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## My Art Autobiography

When thinking about this assignment of describing my first experiences of art, I would have initially said, when I was in elementary school. I used to think of art as being a form of painting or something you would see in a museum. Now I realize that even arts and crafts can be a form of art. According to several dictionaries, the definition of art is anything that is beautiful and appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.

This brought me to remembering my Grandmother and helping or watching her make quilts. I remember picking out colors and watching her piece the patterns together to create a design. I also remember her teaching me to crochet and knit. Initially, I would have thought these were more of a craft, but I now believe they are forms of art. I have quilts and crochet items that my grandmother made, and I would not take anything in the world for them. These things were made with an expression of love, are beautiful, appealing and have more than ordinary significance to me!

My next experience with art was in elementary and middle school. These memories are not as enjoyable or reminiscence as the earlier years with my grandmother. The school I attended didn't have an art teacher, but I vaguely remember doing crafts during Christmas or Mother's Day type crafts. These were cookie cutter type projects where everybody's looked like the example that the teacher made. There was no creativity involved at all. Now I realize

that my teachers didn't know what to teach us about the fundamentals of art, nor did they have time during their day. The only other technique I remember doing myself was paint by number sets, coloring pages, and modeling clay.

During my high school years, I had an art teacher, but I don't remember learning about a different artist or the fundamentals of art. The only thing I remember about this class was doing a teacher directed painting of a clown. After the project was complete, I came into class, and all the pictures were gone except mine. The art teacher had taken all the other paintings to our local mall for an art exhibit. She might have just not seen mine, and it got left behind, but I seriously doubt it. It wasn't good at all, and I remember messing up on his nose. (Insert LOL emoji!) Anytime I tell this story people always laugh, and that's o.k. I do too! I remember the other students laughing about mine being the only one left, and I laughed it off, but to this day I'm insecure about my artistic ability. I don't even want to go with fellow teachers after school hours to a fun activity called "Sips and Strokes" that is led by our art teacher!

My college years was a much better experience. My Introduction to Art History class was structured like a regular history class except it was more fun. I think I enjoyed it because the professor's teaching style matched with my learning style. The course had some structured lecture that, discussed the histories of art, different artists and their methods and techniques used

and going on field trips to museums to visually see various forms of art. I think I also enjoyed it because my husband and I went to Paris, France while I was taking this class and I got to visit art museums like, The Louvre and it made what I was learning relevant. For example, Leonardi de Vinci was one of the artists that I was fascinated with, and I will never forget seeing some of his sketches, drawings, and the Mona Lisa.

Reflecting on my past art experiences and identifying the general characteristics that made my art experiences meaningful were the times that I could create without being judged or criticized (for example with my Grandmother). She gave me guidance and suggestions but allowed me to pick and design the pattern I wanted in the quilts we made. When my college professor made art relevant by enabling our hands-on experiences and going on field trips to museums allowed me to see that what may be art to one person may not be art to someone else. The turn-off experiences were when I was told to do art one way. For example, being instructed to follow a pattern and that if mine didn't look like everyone else's, it wasn't wrong. This intimidated me, made me feel insecure in my abilities and I didn't even want to try anymore.

When I first began teaching, I taught fifth grade and our school didn't have an art teacher. I did an " Artist of the Month." We would research information about the artist the students loved learning them. In fact, it seemed the stranger or more different the artist was the more the students wanted to

learn about them. I had a proud teacher moment when I saw a previous student that is now in college, and she told me that she has the painting we made of Vincent Van Gough's Starry Night hanging in her room. She then proceeded to tell me that she was going to school to be an art teacher.

I currently teach second grade and our school has an art teacher. I've discussed different artists when the subject comes up. Since I've been taking STEAM classes and learned different ways to incorporate different arts into my lessons I can't wait to share this with my students. I plan to demonstrate to students that just like in math and any other subject there is no specific way to do an art project. I want the students to feel free to express their thoughts and feelings into their projects and share their ideas with the rest of the class. Also, if their design isn't like they want, that just like in the Engineering Design Process they can regroup and make changes. I also hope to work with our art teacher and do some projects together.

My definition of art is anything original that someone creates that brings enjoyment to their life. Art can be in many forms. For example, it can be paintings, sculptures, music or even what some consider arts and crafts. Not everyone may like your art, but that doesn't matter if it's art to the person creating it. I'm looking forward to integrating art into my STEAM classes. After my reflection on this, I'm seriously thinking about going with my friends to the next "Sips and Strokes" to paint a clown and sending a picture of it to my high school art teacher 😊

