to share a part of themselves that they have worked hard to articulate; *to talk about their process and to be honoured for their bravery in doing so*. In the context of **both/and** – it is an opportunity to revisit the subject matter in a reflection 2-3 days after the initial viewing. In the interim, the potential for discussion has become richly and deeply informed by a class-full of people who have been actually thinking about and working through what it means to *“imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.”*<sup>12</sup>

### materials list:

**The only materials required for this part of the process are those that you already have on hand;**

- your students’ self-portraits, particularly #3
- a digital camera if you have one and wish to document this part of the process for your own records

### preparation:

- students should all have been given sufficient time to complete stage 3 of their self-portrait before the class moves on to this portion of the process.

### methodology and timing:

#### lesson a)

1. The introduction today is a time for you to welcome the whole class back together and to set the tone for what will be a celebration of personal creative work accomplished and a general willingness to share our expressions with one another. Also during the introduction, it is a good idea to have students volunteer to remind the class of “rules of engagement” when it comes to maintaining a safe community space for sharing personal feelings and ideas without fear of judgment or rejection.
2. The basic format of the show and share for this age group is a maximum of 2 minutes per student (*so as to take into account wandering attention spans*)... Depending on your group of kids, you may even choose to spread this lesson over 2 days. Each participant can begin by showing their #3 self-portrait to the class and pointing out parts of it that they particularly like and why. For the early learner group in particular, I would

<sup>12</sup> from **101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws**, Kate Bornstein, 7 Stories Press, 2006 – used by Lee Hicks with permission of the author and the publisher, **both/and**, ©2010



not recommend setting any specific questions to work from and would instead make time for a few positive comments, compliments or questions posed to each artist from classmates with their hands up. As the teacher facilitator, you can also insert your own comments or questions from time to time so as to bring the discussion back around to the themes of the video (*stereotypes, bullying, changing the way that we deal with "difference", imagining and working towards a world where everyone can express themselves in the way that they most authentically ARE – including gender expression, attraction, race, religion, ability, etc.*)

3. The “**appreciation round**” is an opportunity for all participants in the circle to share briefly what they most valued about this experience and/or to thank the group for their contributions.

1. INTRODUCTION                      **5 minutes**  
2. SHOW AND SHARE                **30 – 40 minutes (approximately 2 minutes per kid)**  
3. APPRECIATION ROUND        **5 minutes**

\*timing is always approximate

#### **lesson extensions / modifications:**

1. For children who are already writing (regardless of proficiency level or creative-spelling techniques) you can encourage them to describe certain pieces of their self-portraits in words and to write these into or around the existing drawing.
2. For older primary students and/or those who love writing, there are a number of potential extensions to creating the actual portrait, *including*;
  - writing about the process of getting to the visual show and share (**procedural writing**)
  - a written description of all or favourite parts of the final image (**descriptive writing**)
  - a poem or story that builds the image with words in the same way that the found objects helped to build the visible image (**poetry/storytelling**)
4. For students who are struggling with English and/or public speaking in general, it is very possible to include them in this process without making it too painfully obvious that they are not speaking. For example;
  - **if you have access to technology** – you can work with the artist before hand one-on-one to find out what they like best about their picture and why, and then record either your voice or theirs as a voice-over to video close-ups on various parts of their image.
  - **without technology** – the same sort of effect can be done “live” with either you or a student buddy providing the “voice-over” while the artist points to their favourite parts of their own work.
  - you can have the artist point to the aspects of their work that they like best and rely on other students in the class to give *them* positive comments and compliments in response to this sharing.

**grades:** 1 to 3

## **RESPONSE TO both/and PART THREE . planning for action**

#### **lesson summaries:**

PART TWO of this lesson plan is designed to encourage conversation that will help kids make connections between their own experiences of identity and those of their classmates. **PART THREE** consists of two lessons that will facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals towards something more like a group planning session addressing how we as a community can make positive social change *happen* in the world around us. **Lesson a)** is a chance for younger children to use images to articulate their thoughts about “*imagining a world*” prior to sharing these ideas orally with their classmates. **Lesson b)** is the equivalent of “brainstorming” in junior classes – using the visual templates from lesson a) to aid the flow of conversation in the collaborative planning for action. I have given one example under the **possible extensions / modifications** heading in this section as to the direction that one of my own classes did end up heading to begin arts-based social action in

response to similar subject matter. I will not however take these lesson plans any further than helping to set the stage for child-directed activism. As I touched on in the general curriculum introduction, I feel that the specific form that this work takes should be the sole domain of students and their teacher. *The role of each educator at that point will be to listen closely in order to discern what is truly igniting the passions of their class, and then to assist students in forming a plan that honours their optimism in a way that is manageable **and** socially conscious.*

**materials list:**

- “**imagine a world**” template
- class set of sharp pencils and erasers.
- thin, black felt-tip pens
- pencil crayons
- chart paper and markers

**preparation:**

For **lesson a)**, print off the “**imagine a world**” template and make a class set of copies. Each student will also need a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser** and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen**. Everyone should also have access to pencil crayons. Preparation for **lesson b)** basically consists of having some sort of visual idea ready from the previous lesson to share with the class. I have found that oral brainstorming in “**planning for action**” is facilitated by first articulating ideas in visual form.

**methodology and timing:**

**lesson a)**

1. I suggest that younger children in particular may want to re-watch the **both/and** video at this point because there is a lot to take in, both visually and conceptually, and I find that this also helps to refocus the discussions that are going on in conjunction to the arts-based response.
2. After watching the video for a second time, it is often possible to have a more focused discussion with young children. Try going back to the point in the video where the young person asks “**can you imagine a world like that?**” ... *pause it* - and ask the kids if they can **actually** imagine that...  
**IF THEY CAN** – ask them to share specifics about what it would *look, sound, feel* like...  
**IF THEY CAN'T** – *find out why*... continue to discuss to see if there is any way they could access that hope...
3. On the templates provided, ask students to draw themselves into the place of the person doing the imagining... *encourage them to draw and colour themselves as much like they actually look as possible so that they are beginning to put themselves in the place of the person making active steps towards positive social change*... In the thought bubble, ask students to draw what that *imagined* world would be like for them...*what is happening there to make it the way it is?*

\* **If you have time, sit with the students one-on-one to scribe some of their ideas on the paper for them so that you can more easily prompt them in the discussion later if necessary.**

\* It is not terribly crucial *how much* drawing gets done on this template, or how completely drawn, outlined or coloured it is (unless you are planning to assess and/or display it in some way and that is important to you)... Basically, this sheet is intended to help kids organize and articulate their thoughts around the idea of “**imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.**” This is so that in **lesson b)**, they can more confidently talk about their ideas with their classmates.

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. RE-WATCH VIDEO     | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| 2. DISCUSS AND INTRO. | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 3. “IMAGINE” DRAWING  | <b>35 minutes</b> |

**lesson b)**

1. The “**share and scribe**” of this lesson is basically what “brainstorming” would be with a junior grade class. With younger children, I find that giving them a template first to work through their own ideas visually helps

to promote discussion. First, go around the circle and get as many children as are able to share some ideas about what this “imagined” world where everyone is safe to express themselves the way they have always wanted to. Some children will have lots to say, while others may just hold up a drawing and you + classmates can help by suggest how you feel when you look at it. As new ideas are shared, you can record them drawing or writing on a large piece of chart paper or whiteboard for the class to see. Once everyone has shared, take a moment to review and celebrate all of the ideas that you have come up with together.

2. If you have never worked collaboratively with very young children to come up with an idea for social action, the concept of it *may* seem rather daunting. Just remember that it does not need to be something hugely ambitious or groundbreaking... Above all, you are trying to create an association between **wanting** things to be different... thinking through how they **could** be different...and then **actually doing something to help change things for the better**. With the early learner age group, this can be as simple as making a collaborative art piece that combines and showcases your class’ magnificent hope-full ideas. You can work with them to find ways to share this work and these ideas with the rest of your school and the surrounding community. The activism here is that your message is being shared beyond the walls of your classroom and your students get a taste of how positive change starts to happen when individuals speak up for what they believe in.

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead**

1. SHARE AND SCRIBE      **20 minutes**

2. GENERAL DISCUSSION      **15 minutes**

\*timing is always approximate

#### **lesson extensions / modifications:**

One example of an experience that I have had working through material on a similar topic with this age of students culminated in the collaborative planning and execution of a mural. This mural was then shared with the rest of our school community and told the class’ interpretation of a poem called **THE 100 LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN** by Loris Malaguzzi - *translated by Lella Gandini*.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN, a poem by Loris Malaguzzi, translated by Lella Gandini.  
[www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php](http://www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php)

## junior – grades 4 to 6

### general introduction

**“Faggot has become the all-purpose putdown... Faggot = anything. Faggot = everything. The ubiquity of faggot redoubles its meaning and at the same time diminishes its meaning, or at the very least blunts them through sheer repetition. Faggot is rather like a tennis ball left too long in the game. It has lost some of its velocity. it has become and empty term, a marker, perhaps more akin to punctuation than to actual language.”<sup>14</sup>**

I chose this quote to introduce the junior section of this curriculum because the same phenomenon has been increasingly true for the phrase *“that’s so gay!”* in popular culture – *and therefore in public school playgrounds* - over the past several years. I have recently witnessed an increased willingness among educators to confront this specifically overt homophobia when it happens.... That is good. What would be *even* better now is a deep and united commitment to the prevention of social bullying and gender based violence that begins at least as early as children *start* attending school. Until that happens in a widespread and sustainable manner and *sticks* (i.e. with the help of a government mandated anti-oppression approach to public school curriculum for example), it is up to individual teachers to take the initiative to work this into the culture of their own classrooms.

By the junior grades, students are frighteningly well versed in the language of bullying built on sexism that adult society both perpetuates and is consistently unwilling to own as anything other than, “the way things are.” You are a faggot or a sissy if you are physically male and interested in fashion... You are a lesbo or dyke if you are physically female and don’t like make-up or dresses... You are stared at, taunted and harassed if the gender presentation that you put forward does not match others peoples’ perception of how you *“should”* look and act and *feel*... According to some opponents of a revised Sexual Health Curriculum for Ontario students, it is teachers who would be “sexualizing”<sup>15</sup> kids by teaching them that queer culture in terms of attraction and/or gender is just another potential way to love themselves and others for who they really are... The tactics that the religious-right used to scare Premier McGuinty into retracting this document are an excellent example of the way that each new generation of schoolyard bullying left unchallenged lays the groundwork for another generation of adult bullies in business, politics and popular culture. I for one am unwilling to base my philosophy of education on fear mongering.

For the time being, our provincial government has decided that the political path-of-least-resistance is worth more to them than the health and safety of *all* kids in Ontario. I have hope that this will not always be the case, but in the interim, here’s how you can still teach this content *and* connect directly to Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents in their current state of publication...

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<sup>14</sup> *Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities*, Ken Corbett, 2009, Yale University Press, p.173

<sup>15</sup> Charles McVety, head of the Canada Christian College, CBC News, Friday, April 23, 2010

# junior – grades 4 to 6

## overview of curriculum

*\* The content of the junior lesson plans have some similarities to the primary and early learner-kindergarten programs. The preparatory work and lesson summaries will explain how to move effectively and authentically outward from the “self” focus with this age group. The framework of some of the activities is similar, but the depth and points of focus are specifically geared to a more mature group of participants.*

**Part One** of this lesson set involves 3 pieces of preparatory work that should be completed before the video is screened. These are intended to establish prior knowledge and, more importantly, a basis of trust, care and community within the group. There are then 3 more lessons for the class to work through after they have watched the video together. These lessons start at the place of “self” and are designed to help students develop a personal connection to the concept of pride, self-identity, and the celebration of differences through an individual, arts-based activity.

**Preparatory work** is described as an overview in “**students prior knowledge**” and all sources used are detailed in “**resources.**” The 3 lessons following the video screening will be referred to as **lesson a)**, **lesson b)** and **lesson c)** and will be looked at in greater detail under the headings “**lesson summaries**”, “**materials list**”, “**preparation**” and “**methodology and timing.**”

**Part Two** consists of two lessons in which the personal artwork that the students completed in Part One becomes a starting place for conversation in response to the **both/and** video resource. The discussion progresses more deeply into what the students are thinking about the similarities and differences between the individual experiences and identities among them.

**Part Three** is an opportunity to facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals to more of a group planning session that addresses how we as a community can make positive social change happen in the world around us. It involves 2 initial lessons that will support planning and open up space for individualized activities to develop. I will describe a potential example of how this *might* occur, but encourage individual teachers to watch and listen to the unique discussions in their own classrooms so as to move into action and activism with authenticity and increased potential for sustainability.

**Documenting images** referred to throughout the lesson plans are labeled accordingly and can be viewed at the end of the curriculum section on pages 58 – 62.

grades: 4 to 6

## RESPONSE TO both/and students' prior knowledge

### 1. BEAUTIFUL STUFF:

My approach to portrait making as a self-reflective process with kids has been inspired partially through ideas from a book called **BEAUTIFUL STUFF: Learning With Found Materials**. This is a book written from the philosophy of **Reggio Emilia**, which has traditionally been applied to early childhood education. I have however adapted many aspects of Reggio philosophy to my work with junior grades, and see no reason not to do the same with this project.

The actual "beautiful stuff" (aside from what the kids themselves create) refers to all manner of found, re-used and recycled items that everyone in the class community collects and brings to school with the intention of sharing. For further details on that philosophy and/or details on related projects, you can consult the source book by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini. In this section, I will summarize what I do with classes to collect, sort, and create with found materials, focusing on planning for a self-portrait project in response to the **both/and** video. For junior grade classes, there is far less potential chaos involved in bringing a giant pile of random found objects into the middle of your classroom, so I will be more succinct and straightforward with my explanation than I was with the early-learner and primary sections.

\* It is also up to you whether you send a letter home to parents at this age level. For the most part I find that a simple explanatory note with examples - *that the kids can actually write to themselves as a reminder* - is enough to mobilize and sustain the project.

Approximately two weeks prior to actually needing a good supply of found materials to work with in class, I introduce the idea of "beautiful stuff" to the class as basically, **"any kind of small object or materials that you can find which is not living, is not belonging to anyone else, and is not already being used for something that it is essential to..."** *Beautiful* on the other hand has few restriction... *it is whatever that idea means to you... You may like to look or the size or the shape or the feel of it... It may make you feel happy, or just feel something in a way that you find beautiful... No one else gets to decide what is beautiful to you.* Following an introductory class discussion about this, I demonstrate the idea of beauty being subjective and individual by showing the students a few found objects from *my* collection and explaining why I like them... Students then volunteer to share their own past experiences with having found and/or saved interesting and "beautiful" objects. At the end of this day, I send each student home with a large, sturdy paper bag and a list of potential objects and searching places that they have brainstormed themselves (*including the due date a couple of weeks down the road when we would like to have all items collected and delivered to the classroom by*)

For the junior grade lesson plans, I have included an adaptation to part three of the self-portrait process, which involves translating part two - *the 3D image* - into a paper collage as opposed to a 2D colour drawing like the younger grades will do. You are welcome to attempt either approach with any grade, but if you are planning on trying out the collage method, you will also need to add *"the scavenging of beautiful paper bits - varying textures, weights and colours"* to the collection goals of your students. Also, I would recommend having a large box set out in the classroom during the collection period where students can deposit found paper scraps directly as opposed to mixing them in with all of the other bits and bobs.

### 2. THE SORTING OF THE STUFF:

On the day that the *beautiful stuff* collection is completed and delivered, we have an *"Opening of the Bags"* ceremony in the classroom (and yes - this is fun for grade sixes too... they love random stuff in a bag as much as the next person even if they are already too cool to admit it in public). It is up to you whether you do this as a big class with older kids or in a few smaller groups - consolidating categories once each team's pile is organized. The potential for general chaos and ingestion of small objects tends decrease with age. If you are tying this work into the math or science curriculums for junior grades, it can be a good idea to review and discuss the idea of "sorting" with students prior to beginning this task, just to make sure everyone is on the same page as to strategies that tend to work best for the classification of many things.



It is also quite acceptable to just launch in and go at this task “organically” (*and by this, I mean quite seriously that I had no idea the first time how it was going to work out before we actually did it*). The trial and error DID work though, and took place essentially like this;

- lay out all of the empty containers in a row of sorts;
- someone suggests a category and takes an example item from the big pile to “file” into a new container;
- the process is repeated until all categories that the class suggests have been assigned to their own container;
- individuals or small groups work to find and collect all of the items from the pile that fit into a certain category
- once the initial sorting is complete, there are inevitably overlapping categories that can be sorted out through discussion, consensus, and/or any other semi-democratic method that works for you and your class.

### **3. LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself**

When teaching about self-portraiture, regardless of the age group, I start by suggesting that as human beings, we all have things that we know about ourselves that seem similar to other people as well as things that seem very different. Humans generally like at least *some* of the “same” things about ourselves, and *some* of the “different” things, but there may also be parts that we spend time not liking at all. Often, we spend time *not* liking certain parts because we are under the impression that they are either TOO much the same, or TOO different from other people that we want to be accepted by. The very funny truth of all this is that every other human around us is struggling with the same worries.... *every single one*... and the thing that they really want most of all is to be celebrated for who they are most naturally. **Just like you.** So, the thing is then that this one similarity – *this key vulnerability about being human and living well in community* – is really the only thing we need to worry about knowing when we take the risk of showing ourselves fully to other people;

It means that the way that YOU do it is exactly perfect, exactly now **for you, and**  
the way that *they* do it is exactly perfect for them....

That goes for drawing,  
*and for BE-ing.*

#### **“MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE**

**we want to love  
and be loved.”<sup>16</sup>**

This doesn’t mean fear of being rejected is not scary.... it means that in THIS group at the very least, we are going to try to remember that EVERYONE – even you – is being the very best self that they can be and that that it is an honour to have someone share their best self with you. **I then ask everyone to please remember to accept this honour with thanks and respect for themselves and each of their classmates.**

The truth is that I begin facilitating the development of this language of positive, supportive community building in the classroom on day one of the school year because it really can’t happen all at once. Before you can expect kids to share honestly about themselves with others, there needs to be a clear expectation of care and safety that we all hold one another to. With younger children, you as the classroom teacher start out doing a lot of the “holding” so to speak... As kids get older though, a very beautiful thing can occur whereby they start to expect love and acceptance within their community and can actually call *each other* out when an individual acts in ways that go against that expectation. It is an incredible moment to witness as an educator.

Risking showing more of ourselves to others is what self-portraiture *does* essentially – and that is why I have found learning about self-portraits to be a good way of opening peoples’ brains wide enough to see and experience the **both/and** video in a different way. As I will detail in **PART ONE** of the lesson plan; going through the process of making and then sharing a self-portrait with classmates can help build a language through which even the youngest learners can consolidate and articulate an understanding of how important it is for **everyone** to be seen and accepted as themselves in the world... For me, a significant goal here is to help more children experience acceptance and celebration of their true selves *consistently*, and early in life. Among other obvious benefits, I have hope that a basic infusion of genuine love to this generation of young people will support the development of a future adult population that is much more likely to put energy into fostering deep, loving community for others.

Perhaps this seems like a lot of theoretical preamble but, just as I think it is essential for kids to understand WHY they are doing something in order for them to actually be invested in learning from it, it is important for me as an

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<sup>16</sup> From THE SKILLS AND PRINCIPLES OF LOVING, Shalom Mountain Sacred Retreat Centre.

educator to be clear on why I am teaching the content that I do. The grand majority of preparation that I do as a classroom teacher is the work of unpacking my own intentions for myself... *As in, "why am I personally invested in planning this particular lesson in the way that I am planning it and, why is it that I am choosing to teach this concept with this process in the first place?"* As elementary school teachers, we know through much experience that "The Best Laid Plans" for the *step-by-step/how-to* of something can mean very little in practical terms when you don't have money for the right kind of paper or your lesson is interrupted by a fire drill. It is way easier to get back on track and not even worry about all that however, if you know *why* it is that you began and *where* you are going. **That being said;**

### **"the potential step-by-step":**

1. I use an OLIVER JEFFERS book – *my favourite is **Lost and Found*** – to introduce self-portraiture to primary-aged kids because in the back of every one of the magnificent stories that he both writes and illustrates, there is an old photograph of Jeffers himself as a kid... Aside from the fact that he is brimming over with impish magnificence, these photos generally bear a striking resemblance to the small human protagonist in the story (*and often he is wearing some sort of fantastic outfit that I wish came in my size*). The outfit IS important to the project beyond my own fashion sense however, because I then show the class a picture of little Oliver beside the character that he has drawn in reference to himself so that we can notice and discuss the similarities. The best thing about his drawing style is that it is often simple shapes that are easy to break down and to demonstrate. In **Lost and Found**, he wears a very similar toque in both images and has drawn himself in an enviable stripey t-shirt. I like to use Jeffers with junior grades also because a) *he is awesome*, and b) *it provides an excellent segway into drawing yourself in the way that you are MOST yourself*. With grades 5 and 6 in particular, I will also show different examples of drawing styles from young-adult fiction and graphic novels, such as **FORGET SORROW: An Ancestral Tale** by Belle Yang<sup>17</sup> or Chester Brown's **RIEL: A Comic Strip Biography**<sup>18</sup>, both of which connect very well to different aspects of the Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum.
2. I then talk about a favourite t-shirt of mine, picking one that I feel expresses something about myself I would like to share with others. **For example**, I once chose a black t-shirt that I had sewn a puffy, pink-striped giraffe on to – transplanted from another shirt that I did not like. I explained that I like it because sometimes people say that "*pink is a girl colour*," but I identify as male, and I **like** pink... I also like it because I sewed it myself (another non-traditional but perfectly awesome pastime for men). I used my creativity to make something that works for *me* and that helps me to feel most "*myself*" when I wear it..
3. As I describe my shirt for the class, I am also drawing it and other details of myself onto chart paper that I have set up so that everyone can see. **By demonstrating this part of the process during the discussion, you are giving the kids a low-pressure opportunity to witness the step-by-step drawing of a self-portrait, and to begin thinking about how they will approach this for themselves.**
4. Once the demonstration self-portrait of myself is done, I ask the class members to all take a minute, close their eyes, and think carefully about the outfit that they either have or *wish* they had to best describe their true self... We will save the sharing of these ideas for the next day, just before watching the **both/and** video and commencing the self-portrait creating.
5. Directly after the idea of "*what do you most want to draw yourself wearing*" has been suggested into the students' brains, I read them **10 000 Dresses** by Marcus Ewert. This book is about a kid named Bailey who happens to be born in a body that people read as "boy". She dreams of all of the dresses that she would wear if she could make what she saw in her head.... *and if her family would realize that actually – she is a girl on the inside*. Following this reading, there are lots of different directions that the discussion may go, all of which can provide a helpful segway into watching **both/and**. For example;  
**- how do you think the story would be different if Bailey really WAS a boy on the inside as well as the outside and he STILL liked to wear and design dresses? why do you think this?**

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<sup>17</sup> FORGET SORROW: An Ancestral Tale, W. W. Norton & Company, Belle Yang, 2010

<sup>18</sup> RIEL: A Comic Strip Biography, Drawn and Quarterly, Chester Brown, 2005

With older students, particularly Grade 6, you can also try something a bit more mature if you are up for it... The youtube video "**INVISIBLE**" by **laidbaqq**<sup>19</sup> is both beautiful and real... a brave and articulate self-portrait in video form. There is minimal swearing involved, so depending on your own comfort level and your group of kids, you may not want to show ALL of it, but it is definitely worth having the context – if only for yourself.

6. \* I recommend doing this introduction to self-portraiture the DAY BEFORE watching the **both/and** video as a class, and then beginning the actual experience of *creating* the next day with a quick review of what was learned and discussed here.

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<sup>19</sup> INVISIBLE, by laidbaqq, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Weo5EQyqxnM>, 2011

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART ONE . self portraits

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- The **Watching, Listening and Discussing** section of the General Introduction to Lesson Plans describes my approach to sharing this video with students in Kindergarten to Grade 6, and may be helpful in thinking through how to start out... \* *Launching into things based entirely on your own ideas and intuition is also fully acceptable of course.*
- The **Students' Prior Knowledge** section of the Lesson Plan outlined the basics of 3 lessons that you may choose to work through with your class prior to watching and discussing **both/and**. The last of these is an introduction to self-portrait-making that I recommend doing the day directly before watching the video and responding with individual portrait creation.
- I have chosen to create self-portraits with my students through a self-reflective process that includes gathering, sorting and using many of our own re-used objects as art materials, spending time thinking about and discussing how we see ourselves, how we would *like* to walk through the world most authentically, and why or why not our desires and intentions match the way that we actually **DO** move through the world... This is not the only way to go about self-portrait making or to respond as a class to **both/and**. I do it this way because I find that it leaves a lot of room for challenging stereotypes of all sorts that restrict us from fully **BEing** ourselves in the world. This video was developed mainly in response to my frustration over gender stereotypes, sexism and transphobia, but if it also opens up space for your class to talk about other layers of identity such as race, religion, beauty standards, socio-economics and/or ability... fantastic! None of these oppressions exist in isolation.
- If you are interested in learning more about the pedagogical perspectives that inform my practice, I have studied both the **Reggio Emilia approach to emergent curriculum** and a variety of **community building and peaceful conflict-resolution practices**... cobbling various influences together on an ongoing basis through readings and actual experiences – some of which are listed in the resources section of this document.

#### lesson a) DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES

This lesson includes **step one: the video - watching, listening and discussing** as detailed on page 16.

It begins where **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS; telling a visual story about oneself** (pages 21-22) left off the previous day by checking in with students and asking them to share their ideas for the ways that they wish to draw themselves in their self-portraits today. The experience of actually **DRAWING OURSELVES BEING OURSELVES** will come after viewing the **both/and** video. This is a preliminary pencil and black pen outline sketch invites the students to draw the “self” in the way they have been thinking and talking about. *Tomorrow*, this drawing will become the model for making a 3D image of themselves constructed from your class’ *beautiful stuff* collection.

#### lesson b) MAKING ME – 3D

**MAKING ME – 3D** employs the line drawing that students completed the previous day as a model for creating a 3D image of themselves using found objects from the “beautiful stuff” collection. This image is developed on a piece of 12”x18” coloured construction paper where the objects are placed but **not** glued down. One reason for this choice is that by taking away glue as an option, we can help free kids up to explore and try things conceptually that they may not take the time to experiment with if permanence is an “option” (*because it is often read as “an expectation”*)... **Small details matter – kids notice** – and if we are asking them to stretch outside of social boxes and try on different, more authentic ways of **BE-ing** with one another and in the world, asking them to glue a version of themselves to a piece of paper and keep it like that forever can (rightly) be experienced as counter-intuitive at best. Students will need to be able to refer to this 3D image the next day when they work part c) of their self-portrait experience, so there are a couple of ways that you can help make this happen;

1. Plan **this** lesson at the end of one day and **lesson c)** at the very beginning of the next day so as to prevent disturbance to the un-fixed 3D image constructions and to avoid covering all available surfaces in your classroom for any longer than necessary.

2. Use a **digital camera** to take a picture of each student's 3D portrait as they finish it and then have them disassemble it and put back / re-sort all of the *beautiful stuff* that they used to create it that same day. Prior to the next lesson, print off a small (i.e. 3.5"x5") **colour photo** of each self-portrait and give these to the students to refer to.

**\*IF YOU HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND OPTION 2...**

In addition to other practical benefits, it is really nice to have a record of all stages of the portrait-making process. This is especially true for JK/SK students because I have found that the developmental leap that often occurs as a **result** of handling the objects they are drawing before trying to recreate them in 2D can be quite astounding and is definitely worth documenting.

### **lesson c) PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES:**

#### **drawing 2D with 3D experience and found paper collage**

"DRAWING 2D WITH 3D EXPERIENCE" is in reference to the fact that the process of translating oneself from the 3D body to a 2D line drawing, to a creative representation by beauty-full objects, and then back to a much-changed 2D drawing *cannot* be a strictly linear experience... This is intentional. Figuring out who we really are as human beings without all the layers of social expectations – particularly in relation to stereotypes of gender, race, religion, ability, etc. – is neither linear, nor static, nor easy. It would seem disingenuous to me as an educator to design the process of telling the story of one'SELF to the world as a quick sketch. By introducing this as a many-step journey with several translations and points of reflection, we are building a space for kids to *create* the specific language of authentic self-description inTO the lesson plan ... (i.e. "*scaffolding*" in edu-speak).

In **lesson c)**, students are asked to draw themselves again by referring directly to the photograph (or actual objects) of the 3D image that they created the previous day. Two things generally happen at this point;

1. The technical quality of anyone's rendering skills can improve through the simple act of having *handled* the objects that they are attempting to draw.
2. Some of the found objects that individuals have used to represent special parts of themselves are melded and morphed into a beauty-full and completely unique symbolism of the self.

THIS is the art piece that students will complete with colour and **found paper collage** after the initial translation of the 3D drawing to 2D. They will then challenge themselves to speak about it with the rest of the class community in **PART TWO** of the lesson plan; **visual show and share**.

#### **materials list:**

##### **PREPARATORY LESSONS:**

- class set of large, sturdy paper bags. (handles are useful)
- 20-30 medium sized containers to house the various categories of "stuff"
- **Lost and Found** picture book by Oliver Jeffers
- unlined chart paper + pencil and/or large black marker
- **10 000 Dresses** picture book by Marcus Ewert

**\*both/and video** can be viewed online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca)

##### **SELF PORTRAITS:**

- 8.5" X 11" white copier paper
- class set of sharp pencils and erasers.
- thin, black felt-tip pens
- pencil crayons
- 12" x 18" construction paper of a darker yet festive tone (turquoise blue or forest green seem to work well)
- an extensive and impressive collection of kid-found "beautiful stuff"
- glue sticks for paper collage
- various colours, weights and textures of found/recycled paper to share
- picture books to demonstrate paper collage,  
i.e. **THE PAPER DRAGON** by **Robert Sabuda** or anything by **Eric Carle**

\*digital camera

\*access to a colour printer

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\* all items are technically "optional" but starred items are particularly so.

### preparation:

You will require internet access to your classroom computer in order to watch both/and online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca).

If you are having trouble accessing the material, please feel free to contact me at [leehicks30@gmail.com](mailto:leehicks30@gmail.com).

### lesson a)

For this first portrait, each student will need one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser** and a thin, felt-tipped, **black pen**. It will also be useful to some students to have the visual examples produced at the previous day's **LEARNING ABOUT SELF-PORTRAITS** lesson to available to reference.

**\* With arts based activities in particular, I find that there are always kids who very legitimately finish in 15 minutes... and then others who could very legitimately spend the entire day on the task. For this reason I generally give a moderate estimate for completion time, and then suggest having a variety of other optional activities on hand for early finishers so as not to stress out the meticulous or bore the more definitive among us.**

### lesson b)

I have found it useful at this stage of the process to have an area of the classroom – *perhaps a stretch of floor at one side of the room* - where the many containers of *beautiful stuff* can be housed in a way that is available to several kids at a time. The students will need to browse the contents of the collection often throughout this class, and it is way more likely to stay in a reasonable state of order if it is easily accessible. Other than that, all that is required is one piece of coloured 12" x 18" construction paper per student. If you are not doing photo documentation of completed portraits, you will need to figure out how to have the students working on surfaces where they can leave their creations undisturbed until the next day.

### lesson c)

The materials for this stage of the process are also quite minimal; one piece of regular **white 8.5" x 11" copier paper**, a sharp HB **pencil**, an **eraser**, pencil crayons and a thin , felt-tipped, **black pen** for each student. You will also be making use of your class-collected stock of paper scraps. If you find that you do not have enough different papers collected by the day that you need them, you can always supplement with blocks of colour and patterns cut out of old magazines and advertisements. The real preparation is for those teachers who chose to photo document the 3D self-portraits from the previous lesson. You will need to print off colour versions of these photos for your students to work from today. In order to preserve ink and paper, I generally print these at ¼ page size, which is quite sufficient for reference.

### methodology and timing: \*

#### lesson a)

1. This lesson begins where the previous day's discussion about *imagining dressing ourselves and walking through world the way that we feel most authentic* left off after reading **10 000 DRESSES** and/or watching and discussing the youtube video-self-portrait **INVISIBLE** by **laidbaqq**. Begin in a discussion circle and ask if anyone would like to share their thoughts regarding how they would like to draw themselves in their self-portraits today... Make time and space for whoever would like to share to participate.
2. WATCH VIDEO – as outlined on page 16, "**watching, listening and discussing**" (*or whatever works for you*)
3. The discussion that takes place after the video will again be dependent on the particular composition and collective experiences of your classroom.... *the important point is simply to **make time for it**.*
4. Before the individual art making begins, refresh your students' memory of examples and ideas discussed the previous day in **LEARNING ABOUT SELF PORTRAITS** by re-posting your chart paper examples and making the Oliver Jeffers book(s) accessible. For this portrait, I ask the students to draw in pencil, and then go over their final outline in fine-tipped black pen. The main reason for this is aesthetic preference, so that step is entirely up to you. Personally, I find it easier to work with kids' artwork in digital form later on if they all have the same orientation on the paper... *Also, doing self-portraits on vertically oriented paper sneakily encourages kids to draw their entire body as opposed to just their head or their big toe...* Taking these factors into consideration, I highly recommend asking all your kids to work on vertical paper for this project.



- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. CHECK-IN           | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. WATCH THE VIDEO    | <b>15 minutes</b> |
| 3. DISCUSS            | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 4. INDIVIDUAL DRAWING | <b>30 minutes</b> |

### lesson b)

- \* Please see the visual documentation section of this curriculum for examples of what a 3D self-portrait may end up looking like** *\*(keeping in mind that most of the examples that I have are from primary-aged children)*

Over the past few days of working through this project with your class, you as the classroom teacher will have already created a 2D self-portrait that you can use to refer to when demonstrating the translation of line drawing to 3D *beautiful stuff* image. If you would like, you can have your students help you to search the collection for items that you might use in your portrait (*surreptitiously modeling respectful care for shared materials*). **\*BE SURE TO PHOTODOCUMENT OR OTHERWISE PRESERVE YOUR OWN 3D IMAGE so that you have it available for reference at the start of lesson c)**

- Basically, this class is the jurisdiction of your students and their own creative interpretation of the task at hand. In terms of *practical* considerations, you have 20 to 30 bins of magnificent found objects and 20 to 30 young people. *Let us acknowledge that the potential for chaos is present...* HOWEVER, believe it or not, I have found that by the time the project gets to this stage, the kids have developed a sense of respect for and connection with the materials (and one another) that actually supersedes what we as classroom teachers might expect would happen... In other words; briefly demonstrate... point your students in the direction of the materials... *relax, and enjoy.*

**If you are photo documenting** the 3D images you will need to take a picture of each student's work as they complete it. **\*SAVE YOURSELF SOME TIME** on the image-processing side of things and frame your shots so that you are taking in only the objects that the student has used to create their image and a thin coloured border around them... *this way you can just select "print" for all images as opposed to having to crop and cut.*

- Once you have a good photo of the 3D image, the student can begin to put away the *beautiful stuff* from their project for later re-use by sorting it back into the appropriate containers. If you are not photo documenting, simply ensure that all of the non-fixed 3D images are safe on stable surfaces until the next stage of the project commences tomorrow.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION     | <b>15 minutes</b>  |
| 2. 3D IMAGE CREATION | <b>45 minutes</b>  |
| 3. CLEAN-UP          | <b>10 minutes</b> * if you are putting the <i>beautiful stuff</i> away today |

### lesson c)

- I also recommend starting this lesson out with a brief demonstration of moving from 3D image into a different sort of 2D drawing (using either the 3D image that you preserved from yesterday's class or your colour photo to refer to)... ***This time, you are different yourself though,*** as you now contain the experience of these actual shapes, lines and colours *in* your hands, informing your knowledge and your use of them as a medium. Basically, all you are demonstrating at this point is a combination of careful attention to shape, colour and form in the objects that you chose to combine, as well as a willingness to change your plan based on intuition; *(to pay careful attention to self).*

- This final version of the self-portrait begins with a pencil drawing. The goal here is to use the shapes and forms of self-selected beauty-full things to inspire the emergence of a more personal level of depicting the self. Once the basic outline and organization of details has been established, the kids can use a combination of coloured pencil, paper collage (*and/or any other mediums that you choose to introduce*) to complete that process of making their authentic selves visible.

**FOR REFERENCE:** I recommend showing your students other examples of paper collage to help inspire them. Two of my favourite artist/authors for this are **Robert Sabuda** and **Eric Carle**, but there are many others.

\* I do not have a visual example of a collage-phase self-portrait by a junior student available, but I have included a couple of other examples of Grade 6 found-paper-collages in the **visual documentation** section.

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. DEMONSTRATION  | <b>10 minutes</b> |
| 2. FINAL PORTRAIT | <b>60 minutes</b> |

\*timing is always approximate

grades: 4 to 6

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART TWO . visual show and share

### lesson summaries:

#### general

- With junior grades, the major source that I look to in learning how to help kids gain the confidence and skill to speak their ideas to one another – *and to really listen to and reflect on the ideas of others in return* – is **READING WRITING AND RISING UP** by Linda Christensen. It is written for intermediate/senior students but is easily adaptable to junior as well.
- In general preparation for this type of activity, I begin on the first day of school – *daily, and in a variety of contexts* – with activities where students can practice telling **their** stories orally. The goal of the audience in each of these instances is to learn how to listen actively and respond with relevant and increasingly thought provoking comments, compliments or questions.
- I would recommend re-watching the **both/and** video after the portraits are done and *before* the show and share as a refresher.

#### lesson a) visual show and share

This is more of a celebration of accomplishment than a “lesson” really; an opportunity for each individual student to share a part of themselves that they have worked hard to articulate; *to talk about their process and to be honoured for their bravery in doing so*. In the context of **both/and** – it is an opportunity to revisit the subject matter in a reflection 2-3 days after the initial viewing. In the interim, the potential for discussion has become richly and deeply informed by a class-full of people who have been actually thinking about and working through what it means to *“imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.”*<sup>20</sup>

### materials list:

**The only materials required for this part of the process are those that you already have on hand;**

- your students’ self-portraits, particularly #3
- a digital camera if you have one and wish to document this part of the process for your own records

### preparation:

- students should all have been given sufficient time to complete stage 3 of their self-portrait before the class moves on to this portion of the process.

### methodology and timing:

#### lesson a)

1. The introduction today is a time for you to welcome the whole class back together and to set the tone for what will be a celebration of personal creative work accomplished and a general willingness to share our expressions with one another. Also during the introduction, it is a good idea to have students volunteer to remind the class of “rules of engagement” when it comes to maintaining a safe community space for sharing personal feelings and ideas without fear of judgment or rejection.
2. The basic format of the show and share for this age group can be a bit looser than with younger, but I would still recommend a time frame of about 3-4 minutes per student, maximum ... Depending on your group of kids, you may even choose to spread this lesson over 2 days. Each participant can begin by showing their #3 self-portrait to the class and describing aspects of their learning/working process that interested them, including

<sup>20</sup> from **101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws**, Kate Bornstein, 7 Stories Press, 2006 – used by Lee Hicks with permission of the author and the publisher, **both/and**, ©2010

parts of their visual work that they particularly like and why. As the teacher facilitator, you can also insert your own comments or questions from time to time so as to bring the discussion back around to the themes of the video (*stereotypes, bullying, changing the way that we deal with “difference”, imagining and working towards a world where everyone can express themselves in the way that they most authentically ARE – including gender expression, attraction, race, religion, ability, etc.*)

3. The “**appreciation round**” is an opportunity for all participants in the circle to share briefly what they most valued about this experience and/or to thank the group for their contributions.

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. INTRODUCTION       | 5 minutes  |
| 2. SHOW AND SHARE     | 60 - 80 minutes ( <i>approximately 3-4 minutes per kid</i> ) |
| 3. APPRECIATION ROUND | 5 minutes  |

\*timing is always approximate

#### lesson extensions / modifications:

1. For kids who always finish early and/or like a challenge, encourage them to incorporate text into/on/around their existing imagery.
2. There are any number of potential language-based extensions to creating the actual visual portrait for junior grades, *including*:
  - writing about the process of getting to the visual show and share (**procedural writing**)
  - a written description of all or favourite parts of the final image (**descriptive writing**)
  - a poem or story that builds the image with words in the same way that the found objects helped to build the visible image (**poetry/storytelling**)
  - written **reflection** on their own oral presentation, *or* that of a classmate who particularly inspired them
3. For students who are struggling with English and/or public speaking in general, it is very possible to include them in this process without making it too painfully obvious that they are not speaking as proficiently. For example;
  - **if you have access to technology** – you can work with the artist before hand one-on-one to find out what they like best about their picture and why, and then record either your voice or theirs as a voice-over to video close-ups on various parts of their image.
  - **without technology** – the same sort of effect can be done “live” with either you or a student buddy providing the “voice-over” while the artist points to their favourite parts of their own work.
  - you can have the artist point to the aspects of their work that they like best and rely on other students in the class to give *them* positive comments and compliments in response to this sharing.

grades: 4 to 6

## RESPONSE TO both/and PART THREE . planning for action

#### lesson summaries:

PART TWO of this lesson plan is designed to encourage conversation that will help kids make connections between their own experiences of identity and those of their classmates. **PART THREE** consists of two lessons that will facilitate a transition from talk about and between individuals towards something more like a group planning session addressing how we as a community can make positive social change *happen* in the world around us. **Lesson a)** uses the strategy of **creative visualization**<sup>21</sup> to jump start students in articulating their thoughts about “*imagining a world*” in writing prior to sharing these ideas orally with their classmates. **Lesson b)**

<sup>21</sup> I first read about the technique of using **creative visualization** with kids in an article by TDSB teacher **Jane Hamilton** in the book **TEACHING GREEN – THE ELEMENTARY YEARS; Hands on Learning in Grades K-5**, Green Teacher Press, 2005.

is basically “brainstorming” – using the experience and writing material that came out of the creative visualization process to aid the flow of conversation in the collaborative planning for action. I have given one example under the **possible extensions / modifications** heading in this section as to the direction that one of my own classes did end up heading to begin arts-based social action in response to similar subject matter. I will not however take these lesson plans any further than helping to set the stage for child-directed activism. As I touched on in the general curriculum introduction, I feel that the specific form that this work takes should be the sole domain of students and their teacher. *The role of each educator at that point will be to listen closely in order to discern what is truly igniting the passions of their class, and then to assist students in forming a plan that will honour their optimism in a way that is both manageable and socially conscious.*

**materials list:**

- “**imagine a world**” script (*make up your own on the spot and/or refer to an example script in this document*)
- class set of sharp pencils
- loose-leaf lined paper
- chart paper and markers

**preparation:**

For **lesson a)**, you do not need to use the sample script that I have provided for the “**imagine a world**” creative visualization... Basically, you should just have some idea in your own mind of how you will lead your kids through it. The writing exercise takes place directly following the visualization and I find that things flow best when each student prepares their desk beforehand with a piece of lined paper and a pencil that they can easily return to. Preparation for **lesson b)** basically consists of having already given your students the experience of visualizing and writing individually so that they are feeling confident and organized for oral brainstorming in “**planning for action**”.

**methodology and timing:**

**lesson a)**

1. I suggest you and your class may want to re-watch the **both/and** video at this point because there is a lot to take in, both visually and conceptually, and I find that this also helps to refocus the discussions that are going on in conjunction to the arts-based response.
2. After watching **both/and** for a second time, it is often possible to have a more focused discussion on some of the subtler themes of the video. Try going back to the point in the video where the young person asks, “**can you imagine a world like that?**” ... *pause it* - and ask the kids if they can **actually** imagine that... They don’t have to answer right away, but *thinking* about it in terms of what they personally, honestly think is a good segway into the next part of the activity; the **creative visualization**:
3. You can use the example script for creative visualization in this curriculum document as a model, read off it word-for-word, OR make up your own thing entirely... all options are good. I generally find that about 5 minutes is sufficient time for all of this good virtual-visual inspiration to get started, but also feel free to adjust up or down in response to the actual group of kids you have sitting in front of you.  
Three factors **are** really important to get settled before you begin though;
  - **REDUCE LIGHT** – turn off all overhead classroom lights and shut the blinds if you can
  - **SPACE** – I tell the kids that they can sit or lie anywhere in the room that I can see them and they can hear me as long as they are not too close to any other person.
  - **QUIET** – in order for the students to be able to concentrate on your voice and their own imagination exclusively, there **CANNOT** be any other distracting noise in the immediate area, (*i.e. from less-focused classmates in particular*)
4. I generally give the kids 15-30 of quiet, UNINTERRUPTED writing time that starts directly after the creative visualization ends, and is essentially “sacred” time where interrupting any other person’s thought process is strictly prohibited... this is important, and kids usually have a pretty easy time holding this because *they* really want that respect for their own process as well...

As one of my magnificent grade 6 students said recently:

**“Adults don’t usually trust kids, but if you do, we can gain the confidence and inner strength to do a LOT of things”** – Noa, 2011

It is not terribly crucial *how much* writing gets done in this activity (unless you are planning to assess and/or display it in some way and that is important to you)... Despite the lack of pressure to produce a certain amount of work, I usually find that most kids write WAY more than they normally would after taking part in an activity like this. Having a quiet, concentrated period of time where someone walks you through the process of developing “pictures” of what you are going to write in your own mind before you even pick up a pencil helps to reduce the “*what do I write!?!*” anxiety in many people – not just kids.

Basically, the creative visualization process is intended to help kids organize and articulate their thoughts around the idea of **“imagine a world where anyone can safely – and even joyfully – express themselves in the way they’ve always wanted to.”** This is so that in **lesson b)**, they can more confidently and fluently discuss their ideas with their classmates.

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. RE-WATCH VIDEO     | <b>15 minutes</b>   |
| 2. DISCUSS AND INTRO. | <b>10 minutes</b>   |
| 3. VISUALIZATION      | <b>5 minutes</b>  |
| 4. “IMAGINE” WRITING  | <b>15 - 30 minutes</b> (depending on age and/or experience of students) |

### **lesson b)**

1. For the oral brainstorming phase of this lesson, I like to have the kids arrange a circle of chairs that includes everyone in the center of the classroom... I as the designated “scribe” generally sit on the floor in the middle of the circle with several pieces of chart paper and markers. As the kids go around the circle and share their ideas about the world they are imagining with the rest of the group, I write all of the new points as fast as humanly possible on the large paper where everyone can see and refer to them during the discussion. **\*Later in the school year**, the class is usually at a point of familiarity and comfort with this process that they can self-regulate and self-direct the discussion as a group of people at a dinner conversation might negotiate amongst themselves to include everyone. **When just starting out** however, you as scribe can also play double-duty as facilitator to keep things on track... Once everyone has shared, take a moment to review and celebrate all of the ideas that you have come up with together as a class.
2. If you have never worked collaboratively with kids to come up with an idea for social action, the concept of it *may* seem rather daunting. Just remember that it does not need to be something hugely ambitious or groundbreaking, especially the first time you try it. Above all, you are trying to create an association between **wanting** things to be different... thinking through how they **could** be different...and then **actually doing something to help change things for the better**. At first, this can be as simple as making a collaborative art piece that combines and showcases your class’ magnificent hope-full ideas. You can them find ways to share this work and these ideas with the rest of your school and the surrounding community. The activism here is that your message is being shared beyond the walls of your classroom and your students get a taste of how positive change starts to happen when individuals speak up for what they believe in.

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”** – Margaret Mead

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ORAL BRAINSTORMING | <b>20 minutes</b> |
| 2. PLAN FOR ACTION    | <b>15 minutes</b> |

\*timing is always approximate

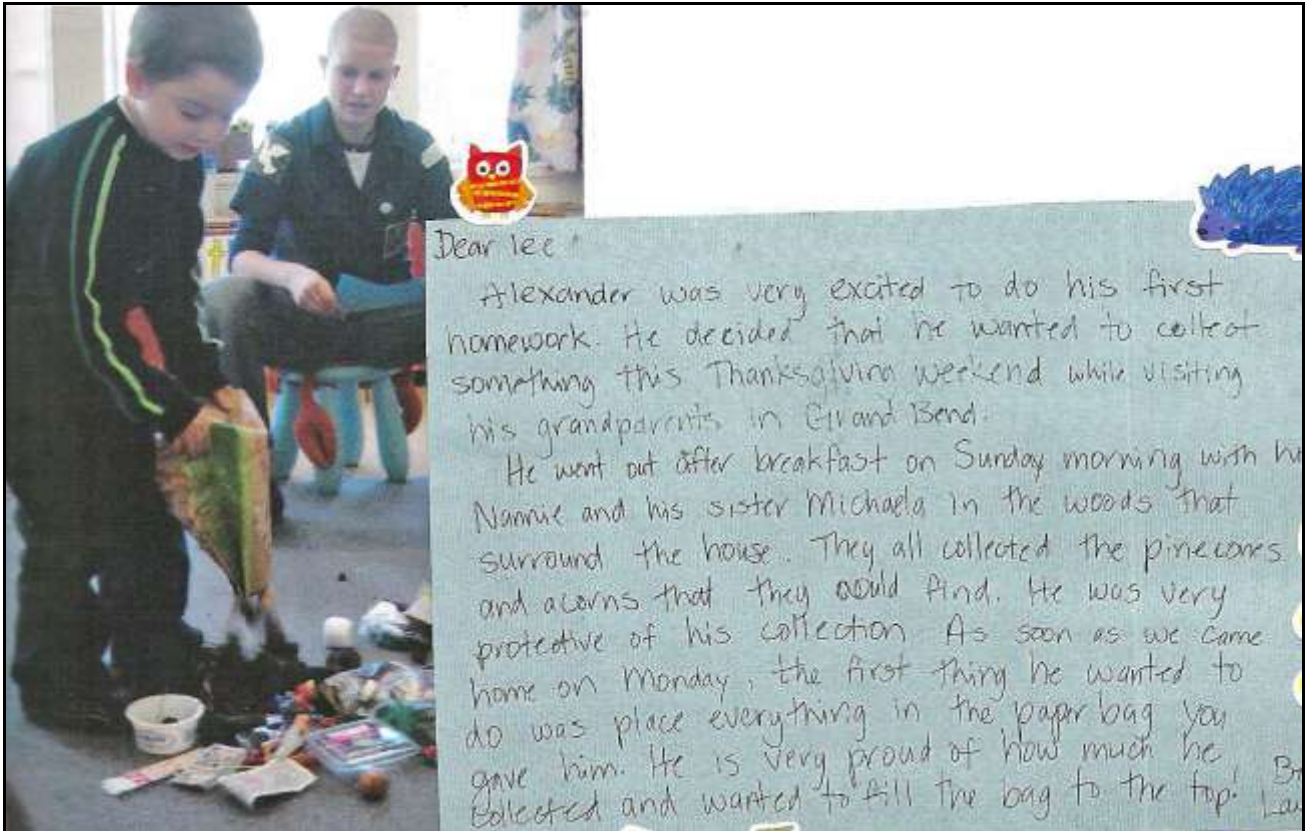
### **lesson extensions / modifications:**

One example of an experience that I have had working through material on a similar topic with this age of students culminated in the collaborative planning and execution of a mural. This mural was then shared with the rest of our school community and told the class’ interpretation of a poem called **THE 100 LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN** by Loris Malaguzzi - *translated by Lella Gandini*.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN, a poem by Loris Malaguzzi, translated by Lella Gandini.  
[www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php](http://www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php)



# visual documentation



**P1. The "OPENING OF THE BAGS CEREMONY" and parent feedback letter from the collection process**

**P2.**



**Enjoying the objects**

**P3.**



**Deciding on categories for sorting**

**P4.**



**Beginning 3D self-portrait**





**P5. Drawing with reference to Oliver Jeffers' LOST AND FOUND**



**P6. VISUAL SHOW AND SHARE** – Junior/Senior Kindergarten Palmerston Avenue Public School



**Examples of paper collage**

Grade 6  
Palmerston Avenue Public School  
2010

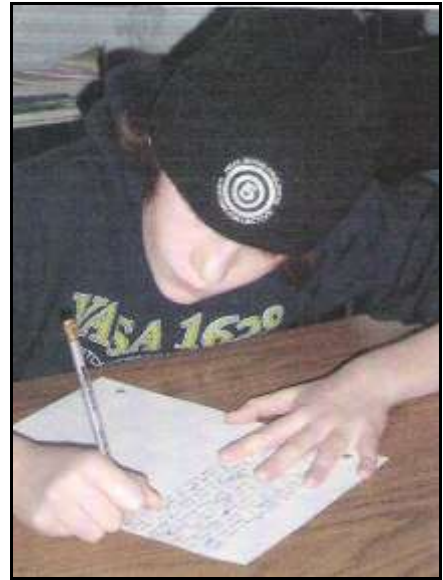
**P7. far left:**  
"tree, water and sky"  
*in process* with elements of pencil  
drawing in background still visible

**P8. left:**  
"outer space"  
completed found paper collage





**P9. CREATIVE VISUALIZATION**



**P10. Writing Response**



**P11. ORAL BRAINSTORMING – post creative visualization process**

Grade 6  
Palmerston Avenue Public School  
2010







**P14. DETAILS: 100 Languages Mural**



Grade 4 - Palmerston Avenue Public School - 2008



**P15. COLLABORATIVE DESIGN AND CREATION PROCESS: Peaceful Dream Mural**  
Junior/Senior Kindergarten - Palmerston Avenue Public School - 2009

**Dear families,**

We have been working hard these last few weeks to learn how to sort and count and share all different sorts of objects together *and now*, we would like to **COLLECT!**

*Will you help us please?*

We are sending home a paper bag for each child to keep their found collections in until they are brought back to school to share with everyone in the classroom. We would like to have a "**GRAND-OPENING-of-the-bags**" event on \_\_\_\_\_, so if you could please have your bags returned to us on or before that date it would be greatly appreciated.

Maybe when looking in a drawer you will find some things that we could use for our project... or when you are outside walking... or even cleaning your room!... Small bits of recycled materials can also be very interesting.

There are few limits to the sorts of things that you could find and bring, but we do ask that they please be small, fit into the bag, and are *clean*. *\*Please be aware that some children at age 3 still have a tendency to put things in their mouths, so please use your discretion with the materials and exclude anything that might be potentially sharp or toxic.*

If you would like some help getting started, here is a list of potential categories of materials that you *could* collect:

- wire
- buttons
- costume jewelry
- string, ribbons and yarn
- old keys and other metallic objects
- **small** machines like watches that don't work
- corks and bottle caps
- fabric remnants
- shells and other natural finds like stones, etc.
- sponges
- wood scraps
- baskets
- cardboard pieces (any type/shape)
- paper - different textures, weights and colours
- screws and bolts
- small mirrors (no jagged edges please)
- **MANY** other types of things...

As a teacher, I would like to investigate what it means to children when they have sought out, discovered, and collected materials *themselves*. Does this affect the way that they use and care for these materials? Are they more thoughtful, focused and pleased with their efforts when they have been engaged in the process right from the beginning?

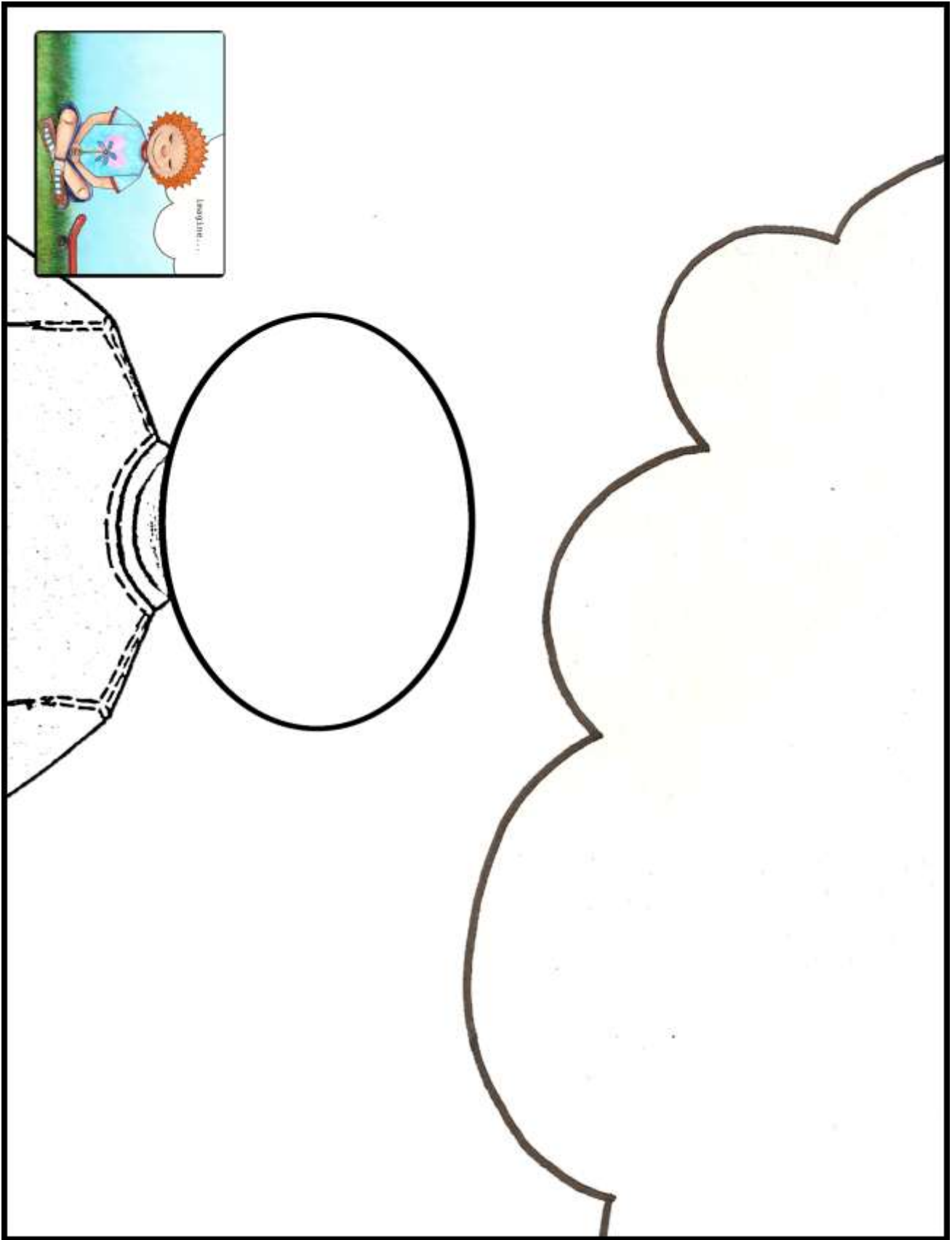
We will be using these materials in a number of different ways throughout the year (*the majority of them to be planned based on the children's' own responses to our early investigations*). The main goal is for the children to become comfortable with their own explorations and confident in their oral, drawn, and eventually written reflections of their creations.

***"The goal is to allow children to become fluent with materials - as if materials were a language"*** - Lella Gandini

I am very interested in any perceptions that you or your child has about the collecting process. Any interesting dialogue or quotes that you are able to record would be very helpful as well. I would be happy to know your thoughts.

With thanks,  
**LEE**





# CREATIVE VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

\* inspired by the work of Jane Hamilton

We are going on a journey together today:

*an imaginary journey into our own imaginations and even further...*

into the collective imagination that happens when each one of us dreams together.

It may feel like a dream, but you will be awake.

You won't be alone on this journey because you will be guided by all of the experiences and discussions that our class has shared together that have led us to this point today. I encourage you to let whatever thoughts and feelings you have simply happen. We are going to gain strength and wisdom and clarity from our journey as we take the time and space to visualize the new world that we aim to create together today.

Your eyes should stay closed, but in your head, you are slowly beginning to see and feel and experience this new world around you...

Where are you sitting in this new world?

It is your favourite space to be and it is the space that you feel most safe ...

What does it look like? Are you inside a building or in a big open space?

What is it about this place that feels best to you?

What can you see?... Smell?... Hear?... What other living creatures are near to you?

In your mind, you can see yourself standing up now from the place that you have been sitting and you begin to walk around and to explore this space ...

What does the ground feel like under your feet?

Are you up high, or underground or... are you even on ground at all?

This is your world and it is a place where everything that you can imagine as good and true and important is an integral part of the way that society works.

There are many, many children here... can you see them all in the world around you? Take a moment now to see and understand and appreciate their differences...

The different ways that they look and move and speak - *yes*, but also see **deeper**...

See all of the different ways that they feel and love and care and dream and express themselves...

These many, many ways of be-ing are the languages of this world.

They are the 100-MILLION ways to be that are all legitimate and important and precious... you can understand and appreciate all of them.

This world of amazing new plants ... and creatures... and buildings

was and is being created by the expression of all these different people working together; by the simple fact that they are allowed and encouraged to exist.

Look all around and you will see how everything that each child imagines can be a part of this world.

The world is being drawn and painted and spoken and built into existence BY children and all of their magnificent ideas even as you are walking around inside of it ...

Take a minute now in silence to notice and remember what you have seen and experienced here today ...

Slowly,

peacefully,

walk back now to the safe and comfortable place in this world where you started this journey.

Settle yourself down there again for a rest.

In just a minute, you will open up your eyes and be back in this classroom and the community of your classmates, but you will not forget the colours and shapes and details of the place that you have been.

This is part of our world together now, and we can re-create it together with our creativity, positive energy, and willingness to really SEE, KNOW and APPRECIATE one another.

Slowly open your eyes,

*stretch,*

and find yourself back in this room.

## resources

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**IN THE SPIRIT OF THE STUDIO: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia**, Teachers College Press, Gandini, Hill, Cadwell and Schwall, 2005

**EMERGENT CURRICULUM IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM: Interpreting the Reggio Emilia Approach in Schools**, Teachers College Press, Carol Anne Wein, 2008

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**FORGET SORROW: An Ancestral Tale**, W. W. Norton & Company, Belle Yang, 2010

**RIEL: A Comic Strip Biography**, Drawn and Quarterly, Chester Brown, 2005

**THE PAPER DRAGON**, Atheneum, Robert Sabuda, 1997

**THE BLIZZARD’S ROBE**, Atheneum, Robert Sabuda, 1999

THE OFFICIAL ERIC CARLE WEBSITE: [www.eric-carle.com/home.html](http://www.eric-carle.com/home.html)

**THE 100 LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN** by Loris Malaguzzi - *translated by Lella Gandini*.  
[www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php](http://www.innovativeteacherproject.org/reggio/poem.php)

**INVISIBLE**, by laidbaqq, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Weo5EQyqxnM>, 2011

\***both/and video** can be viewed online at [www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca)

CURRENT CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS FROM THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION:  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html>

Toronto District School Board’s OFFICE FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION,  
[www.tdsb.on.ca/\\_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10471&menuid=27720&pageid=23861](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10471&menuid=27720&pageid=23861)

# **glossary of terms**<sup>23</sup>

## **ableism:**

Bias and discrimination in favour of those defined as “able-bodied”.

## **assigned sex:**

Assigned Sex refers to the sex a person is assigned at birth and is most likely raised as. It is a more accurate way of referring to what most people still call “biological sex”.

## **classism:**

Bias and discrimination based on the perception of belonging to a particular social class.

## **gender:**

Gender is socially constructed and is based on societal expectations of how a person should behave based on their sex.

## **gender identity:**

A person’s gender identity is linked to their sense of self, It is a person’s own identification of being male, female, intersex; masculine, feminine, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirit or genderqueer among many other terms and combinations of these concepts.

## **gender queer:**

This very recent term was coined by people who experience a very fluid sense of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, and who do not want to be constrained by absolute or static concepts. Instead, they prefer to be open to continuous flow on the gender and sexual orientation continuums.

## **Gender role / presentation / expression:**

The public expression of gender identity; gender role includes everything people do (or at least everything that *others perceive* that they do) to show the world they are male, female, androgynous or ambivalent. It includes sexual signals, dress, hairstyle and manner of moving/interacting. In society, gender roles are usually considered to be masculine for men and feminine for woman, but this is also a construct.

## **gender variant:**

Gender variance refers to challenging the boundaries of socially prescribed norms of what is “typically” male or female through physical appearance, dress and/or behaviour. Also may be referred to as gender bending, gender non-conforming, gender open, or gender independent.

## **homophobia:**

The irrational fear, hatred, prejudice and/or negative attitudes towards homosexuality and people who do not identify as “straight”. Homophobia can take overt and extreme as well as covert and subtle forms. Homophobia includes behaviours such as jokes, name-calling, exclusion, and verbal or physical violence, etc.

## **LGBTTTQI:**

The current manifestation (*frequently shifting*) of a common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered, two-spirit, queer, questioning and intersex individuals/communities.

## **queer:**

Traditionally, this was a derogatory and offensive term for LGBTTTQI people. Many LGBTTTQI people have reclaimed this word and use it proudly and politically to describe their identity. Some transsexual and transgendered people identify as queers; others do not.

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<sup>23</sup> The main source of reference for these definitions was the Toronto District School Board’s OFFICE FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION, [www.tdsb.on.ca/\\_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10471&menuid=27720&pageid=23861](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10471&menuid=27720&pageid=23861)

**Reggio Emilia:**

The **Reggio Emilia Approach** is an educational philosophy focused on preschool and primary education. It was started by Loris Malaguzzi and parents from villages around the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy after World War II. Parents believed that the destruction from the war necessitated a new, quick approach to teaching their children. They felt that it is in the early years of development that children form who they are as individuals. This led to the creation of a program based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment built on the interests of the children through a child-inspired, emergent curriculum.

**sexism:**

All attitudes, procedures and patterns – economic, social and cultural – whose effect, (*regardless of conscious intention*), is to create, maintain and extend the power and privilege of one sex or gender over another.

**transgendered:**

a person whose gender identity is different from his or her assigned sex at birth. It is also often used as an umbrella term to include transsexuals, crossdressers, two-spirit, intersex, genderqueer and transgendered people.

**transsexual:**

A term for a person who has the experience of being a sex other than his or her birth-assigned sex and who typically pursues a medical and legal transformation to embody the sex that they know they actually are. There are transmen (female-to-male transsexuals) and transwomen (male-to-female transsexuals). Transsexual people may undergo a number of procedures to bring their body and public identity in line with their self-identity, including sex hormone therapy, electrolysis treatments, sex reassignment surgeries and legal changes of name and/or sex status.

**transphobia:**

The irrational fear, hatred, prejudice and/or negative attitudes toward transsexual, transgendered and other trans-identified people. Transphobia can take overt and extreme as well as covert and subtle forms. Transphobia includes behaviours such as jokes, name-calling, exclusion, and verbal or physical violence, etc.

**This document was made to be shared.**

**Feel free to share it.**

**Please share often.**

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