

Let me preface this by saying that I do not have much artistic talent. I was more of an athletic musician rather than an artist in school. That being said, I do have some wonderful memories of my art educational experience.

One of the biggest memories I have of my art class while in elementary school was that of my art teacher, Mr. Snyder. In fact, since my school district was in a rural setting and very small, Mr. Snyder was my art teacher from kindergarten up until the time I graduated. He made art fun with his enthusiastic personality and the fast pace of his instruction. I was in awe of how he could create such wonderful art projects. Every year, on the very first art class of school, Mr. Snyder would teach his students that each student's artwork will look different but each one has potential to be a masterpiece. His lessons focused more on the creative processes used rather than the finished product. This aspect was most beneficial to me.

My best piece of artwork was that of a picture which I had to transpose onto my own sheet of paper. I grew up on a farm so of course I chose one that included a cow! This particular picture was that of a nun walking a large dairy cow. I drew this picture and made it into black and white so that I could practice my shading techniques. I was so proud of this picture so my parents had it professionally framed and it is still hanging in their house. When I look at that picture, I remember how Mr. Snyder let us make our own choices about the piece.

I also remember how I loved painting when I was little. I loved mixing the colors to make new colors and starting to paint without even really knowing what the piece would look like after I was finished. Again, it was that freedom of choosing what I did with my artwork that I really enjoyed. Even to this day, I love painting, even though lately it has been painting the walls of my home instead of a canvas.

There were various times though, where I was anxious and embarrassed with my art talents. Free drawing is not something that I have the ability to do and have it turn out well. Many projects throughout my art experiences required me to sketch or free draw my assignment. I remember going through many, many erasers because of the amount of erasing I did. To this day, I always buy a large wedge eraser for myself as well as my classroom because I know there will be plenty of erasing happening when sketching their blueprints.

When looking back on my memories of art, I feel like the art projects and experiences that I think of fondly were those where I had the choice of what I was to create. This might have included a picture that I could create with different mediums or an open-ended project that had to use a specific material. It harnessed the creativity inside me by allowing me to think of endless possibilities in which to complete the assignment. Since then, in my teaching experiences as well as with my own children, I have utilized the creativity that I gained throughout my art experiences.

Not all moments I remember fondly. Like I stated at the beginning, besides my creative thinking, I have little artistic ability. I was in awe of my art teacher and how many of my classmates (and baby sister) could just draw this masterpiece by hand. With some projects, I became so stressed out because it included an aspect of art that I was not particularly good at. I think the reason for these feelings were because I was very successful in school with academics, music, and athletics. It was difficult for me to accept that I was not as successful in art. This hindered my view of some of my art experiences.

I would define art as a way for people to express themselves; their creativity, and their imagination. When I first started with my experiences in art, I viewed it as something people did for fun, as a hobby. However, my art experiences since the beginning of school until recently,

have changed my views and I now view art as a way to express an individual's creativity in any way they are able. Children are naturally creative, it is up to those around them to further push their creativity and allow them to achieve goals that express who they are. This quote by Meri Cherry sums up what I feel, not only about art, but about what STEAM does for those who I encounter daily in school and out of school, "The act of creating for young children is about the process, not the outcome. Children need to explore, to take risks, make their own choices. This is the richness of creativity. This is the groundwork for future problem solvers."

References

Cherry, Meri (2020). Meri Cherry Art Studio. [https://mericherry.com/page/30/?wordfence\\_logHuman=1&hid=3594A243999877F4E58A3827AA068469](https://mericherry.com/page/30/?wordfence_logHuman=1&hid=3594A243999877F4E58A3827AA068469)