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A Mindfulness and Contemplative Inquiry Coursefor Pre-Service Art Educators

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for Pre-Service Art Educators

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ABSTRACT

A Mindfulness and Contemplative Inquiry Course
for Pre-Service Art Educators

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This research project incorporates a series of mindfulness and contemplative workshops within the established curriculum of an advanced art studio methods course for pre-service art educators. Educational research studies suggest that individuals who complete a mindfulness course of study experience increased mental and physical stamina; enhanced memory retention; and decreased irritability, anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. Research also indicates that individuals who practice mindfulness have improved relationships and bolstered immune systems (Williams & Penman, 2012. These studies suggest that mindfulness training can make positive contributions to teaching and learning, enabling teachers and students to perform at their best capacity in their respective roles. Many studies hypothesized that mindfulness training would enhance student well-being and learning in particular. The hypothesis of the current study was that an arts-integrated mindfulness curriculum will enhance student learning, art practice, and attitudes toward teaching and learning. This was an exploratory study designed to investigate possible connections between art-making and mindfulness.

Keywords: mindfulness, self-inquiry, teacher preparation, art education, art practice

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Mindfulness" is a word that appears frequently in current media, books, and research. Twenty years ago it was relatively rare to encounter mindfulness in the public spectrum, but today it seems to surface on just about everything from T-shirts to apps to page-a-day calendars. According to author Thomas Armstrong, mindfulness embodies the following:

> The essence of mindfulness is simple: by attending to the present moment with an attitude of acceptance, openness, and curiosity, we can train our minds, regulate our emotions, control our behaviors, and cultivate healthier relationships with the people and events arounds us. (2019, p. 31)

Schools are turning toward implementing mindfulness courses for their students and teachers into their curricula, a trend that is garnering both praise and criticism (Moreno, 2017). This research explores the effects of a mindfulness curriculum and the practice of mindfulness (as defined in this paragraph) on teaching and learning within an arts-based methods course for pre-service educators.

The current movement of self-inquiry in education stems from a deep questioning of the established modernist climate focused on end results, societal gains, and the iconic factory-based system (Carson & Sumara, 2001). Educational theorist Parker J. Palmer consistently draws parallels between wholeness, spirituality, and teacher health and effectiveness. In describing the moral aspects of teaching, he says, "The external causes of our moral indifference are a fragmented mass society that leaves us isolated and afraid, an economic system that puts the rights of capital before the rights of people, and a political process that makes citizens into ciphers" (2004, p. 38).

Other scholars, including Dr. Darlene Mininni of UCLA, have noticed the gap between the self and education. Based on her 15 years of research and teaching in the UCLA Arthur Ashe Health and Wellness Center, Mininni (2005) recommends the meditative arts as an important component of teaching. She writes of the countless resources spent illuminating the external world for students—science, mathematics, computer technology, biology, geography, and literature—but notes the lack of attention paid to caring for the emotional dimensions of self. These are essential subjects, each important in its own realm, but the reality is the human brain is wired to connect with other humans in a fundamentally emotional schema (2005, p. xviii). Research indicates that the emotional and social aspects of school are fundamental aspects of learning (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2019).

In her influential book *The Soul of Education* (2000), Rachael Kessler, advocate for holistic education for adolescents, warns that unless educational systems learn to acknowledge the whole self, students will continue to be at an increased risk for anxiety, depression, numbing addictions, violence, and suicide. Our rapidly changing, time-scarce, technological culture increases pressure on students in the K–12 setting to score higher, achieve more, and compete more perfectly on a global platform (Brown, 2012). Meanwhile, recess and breaks at many schools are being reduced or eliminated altogether, as kindergarten has taken on the looks of first grade (Bassok, 2016). Too often students and teachers are deeply immersed in digital media, entertainment, the social pressure inherent in social media, increased demands on their time, and heightened expectations in their roles and responsibilities. The increasingly mechanized, automated, socially demanding landscape is causing elevated stress levels, disillusionment, disconnection from self and environment, distraction, addictions, anxiety, and depression.

The challenges of contemporary life have driven educational reformers to begin to build curriculum and teaching around the concept of reclaiming the self, for both teachers and students. Educational scholars are reevaluating the workings of self-identity in the classroom setting. Oren Ergas, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Beit Berl College and a teaching fellow at the School of Education at Hebrew University, recently suggested that teachers need to reclaim their sense of purpose and identity through mindfulness and contemplative inquiry. In his research, Ergas implements mindfulness practice as the means to guide teachers "to step outside," "reclaim self," and "return with a difference" (2017, p. 222). Ergas, among others, including Nel Noddings (2006), William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet (2014), reemphasizes self-knowledge in education and the importance of self-knowledge in teacher education.

British educator Richard Burnett has implemented a Mindfulness in Schools Program (MiSP), endeavoring to empower teachers and students with the mindfulness tools necessary to see them through the daily stresses they face. Burnett's research indicates that children who participated in mindfulness workshops were better prepared to navigate the stresses of school and reported higher states of emotional well-being compared to students not participating in a mindfulness program (Burnett, 2011). Research indicates that individuals who complete an eight-week mindfulness course experience increased mental and physical stamina; enhanced memory retention; and decreased irritability, anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. In addition, individuals who practice mindfulness have improved relationships and bolstered immune systems (Williams & Penman, 2011). Each of these mindfulness benefits could contribute positively to teaching and learning, enabling teachers and students to perform at their best capacity in their respective roles.

Moreno's (2017) study examining the effectiveness of mindfulness in schools suggests that, "While the body of evidence surrounding mindfulness-based interventions in schools is both young and small, existing studies employing rigorous methodology have shown promise for benefitting children's attention skills, social-emotional well-being, and even academic performance" (p. 101). My intervention, which consists of a self-inquiry approach to mindfulness practice within a pre-service art education course, endeavored to empower teachers with mindfulness tools that may enhance their ability to teach, learn, and navigate the daily stresses they face. The mindful curricula I implemented was designed to create a container for open, transformative, individual learning and practice in the educational setting for both teachers and students.

Notwithstanding the reported benefits of mindfulness for teachers, students, and the general public alike, little research has studied mindfulness for college students. My project incorporated a mindfulness curriculum into an existing Art Ed 450 course, Advanced Secondary Student Teaching Methods for Art Education. The course already includes a substantial unit on the spiritual dimensions of art and education, which has numerous overlaps with the methodologies associated with mindfulness. Art has long been connected to the expression of self and the understanding of identity, hence integrating this mindfulness material augments existing course content. In addition, art also has important connections to social and emotional learning (Farrington et al., 2019; Lowenfeld, 1947; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964), integral components of self-inquiry.

The intent of this project was to integrate classroom art experiences with practices of mindfulness and provide opportunities for students and teacher to explore relationships between mindfulness and art practices. I viewed this as a lived practice with students and instructor

engaged in transformative learning experiences (Ergas, 2017; Kegan, 1982; Mezirow, 2000). An important assumption that guided this study was that an integrated mindfulness practice has the potential to be self-illuminating and could positively influence my own teaching practice. Hence, I was also looking at my teaching practice within the context of mindfulness training.

This is a qualitative, exploratory study of how a deliberately designed mindfulness training program might be implemented or integrated into a teaching methods course and how such a program might influence my own teaching and learning as well as the learning of the students within the course. I used an action research methodology since I was interested in improving my own practice and intended to do at least two iterations of the project.

This study took place over the course of two 15-week semesters, with the first semester serving as a pilot study designed to test curricular precepts. I worked closely with the instructor of this course, Dr. Mark Graham, who is also a coresearcher and my advisor on this project.

The following research questions guided my inquiry:

1. How might mindfulness be effectively taught and practiced within a visual arts class?
2. How might an exploration of ideas and practices associated with mindfulness in an arts method course influence student learning and attitudes toward teaching and learning, perceptions of self, and art practice?
3. How does designing, teaching, practicing, and evaluating mindfulness training within the Art Ed 450 curriculum influence the instructor's teaching practice and awareness of self?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

"Mindfulness" is a term that appears consistently in current media, books, and research (Nepo, 2011; Palmer, 1998) and in the writing of prominent spiritual leaders, including the 14th Dalai Lama. Although there are many approaches and definitions of mindfulness, it is generally defined as a state of open and active attention to the present (Armstrong, 2019).

Among other things, mindfulness in the context of personal development and education means living in the moment and being fully awake to experience. The rationale for incorporating mindfulness training in schools is to develop the ability to attend to important intellectual and emotional issues. The benefits of mindfulness training in schools has been the subject of numerous studies, which suggest that adapting mindfulness training to educational contexts can yield benefits to both teachers and students (Graham, 2012, 2014; Kabat-Zinn, 2005, 2014; Williams & Penman, 2011). Most of the programs studied involve an extended mindfulness intervention within the regular school day over the course of several weeks.

As educators have perceived the benefits of mindfulness for themselves and their students, a growing movement has begun to emerge. For example, "Mindfulness in Education: Using and Teaching Mindfulness in Schools" was the subject of the March/April 2017 issue of *Childhood Education*, the journal of the Association for Childhood Education International. Contributing authors cited numerous studies that support mindfulness in the classroom, including benefits such as emotional regulation, increased attention skills, cognitive development, and increased immune function (Killoran, 2014). Building on these types of supportive findings, teachers are creating organizations to provide instruction and mentoring in mindfulness to teachers and students.

These studies are complemented by research into the spiritual dimensions of education and holistic education (Graham, 2012, 2014). Holistic education is based on the premise that individuals find identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections, including connections to community, the natural world, and spiritual values (Miller, 2005). Holistic education aims to call forth an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning and is often seen as a counterbalance to overly rationalistic or technocratic approaches to schooling. Hence this study looks at the convergence of the spiritual dimensions of art education, holistic education, and mindfulness training. An important question that the study addresses is how a course of mindfulness training or experiences might be integrated into a pedagogical arts methods course. This is a curriculum design or learning design problem that will be informed by student responses to the course's learning experiences. In addition to exploring how such a course of study might be implemented, this study also examines how both the process of planning and implementing the course influences the instructor's teaching practice and student learning.

The current resurgence of mindfulness in Western 21st-century culture may seem a mystery as mindfulness originated with Eastern Buddhist philosophy 2,500 years ago, but considering the effects of the Industrial Revolution, materialism, consumerism, and secularism, it is not surprising to see mindfulness serving as a possible, powerful counterbalance in mainstream society today. Educational ideas that overlap with holistic education and mindfulness include the ideas of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), *play* (Brown, 2012), and a *growth mindset* (Dweck, 2017). Mindfulness is fast becoming a popular response to the challenges of contemporary life in the public, private, and corporate realms of the West; perhaps its greatest impact will be within the walls of schools as thousands of educators and students begin to practice it.

Mindfulness Defined

There are myriad definitions of mindfulness circulating in both academia and popular culture. Educators Daniel P. Barbezat, professor of economics and European studies at Amherst College, and Mirabai Bush, cofounder of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, provide a useful definition of mindfulness in their coauthored book entitled *Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning* (2014):

> In Chinese, the word for mindfulness is a composite: the character for now is drawn atop the character for heart/mind. Mindfulness is both a process (mindfulness practice) and an outcome (mindful awareness). It begins with the simple act of paying attention with care and respect. Mindfulness practices are found in many traditions around the world. The word mindfulness can mean something particular in each of these traditions, so as a shorthand definition, many academics use the one inspired by Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR): the awareness that arises by paying attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally. (2014, p. 95)

In Buddhist traditions, mindfulness springs from the teachings of Buddha, who during the fifth century BC taught in northeast India and "offered his teaching, called the Dhamma (Sanskrit Dharma), not as a set of doctrines demanding belief but as a body of principles and practices that sustain human beings in their quest for happiness and spiritual freedom" (Williams, & Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 21). The Dharma, or the teachings of Buddha, are represented symbolically as an eight-armed wheel, with "right mindfulness" and "right concentration" comprising the seventh and eighth spokes on the wheel. As cited in Williams and Kabat-Zinn,

Bhikkhu Bodhi, American Buddhist monk and author, describes the goal of Buddhist practice as follows:

> The Buddha indicates the goal of the practice to be the extinction of suffering and the attainment of nibbäna (Sanskrit nirvärJa), a state of transcendent bliss and peace. The method is the four satipatthänas, the four establishments of mindfulness. From the formula for right mindfulness, we can deduce two important facts about the practice, one pertaining to its objective side, the other to its subjective side. On the objective side, we see that right mindfulness involves the reflexive contemplation of one's own experience, subsumed under the four objective domains of the body, feelings, states of mind, and experiential phenomena. (2011, p. 21)

To summarize Bodhi's statement, mindfulness from Buddhist tradition is concerned with the contemplative inquiry of the states of mind, body, emotion, and outer experiences combined with an alert, observant lens of "the now." This type of epistemology offers a powerful means of conscious living, a possible solution to the postmodern disillusionment and dystopian outlook prevalent in media and society today.

Mindfulness Applications

Not until the 1990s did mindfulness begin to have recognizable impact as a viable means of increased well-being, mostly due to Kabat-Zinn, who, as mentioned previously, is currently the Executive Director of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn also founded and directed the Stress Reduction Clinic and is a Professor of Medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn states:

> Interest and activity (of mindfulness) is no longer limited to the discipline of behavioural medicine, or mind/body medicine, or even medicine. Major developments are now occurring in clinical and health psychology, cognitive therapy, and neuroscience, and increasingly, there is growing interest, although presently at a lower level, in primary and secondary education, higher education, the law, business, and leadership. (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 2)

Kabat-Zinn's research developing mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) working with patients at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and his prolific writing on the subject have propelled mindfulness forward in the 21st century as a substantial tool for well-being with far-reaching global impact, specifically in science and education.

Mindfulness and science. In recent years Buddhist monks have been studied as part of neuroscience research into the effects of meditation. The 14th Dalai Lama speaks about the joining of Western science and Buddhism as follows:

> One of the unique things about Buddhism, particularly in the Sanskrit tradition, is that investigation and experiment play a very important part. Many troubles come out of ignorance, and the only antidote to ignorance is knowledge. Knowledge means a clear understanding of reality, which must come through investigation and experiment. In ancient times, the Nalanda masters 14 carried out these investigations mainly through logic and human thought, and perhaps in some cases through meditation. In modern times, there is another way to find out about reality: with help of equipment. I think both science and Buddhist investigation are actually trying to find reality. (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Kabat-Zinn, Davidson, & Houshmand, 2012, p. 22)

People have been looking to the Dalai Lama for discernment for over half a century, and here, as usual, his words prove to be wise counsel: inquiry, experience, and logical observation are critical to well-being. Robert Sapolsky, one of the world's foremost researchers on stress and neurobiology, discussed his findings at a conference with the Dalai Lama, believing that mindfulness is an important inroad for his research on understanding stress and stress management. Sapolsky relates:

> Few of us will succumb to cholera, smallpox, or scarlet fever. Instead, we die from diseases of our Westernized lifestyle, which are often compounded by stress. When the stress response is mobilized by the body because of a typical mammalian stressor (for example, a sprint to flee from a predator), it is highly adaptive. However, when activated in the modern manner of Westernized humans (that is, chronic psychosocial stress), it is pathogenic. (qtd. in Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho et al., 2012, p. 77)

It is imperative that concepts such as lifestyle and overall stress become subjects that educators care deeply about in order to promote health and well-being through practices like mindfulness in the classroom setting.

Mindfulness in Education

Neuroscientists are also considering mindfulness as it relates to the brain's neuroplasticity, which affects cognition, making mindfulness of possible importance in the classroom. Mirabai Bush states:

> Educators are interested in the calming, quieting, focusing qualities of mindfulness that help students reduce stress and become more patient and present in the classroom, but they are also interested in how that calm stability can positively affect cognitive functions

> like attention, working memory, and long-term memory, and lead eventually toward understanding and wisdom. (2011, p. 184)

In addition to the scientific and educational research currently underway regarding mindfulness and how it may influence overall well-being, lifespan, and learning, educational research is exploring mindfulness as a basis for self-inquiry and teaching.

Self-Inquiry in Education

The concept of self-inquiry in education incorporates mindfulness practices within the classroom in order to reclaim teachers' images of self within their educational practiceMarshall McLuhan, Canadian philosopher and predicter of the internet, coined the phrase, "The medium is the message" (qtd. in Meadow, 2006, p. 101). In his text *Messages, Meanings, and Symbols*, Professor Charles T. Meadow (2006) of the University of Toronto discusses the important connection between the sender and the receiver of information and how medium, Latin for "middle," is the substrate. In other words, it is not what is being transmitted but how the information comes through that is critical because it changes our mind and senses, influencing our ways of knowing and being. In a similar framing of communicating knowledge, educator and author Parker J. Palmer states, "We teach who we are" (2004, p. 2). Self-inquiry is critical to education and pedagogy because the teacher becomes the lens through which information transfers to the students.

Many parents know that beyond the institution their child may be attending lies the paramount question of who is teaching their child. If teachers are oblivious to their own sense of self and identity, are distracted in a media-driven climate, and are running on an automatic-pilot mode of doing, how do they instruct students in direct and meaningful ways that will ignite real curiosity to know?

As mentioned, Ergas performs research that looks at how teachers perceive themselves. He states:

> Only if reflection is intentionally pushed from solving technical problems to questions like: "what meaning does this problem have for *me*?", "what kind of problem solver am I?", "what personal and social meaning does my solution bring about?", "How am I promoting a just and kind society based on it?", and most importantly "*who am I* and *how am I connected to you*?" Does "self" become an end in its own right and not merely an instrument? (2017, p. 257)

Ergas created a mindfulness course, "Education, Mindfulness, and Self" in which students become familiar with standing meditations, silence, and journaling in a fourteen-session course. He describes the journaling portion as follows:

> The practice is accompanied by pre-and post-journaling in which we describe our experiences before and after the mindfulness practice session. The accumulation of these notes becomes an autobiography that depicts "who I am: before the practice, who I was while I practiced, and who I am now after practice." This journal, as students are instructed at the beginning of the course, serves as a basis for their final project." (2017, p. 223)

Clearly Ergas, in his work in contemplative education, stresses the importance of what he defines as the two sides of education, the secular and the individual and believes that both are important aspects in learning.

Thomas Armstrong, executive director of the American Institute for Learning and Human Development, has published several books addressing how teachers can implement mindfulness in their classrooms, emphasizing that mindfulness can be a critical tool in educational settings as

it “positively affects both functional and structural areas of key brain centers” (2019, p. 20). Armstrong discusses the complex connections between neuroscience and mindfulness, explaining that mindfulness appears to alter the stress-producing pathways of the brain and change the actual structures of the brain, including aspects of the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the insula. Important components in Armstrong’s recommendations for mindfulness in schools center around formal and informal mindfulness practices, the former including mindful breathing, walking, eating, and stretching, while the latter may include doing the dishes, taking out the trash, or using technology.

Mirabai Bush has examined several examples of mindfulness curriculum in higher education created by both Buddhist scholars and scholars in various disciplines from architecture to chemistry to law. Bush describes how Daniel Barbezat at Amherst College utilizes mindfulness practice in a behavioral economics course:

> Barbezat first helps students develop one-pointed awareness and then guides them through meditations in which he evokes emotions like regret. He then asks them to explore the feeling of regret and shows how it is part of even small decisions—will I regret taking an umbrella today if it does not rain? How does that factor into my decision to take it or not? How does it factor into decisions about what I buy, from a chocolate bar (will I regret eating it because of the calories or will I regret not eating it because it is so delicious?) to a house? Being aware of arising thoughts and emotions becomes essential to making good economic decisions at every level, or at least to having more choices. (2011, p. 195)

Bush also notes Professor Anne Beffel of Syracuse University and her course entitled “Contemplative Arts and Society.” A student in Beffel’s course wrote:

> Before this class, I found myself often judging my work while I was creating. I had a hard time staying in the present moment and allowing myself to relax and enjoy the process. I worried about what others would think about my art. In this course, I realized that I have gotten away from what I believe to be true art: art that completes me as an artist. I wanted to get back to the stage where I didn't notice the judgmental opinions of others and simply did art for myself—connected and accepting. (Bush, 2011, pp. 189–190)

Critics of Mindfulness

While many qualitative studies of mindfulness in education indicate positive results with students, like the student mentioned in the previous paragraph who noted increased confidence, there is concern that a "shadow" can accompany a secular approach to mindfulness, in which mindfulness becomes merely a means to the West's capitalistic ends (Purser & Loy, 2013). *Time* magazine recently published an article entitled "How We Ruined Mindfulness," in which Roman Krznaric, a social philosopher in the United Kingdom and author of *Carpe Diem: Seizing the Day in a Distracted World*, writes about interviewing Matthew Ricard, a preeminent Buddhist monk who expressed his concerns about the West's secular diversion of Buddhist mindfulness as follows:

> There are a lot of people speaking about mindfulness, but the risk is that it's taken too literally—to just 'be mindful.' Well, you could have a very mindful sniper and a mindful psychopath. It's true! A sniper needs to be so focused, never distracted, very calm, always bringing back his attention to the present moment. And non-judgmental—just kill people and no judgment. That could happen! (Krznaric, 2017)

Ricard's half-serious, half-joking observation merits contemplation as mindfulness is being swept into arenas such as military training and the corporate world at large, the former with the label "McMindfulness." Mind training can become an end to a material means that has little to do with altruism and higher ways of learning (Krznaric, 2017).

Considering Ricard's statements regarding mindfulness in education specifically, it may be that as long as educational models in the West are factory-based frameworks feeding a capitalistic society, mindfulness will only sharpen the saw of materialism and self-indulgence. However, at the grass roots level of qualitative, holistic, educational research, mindfulness curricula tend to contain concepts of self-reflection via some type of formal/informal meditation and journaling that endeavor to bring an increased state of individual well-being and positive contribution to society as well as an expanded understanding of delineated course material.

Mindfulness in Art Practice

In the art discipline, artists past and present have utilized mindfulness in their work. Artists such as Marina Abromavic, David Lynch, Leonard Cohen, Yoko Ono, and Jack Kerouac have included mindfulness in their artistic practice. The Rubin Museum of Art (2015) recently ran an exhibition illustrating these particular artists and their connection to meditation. Contemporary artists Heather Hansen and Tony Orrico have illustrated what breath, the body, repetition, paper, and charcoal can produce, while artists like Ann Hamilton, Ani Lui, Sissel Tolaas, and Cevdet Erek work with the senses to explore new frontiers in art. This is just a sprinkling of artists who have used concepts of mindfulness to approach their artistic ground.

Curricular Models for Mindfulness and Art

Beyond artists working with meditative processes, art educators are also exploring the methods of mindfulness. In this section, I offer a deeper view of their respective mindfulness and

art curricula, quoting their methods and views extensively in order to provide greater clarity about the possible relationships between mindfulness and art-making as well as curricular possibilities. Art education professors Jodi Patterson of Eastern Washington University and Sally Armstrong Gradle of Southern Illinois University are incorporating mindfulness into their curriculums.

In Patterson's work with teacher candidates, she describes how mindfulness and art naturally coexist:

> The mindfulness process is akin to the art-making process. Both are solitary undertakings that often operate in the context of silence; both require practice to help direct attention more skillfully. The artist and the meditative practitioner intensely and purposefully organize his/her thoughts, feelings, observations and experiences. In both processes, one is witnessing awareness and grounding the Self in contemplative and creative practices. (2015, p. 190)

Art, like many other hand crafts, involves repetition and eye-hand coordination, which can provide a meditative experience for students. For example, Patterson discusses how observational drawing can foster mindfulness and build confidence:

> As students pass through the laddering process of observational drawing (blind contour, contour, shape, perspective, value, texture), it reminds them to pay attention to not only how to model the processes, but also how they feel while they are learning new skills. Ask them to think about their thoughts so that they may better empathize with their future students, and to pay attention to how their classmates respond and grow as artists too. Invariably, their drawing and observational skills grow exponentially in just a few short

> weeks. They realize drawing is something to practice, not something that just magically emerges. Their ability to focus lengthens. (2015, p. 186)

In addition, Patterson relates, "The primary elements of mindfulness practice come through breathwork, physical exercise and sensory activities—all accessible through meaningful art-making opportunities" (2015, p. 186).

Patterson connects ritual to mindfulness by giving students an interesting visual prompt to draw at the start of each class. This not only incorporates a mindfulness routine into each class but also gives students time to transition into the class climate of drawing and thinking independently. She describes the importance of ritual in a classroom:

> Ritual allows the outside stress and chaos that might surround a student to dissipate as he/she transitions into the school day. Mindful rituals can enhance students' capacity of self-regulation of attention, impulse and emotions—tasks teachers sometimes wrongly assume children know how to manage. Students need time to focus and settle in to the process of learning as negative emotions about things outside of the classroom can interfere with the student's ability to focus on tasks at school. (2015, p. 188)

Patterson concludes, "Offering consistent opportunities for mindful art-making is predictable and stabilizing for children; it builds skills, brains, attention spans and confidence" (2015, p. 188).

Patterson's emphasis on distilling mindful practices based on the source of the subject (in this case art) as well as infusing community ritual into curricular learning outcomes could be a powerful tool for educators in any field.

Professor Sally Armstrong Gradle of Southern Illinois University examines "intuitive vision" via concepts of mindfulness in her course entitled "Art and World Making." She discusses this process as follows:

> By beginning with intuitive vision, something that could be cultivated within the self, an attentive mind might appreciate both form and content, despite the lacunas of content knowledge and facts of historical significance. We began with ideas on focus, attention, perception and being fully present in the moment, which were gleaned from outstanding thinkers who have made a daily practice of observing the world. (2011, p. 139)

Gradle describes how students were encouraged to explore different types of mindfulness practices, such as walking meditations; the Alexander Technique; and meditations with taste, texture, and so forth. Students then applied individual learning observations gained via these meditations to their art practice. Gradle describes her course in the following way:

> The beginning of the course established a pattern of mindful attention that students could later apply when looking at art. Several exercises from previously mentioned scholars were encouraged in order to foster an attentiveness to being present in the moment. Students wrote about and shared the experiences that helped them develop a more consistent, mindful practice. For example, one individual noticed that trying to have an experience in which she was aware of her surroundings and able to stay completely focused was impossible when she was immersed in her usual routine. Taking a walk through the campus woods, however, took her out of her previous pattern, and she began to relax and focus on objects in her immediate surroundings. Her newfound ability to relax in the presence of the unfamiliar was a skill she felt she could use in viewing unfamiliar artwork. Another student wrote about noticing the contrasting textures of foods (bananas and cereal) in his mouth, and then considered that observing contrasts in a work of art and his response to them might be one way he could “enter” a work that was unusual. (2011, p. 141)

While it may seem simple or unimportant, a student's ability to be aware in the present moment and make mindful connections to their subject of study can be transformative.

Gradle also examined a meditative process wherein a specific artwork of the student's choice was to be viewed for ten minutes each day for seven days, with reflective writing following each meditative session. She discusses the process as follows:

> The general instructions given were: After you settle in to breathing and relaxing, letting go of everything else that is clamouring for your attention, begin to look at the artwork. Notice what draws you into the image first. What do you wonder about as you view the image? What seems marvelous, mysterious, still beyond comprehension, yet curiously fascinating? What delights you or perplexes you? What do you appreciate? What has changed for you in the image since the last time you viewed it? Does anything about the image connect you with your experiences? (2011, p. 142)

Through her experiences combining mindfulness practices and art curriculum, Gradle found that her students presented increased abilities to view art. She states:

> Understanding the link between focus, a calm mind, and insight or awareness as a connection between the world around them and within them appeared to be useful in viewing. As the readings, activities and discussions fleshed out the world of the artist or culture, this became evident in their written appreciation as well. (2011, p. 143)

Both Patterson and Gradle illustrate how mindfulness can be a transformative tool in the art education classroom, creating vibrant learning environments and stimulating individual growth.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This is a qualitative, exploratory study that includes my own autobiographical reflections. Due to the holistic, reflective, individual, and transformative nature of mindfulness, action research as a living practice is a strong choice of methodology for my research.

Action Research

Action research in general aligns with qualitative concepts such as inquiry and understanding of behavior, broad perceptions of a concept, research that embeds the values of the researcher, data based on undetermined answers to questions, and data collection that drives the design of inquiry (Grady, 1998). Historically, action research developed from individual forerunners such as John Collier (Gittler & Collier, 1956), Kurt Lewin (1945), and Paulo Freire (1970), who sought in their individual realms to promote living conditions of society as a whole using communal society as a lens and frame of reference for democratic-driven change.

Dr. Paulo Freire, the father of "critical consciousness" and author of the groundbreaking *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is a vital figure in my research process and approach. Freire sparked revolutionary reform in global education with what is known as "critical pedagogy" (Illeris, 2009). Reading his books influenced me to think about how students experience their everyday lives, perhaps in some way illiterate to the existence of their daily thoughts and overall awareness of their bodies. I wanted to raise students' daily awareness of their thoughts and physical circumstances and increase their capacity to cultivate their own well-being. Freire's work focused on the oppressed and their oppressors and the idea that only the oppressed are in a position to bring about the humanity of both. Freire explains:

> To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes

> possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation. Although the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting both the oppressor and those whom they oppress, it is the latter who must, from their stifled humanity, wage for both the struggle for a fuller humanity; the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle. (2018, p. 21)

I drew parallels to mindfulness from Freire's words as stated above. Couldn't an individual's mind be both an oppressor and the oppressed, and isn't the capacity to love based on the ability to have empathy for the self? What if in overcoming oppressive conditions such as anxiety and depression individuals could alter their conscious state of reality and "create a new situation"?

Freire's work, combined with that of Habermas (Habermas & McCarthy, 1987) would influence Jack Mezirow (2000) to develop Transformative Learning Theory, which explores the power of the mind to govern individual thought process, "habit of mind," and "frames of reference" (Illeris, 2018, p. 92). Beyond Freire's campaign of teaching the illiterate to read and becoming active in promoting political and social equality, Mezirow sought to teach a new form of learning and ways of knowing. To Mezirow, transformational learning goes beyond the student merely gaining additional information or changing behavior; instead the student is engaged in new vehicles of knowing (Mezirow, 2000, p. 41). It is here that mindfulness, not a learning theory but a "learning behavior" or "new way of knowing," finds a niche in educational classroom research as a means to reconnect the teacher to self (Killoran, 2017, p. 101).

Action research has four main phases: plan, act, observe, and reflect. Stephen Kemmis and Wilf Carr further developed action research with their term "educational action research," as

did John Eliott, who believes in a more progressively shifting and open-ended approach to Lewin's model of an action-reflection cycle (McNiff, 2013, p.32). In the first iteration of my research study, a mindfulness curriculum for pre-service art educators was designed and implemented for fall semester 2018 at Brigham Young University. Observations and reflections from students, Dr. Graham, and myself were considered and used to revise and improve teaching and learning for winter semester of 2019. Action research is a cyclical process that never really has a complete resolution since each iteration brings new information and insight.

Action research as a living practice. More recent developments in action research include action research as a living practice, which can be defined as a "lived practice that requires that the researcher not only investigate the subject at hand but, as well, provide some account of the way in which the investigation both shapes and is shaped by the investigator" (Carson & Sumara, 2001, p. xii). In addition, "action research as a living research is a response to an increased awareness of corporate underpinnings in education as well as in society at large and strives to promote a holistic connection between learner and content" (2001, p. xiii).

For example, students learning biology could grow the plants they are investigating, incorporate them into their diet, and reflect on this practice instead of viewing a documentary of plant life in Madagascar. In other words, in holistic learning, what the mind considers, the body encounters in some way. This type of mind-body learning is central to action research as a lived practice and fits well with the concept of mindfulness. In addition, action research as a lived practice demands of the researcher, "How does one conduct a life that includes the practice of educational action?" (1997, p. xvii). I chose this particular type of action research because I wanted my research to go beyond the classroom and examine my daily practice of living. I felt this type of self-inquiry would be the most influential to myself as well as to my students.

Participants

This research was conducted within an ordinary classroom in the university and included eight participants in the pilot study and 12 students in the final study. Students in Art Ed 450 are pre-service secondary educators. As outlined in the Introduction, the possible influence of mindfulness training on this population (college undergraduate students) needs further investigation. Art Ed 450 is specifically designed to provide opportunities to explore current secondary art teaching methods in a variety of art mediums. Mindfulness as an approach to self-inquiry and artistic practice fits into the pedagogical approach and content of the course.

The Art Ed 450 course meets twice each week for three hours. Over the 15 weeks of the course, two hours each week were devoted to the mindfulness course, the study of the spiritual dimensions of art, and the pedagogical possibilities of this content. Outside of class, students were given art, curriculum design, readings, and mindfulness exercises that they were required to reflect upon in their journals. All students in the class were informed and invited to participate. We gathered data from all students; however, we will describe the experiences of 8–10 of these students from the second semester in greater detail. These types of rich descriptions required a smaller, purposeful sample in order to interpret the detailed qualitative data. We were interested in students' individual responses to the curriculum, hence this relatively small number allowed us to explore their responses in greater detail.

Data and Methods of Gathering Data

Data was gathered from multiple sources, including student reflections, student artwork, questionnaires, discussions, informal conversations, and observations.

Student reflection journals. Students kept a reflective art-making journal with approximately 5–7 entries per week. Each entry is a thought, reflection, observation, drawing,

collage, painting, or collection based on questions that relate to the mindfulness curriculum. These journals were collected every two weeks for observation, data, and feedback purposes. Students were asked questions regarding their perceptions of their senses (taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound, as well as their kinesthetic and proprioceptive senses, including heartbeat, breathing, alignment, posture, walking, general movement, etc.). Students reflected on their thoughts and experiences interpreting and making art and recorded these thoughts in their journal entries.

Observations and conversations. Dr. Graham and I made observations of student work in progress and had conversations with the students about the work and kept a research reflection journal as part of the data. Class dialogue was an important part of collective feedback.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires regarding student knowledge, experiences with holistic learning, art practices, and responses to the course were sought at the beginning and the end of the course (see Appendix A through I).

Student artwork. Student artwork, along with documentation of conversations with students about their artwork, was an important data source. Student artwork was analyzed and discussed with participants.

Analysis of Data

The aims of this research are primarily exploratory. We were attempting to investigate the claims for mindful educational enterprises among a group of college-aged pre-service art education students, as well as exploring the possibilities for how a mindfulness curriculum might be designed to augment an advanced arts methods course within the constraints of the course learning outcomes. Data gathered from researcher observations, participant reflections, interviews, conversations, and questionnaires were used to carefully examine students'

experiences with mindfulness training, pedagogy, and artistic practices. In the analysis, we looked for evidence of how a mindfulness practice influenced student learning, perceptions of self, and art practice. To some degree, this was an autobiographical study. Dr. Graham and I examined our own reflections on this eight-month experience to see how designing, teaching, and practicing mindfulness within an arts method course influenced our teaching practice and awareness of self. Although both researchers and students were aware of the claims of mindfulness training, student and instructor responses to the experiences of the course were critically examined for evidence that supports or does not support the claims described in the research hypothesis.

A Mindfulness Curriculum

The mindfulness curriculum we designed had several main components, including in-class formal meditation sessions and mindfulness concepts from the text *Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World* (Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2012), the body as a whole addressed in movement workshops via concepts based on the Alexander Technique and Bartenieff Fundamentals, a two-week unit on emotional intelligence, and a seven-week experiential unit on the senses tied to field studies at museums and other on- and off-campus sites. The students also considered the practical application of personal mindfulness to individual student art practice both inside and outside of the classroom. Each week, students were given specific prompts for reflection and art-making that were related to the topics we were studying in class. These learning experiences were woven into the normal curriculum of the course.

In-class formal meditation. The text *Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World* was an important aspect of the curricular design in this study. Beyond essential chapter readings, two main concepts from the text were included in this study: “Habit Releasers,” a method to

break up regular patterns of everyday choices, and "Routine Daily Awareness," or daily opportunities to choose to be present. Both of these types of recommended experiences from the text were individually approached by the students with open constraints. Some students chose to incorporate the particular sense we were looking at in a given week, while others chose activities such as folding laundry, walking to school, showering, doing the dishes, cooking, and so on. Students practiced regular, formal meditations inside and outside of class and listened to online meditations. Formal meditation practice in class was approximately 10–15 minutes long. Students experimented with seated, standing, or prone positions as well as with other variables such as sound or visual stimuli.

Movement. Martha Graham, iconic modern dancer of the 20th century, built her innovative movement vocabulary on the basis of her father's words to her as a child—that it is impossible for movement to deceive (Welty, 1967). For me, as a dance educator, this concept dovetailed well with Freire's idea of greater awareness of the external world, thus movement was an important concept for students to explore in my research in order to develop an increased transparency of their everyday experiences. This idea was approached via two main frameworks, the Alexander Technique and the Bartenieff Fundamentals.

The Alexander technique. F. M. Alexander, an Australian movement theorist of the 19th century, was another important link in the movement platform of my research. Alexander Technique methods rely on an awareness of the mind and body working together to release unnecessary tension, with a particular notice of how the head and neck interact and initiate movement (Gelb, 1994). Our study included movement workshops where students could be directed toward awareness of their breath and posture while standing, sitting, and lying down. Students were also instructed experientially in some of the basic principles of the Alexander

Technique, which included developing awareness of habitual tension in the body and directing the body to engage in functional approaches to movement. For example, students were instructed to, "let the neck be soft and free."

Bartenieff fundamentals. Irmgard Bartenieff was a pupil of Rudolph von Laban, a dance artist and movement theorist in Germany in the 1920s. Bartenieff's explorations in movement proved helpful to polio victims as well as to the dance world at large. Her concepts of movement were adapted by others, including her students, Peggy Hackney and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, into a system of movement analysis called the Total Patterns of Body Connectivity (TPBC). The TPBC are breath, core-distal, head-tail, upper-lower, body-half, cross-lateral, vestibular, and tactile. These patterns have been described as developmental and progressive systems of movement that we begin to experience as newborns, such as the breath pattern (Hackney 2015). Students explored breath as a three-dimensional experience—sagittal, horizontal, and vertical—as the diaphragm and lungs expand upward, outward, and front to back. Students practiced an awareness of these dimensions within their body as they breathed slowly in and out.

The core-distal pattern, an awareness of movement that initiates from the center of the body toward the distal limbs, was explored as students contracted into a ball shape on the ground and then expanded into a reaching 'banana' shape. Student experience with TPBC in class can create a greater awareness of the body while performing everyday activities such as walking, sitting, running, standing, and overall posture perception.

As students discussed and experienced movement in our classroom, we engaged in conceptual dialogue with questions such as, "What things, people, places, experiences do you consider 'core,' and what do you consider 'distal'?" Other questions were, "How does the idea of 'cross-lateral' relate to things in your life that are similarly connected?" This question would

address how a student's actions, relationships, ideas, might directly affect another aspect in their lives. I felt the time spent in movement was an important link to the kind of transformative experiences that the mindfulness curriculum was designed to cultivate.

In addition to these concepts of TPBC within the body, dance elements BEST (body, energy, space, and time) were explored via movement using visual art as a prompt. For example, Katsushika Hokusai's well-known work *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (1830) incorporates aspects of time (accent), space (specifically curved shapes and levels, a bit of angularity), and energy (percussive/explosive movement, a sense of suspension, a swaying motion in the waves). Students were shown artwork that expressed movement concepts and then were asked to create movement sequences that reflected different movement qualities of BEST in small groups. Having these type of movement experiences in class was an important stepping stone to making connections in mindfulness within the body as well as applying concepts of movement to students' everyday life. Working with students within movement and mindfulness constraints influenced my own teaching practices as well.

Over the past two years as I participated in lectures within the Art Education Department at Brigham Young University with Dr. Graham and Dr. Barney, I began to interpret and develop the idea and application of an individual movement practice. I questioned what my movement practice was and how it applied to my everyday living. By applying elements of movement beyond the studio, I changed my frame of reference regarding my use of time, space, and energy in my home and environment and devised a four-week self-inquiry experience entitled, "What is Your B.E.S.T. (Body, Energy, Space, Time) Living Practice?" For example, for one week I could choose to be aware of my Body posture throughout the day, consistently striving to be in the moment with my body. While I cooked, cleaned, drove, ate, taught, folded laundry, etc., I

could direct my mind to be aware of my posture, breath, and check in with tension that might be building in my body. The second week I could move to Energy and focus on ideas such as my food intake, getting adequate sleep, focusing on my emotions, or developing an increased awareness of what I read, listen to, or who I spend time with. The third week Space would involve increasing conscious choice of buildings I go into, how my dwelling space is organized, what pathways I choose to use in my community, etc. Lastly, Time could be focused on my overall awareness and use of time, learning to design my time to better fit my needs.

By applying the elements of dance directly to my lived practice I could develop transformative experiences and share them with my students. I began implementing "What is Your B.E.S.T. Practice?" into the GE dance education classes I instructed as well as into this research study. Some of the students in this study chose to look at their living space and question how it was organized, and others looked at their use of time, including tracking their time spent on social media and overall screen time. Attention to the body with increased awareness of breath and posture during a given week was of interest to students as was paying attention to food choices and the overall effects their diet had on their energy states. Various student explorations of this movement-based inquiry are presented in chapter 4.

Emotional intelligence. An important component in mindfulness is an awareness of emotions. Emotions register in both the mind and body and directly influence our thoughts. For example, we experience anxiety due to fear, anger due to violation, sadness because of a loss, and happiness with a perceived gain. Often individuals are not aware of these basic four emotions or the root causes contained in them. When people are able to notice and identify their emotions it can be possible to navigate through them with greater function and ease, this process is the basis of forming emotional intelligence (Mininni, 2005). It was important to me that

students be taught the basics of emotional intelligence based on the text *The Emotional Toolkit* (2005) by Dr. Darlene Mininni. Students created an Emotion Wheel in which for two weeks they tracked the four basic emotions: happiness, sadness, anxiety, and anger. Students were instructed on main concepts from the text regarding what these four emotions can mean on a personal level, how these four emotions register in the body and mind, and how to best engage with difficult emotions. Students also explored fiber arts as a means to calm difficult feelings and refocus the brain on more positive pathways and were given articles to read that described the benefits of craft-type activities for the brain.

Senses. We explored mindfulness through a close look at the seven senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, taste, proprioception, and kinesthetic awareness. Proprioception is related to the sense of skin on surfaces and the posture and alignment of the body, and kinesthetic awareness is an awareness of the body in motion (Eddy, 2017). For seven weeks each sense was explored individually, experientially, and with connections to current artists in the field. We questioned how mindful awareness of the senses might change sense of self, environment, and art practice. For example, during the week in which we focused on the sense of smell, various herbs and plants were brought in to class, and students were given time to experience the scent of each one with a prompt to be open to thought and memory and to record their observations. Students were given the task to observe smells in their environment throughout the week, noting thoughts associated with them as well as likes and dislikes. The idea that smell could be part of a meditative process as well as art exploration was considered. Smell artist Sissel Tolaas was a featured artist of the week, and students were given the task of implementing smell into their art practice in some way or creating a work framed within concepts of smell.

For every sense explored, tangible objects were brought into the classroom for a sensory, mindful exploration that was connected to self and art practice. Students also explored the outside world in connection to the senses, including class trips to museums, canyons, and on-campus sites.

Mindfulness and art practice. Students were encouraged to connect mindfulness to their art practice in their own individual way, beginning with what felt right for them. Some students chose to cultivate an awareness of breath, posture, and the senses as they worked in class and at home in their various individual art methods. Others chose to directly focus on aspects of line and shape, texture, and the senses as they were drawing or painting. Some practiced in a certain setting or set up their own constraints, such as, "Each day I will randomly select a window to mindfully draw what I see beyond the glass." Drawing, figure drawing with live models, plein air painting, and various fiber arts were particularly explored as vehicles for mindful art practice.

Data visualization. Data visualization is the representation of information in the form of a chart, diagram, picture, or other type of graphic representation. Data visualization can help people understand the significance of data by placing it in a visual context. Patterns, trends, and correlations that might go undetected in text-based data might be recognized more easily with data visualization. Students were encouraged to create visual representations of their observations related to our various studies of mindfulness. We studied ideas about data visualization and looked at artists who use data visualization as part of their artistic methodology.

Social awareness. I felt it was important to have varied, mindful approaches to create a classroom container for transformative change. In addition to the formal meditations, sense units, movement studies, and practical application of mindfulness to the arts, students examined

aspects of social consciousness by viewing documentaries on various subjects addressing current issues of consumerism and capitalism. Films such as *The True Cost*, *A Plastic Ocean*, and *Minimalism* and various Buddhist TED Talks were assigned to students to watch and reflect on as a means to enable change via individual choices made in everyday life.

Some students wrote that they were not previously aware of the impact their daily consumer decisions were having on others and that they were interested in changing some of their everyday choices. Had there been more time allotted, students could have designed a social impact mindful practice in response to these documentaries, an idea I would like to develop with a class in the future.

Chapter 4: Results

This study explored how mindfulness might be effectively taught and practiced within a visual arts methods class for pre-service art educators and, by extension, in a secondary visual arts class. It was a curricular experiment in which mindfulness practices were incorporated into the existing art methods class. This course teaches studio methods and at the same time asks students to step back and consider the pedagogical affordances and limitations of numerous artistic practices. For this study, a mindfulness curriculum was integrated into the course. In addition to the various practices and ideas that were introduced, students were asked to critically reflect on the pedagogical applications of the different mindfulness approaches they practiced. They considered how mindfulness practices affected them personally. In the first section below, several student responses and researcher observations have been selected that provide insight into one of the main research questions, "How will an exploration of ideas and practices associated with mindfulness in an arts methods course influence student learning and attitudes toward teaching and learning, including perceptions of self and art practice?"

Student Journals

This section will describe selected students' exploratory processes of mindfulness as they were recorded in self-inquiry art journals, specifically addressing the question, "How does mindfulness influence perceptions of self and art practice?" Some students were very diligent and meticulous in their practice of the ideas of mindfulness, while others chose more open and abstract methods.

Mia: Perceptions of self. Mia's work provides a compelling example of the interlacing of the ideas of data visualization, art practice, and mindfulness practices. For example, each

week she constructed an energy meter to graphically represent her levels of energy. These were accompanied by reflections and commentaries (see Figures 1–2).

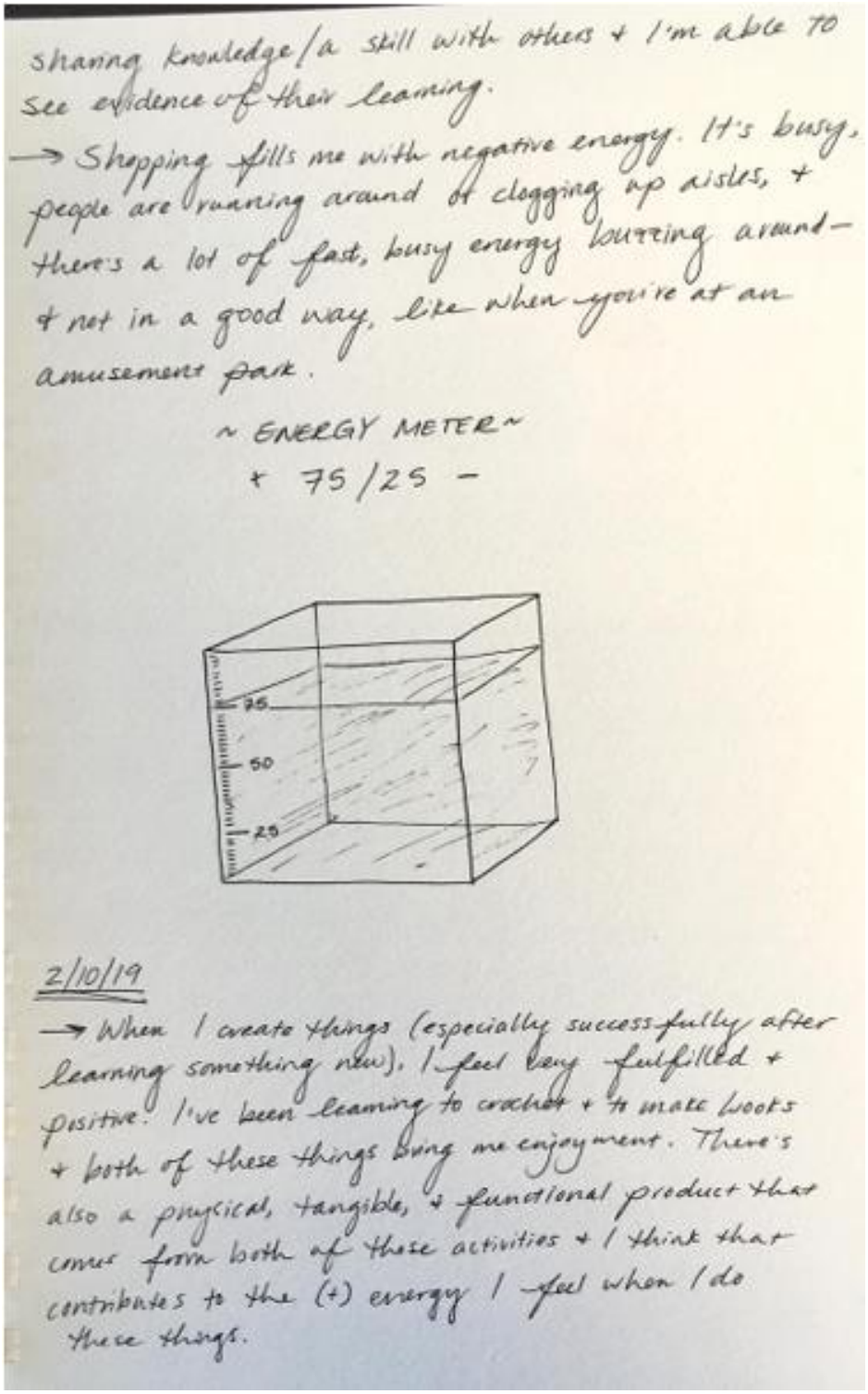

Figure 1. Mia's Energy Meter Cube

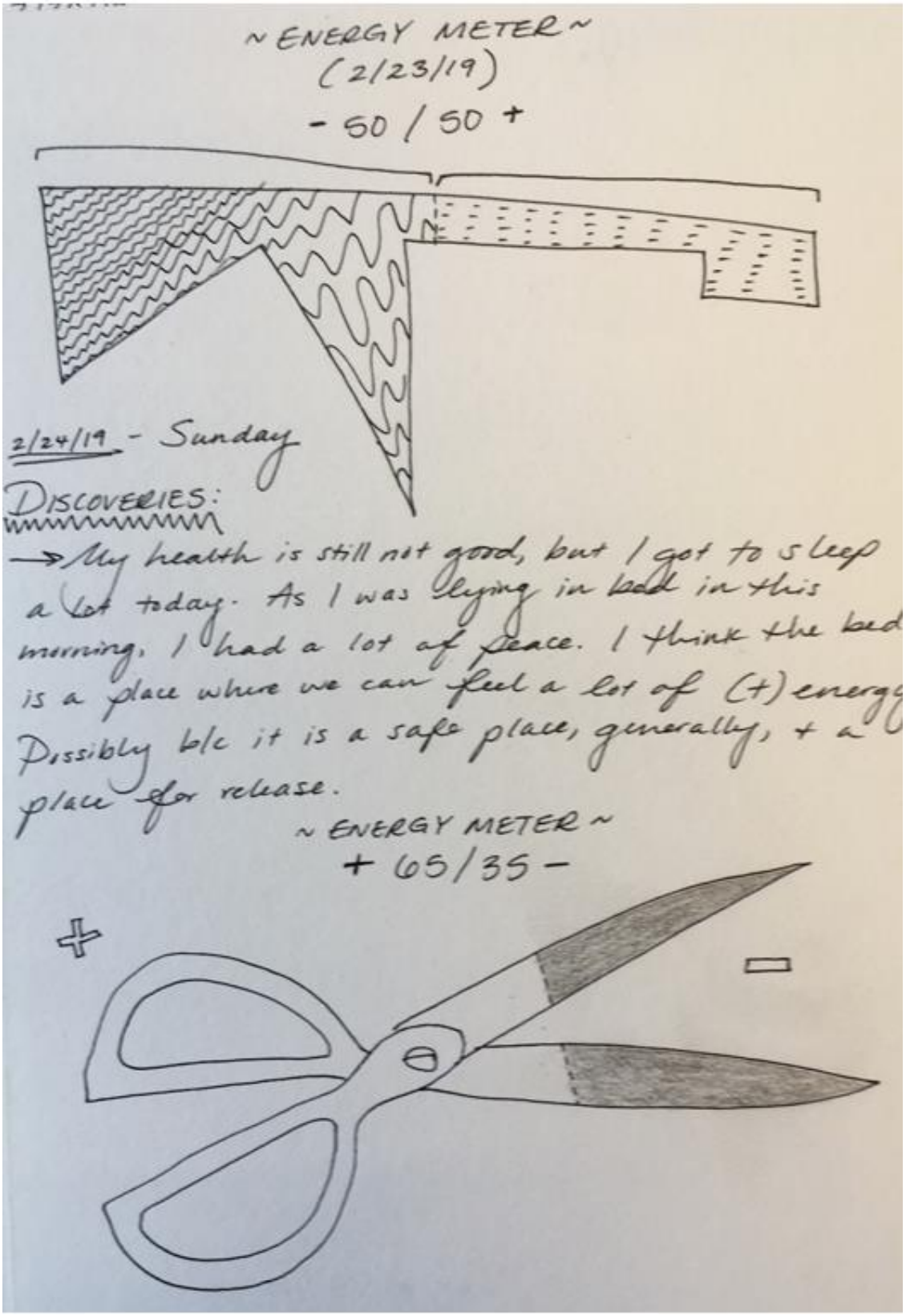

Figure 2. Mia's Scissor Energy Meter

In a similar fashion she made an Emotion Wheel, tracking her awareness of her emotions for two weeks (see Figures 3–5). Mia's reflections about the process of engaging with these practices is particularly detailed and provides insight into how the various practices played out in her life. For example, she noted as discoveries, "When I create things I feel very fulfilled and positive. . . . Positive energy requires conscious effort. I've been forgetting lately to remember that I only have control over my own life and cannot expect others to conduct themselves the same way I do."

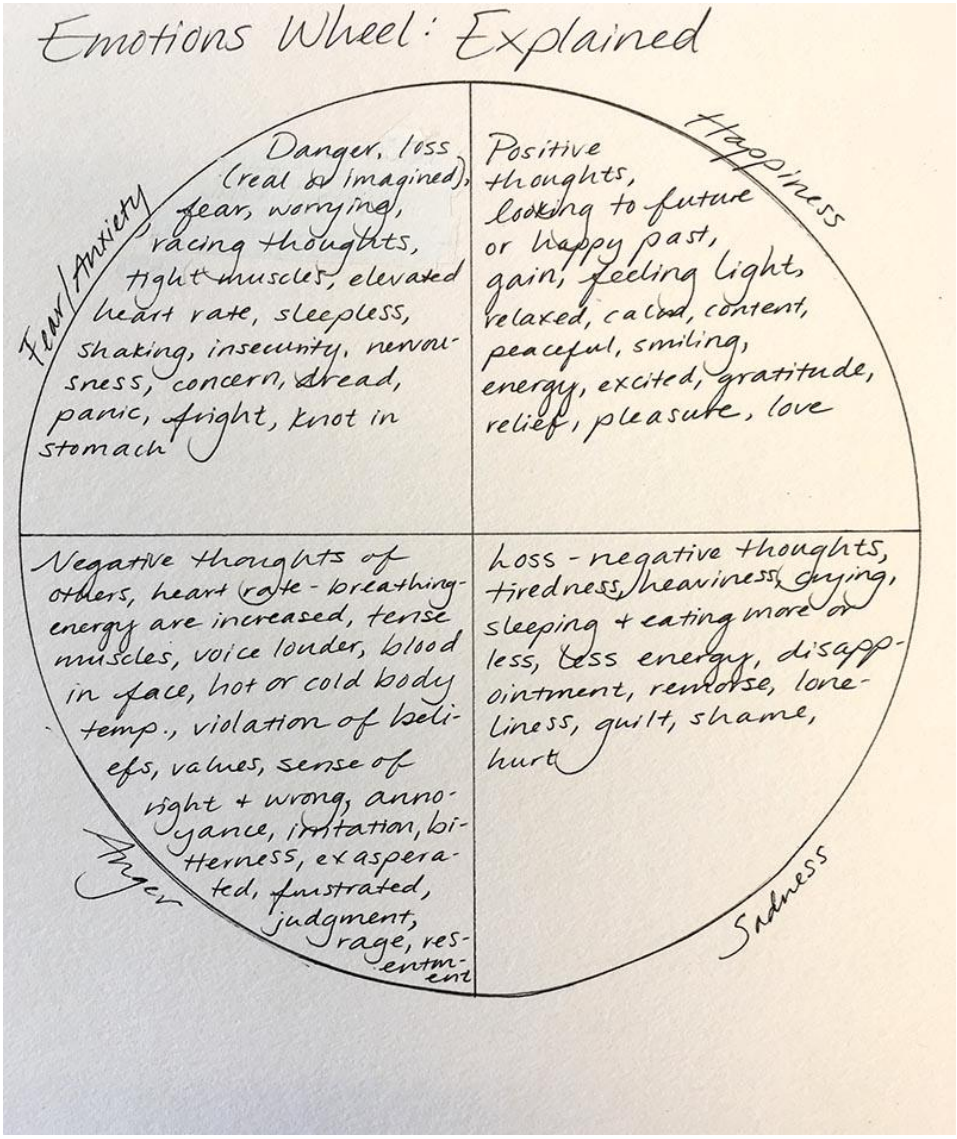

Figure 3. Mia's Emotion Wheel Explained

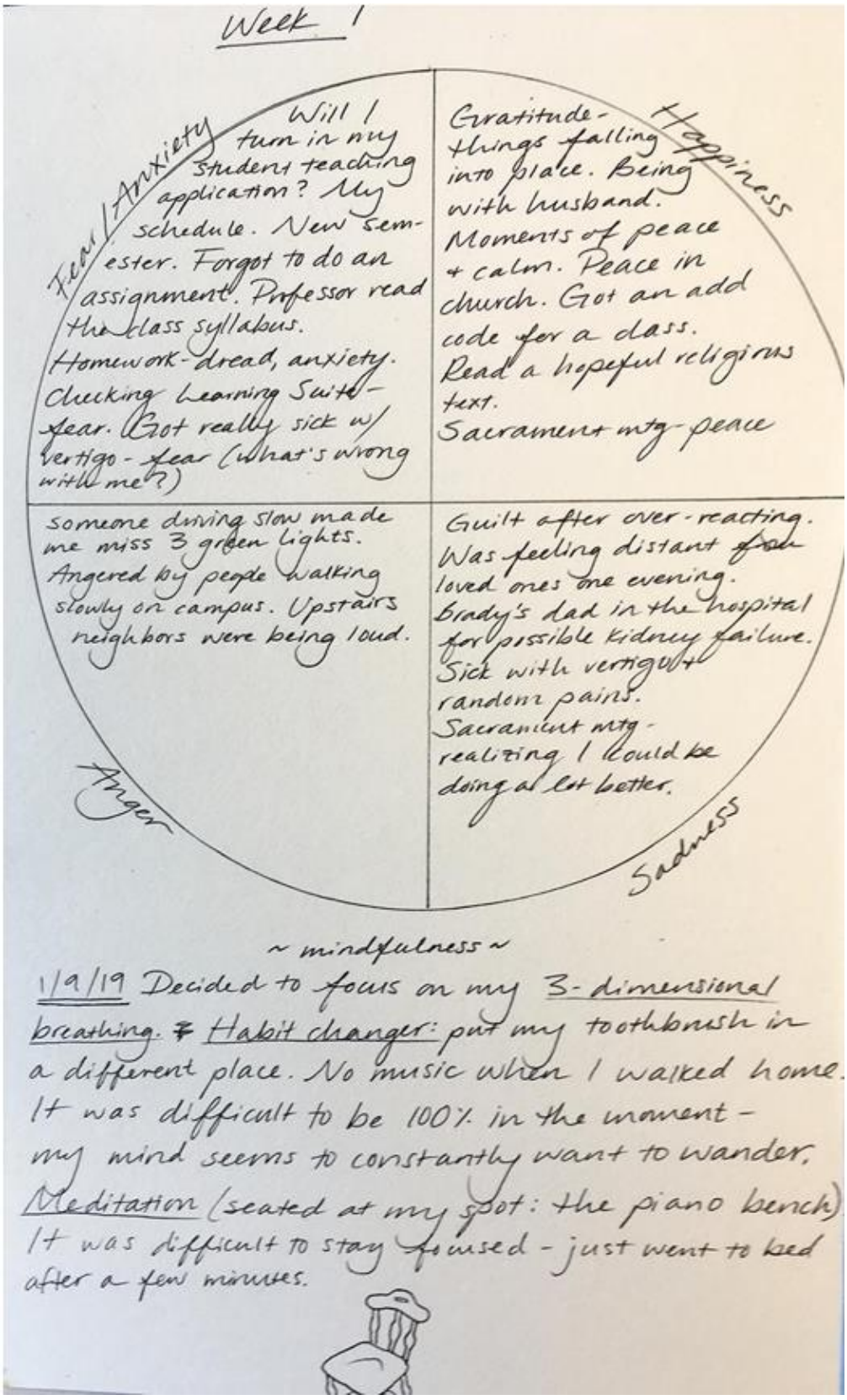

Figure 4. Mia's Emotion Wheel 1

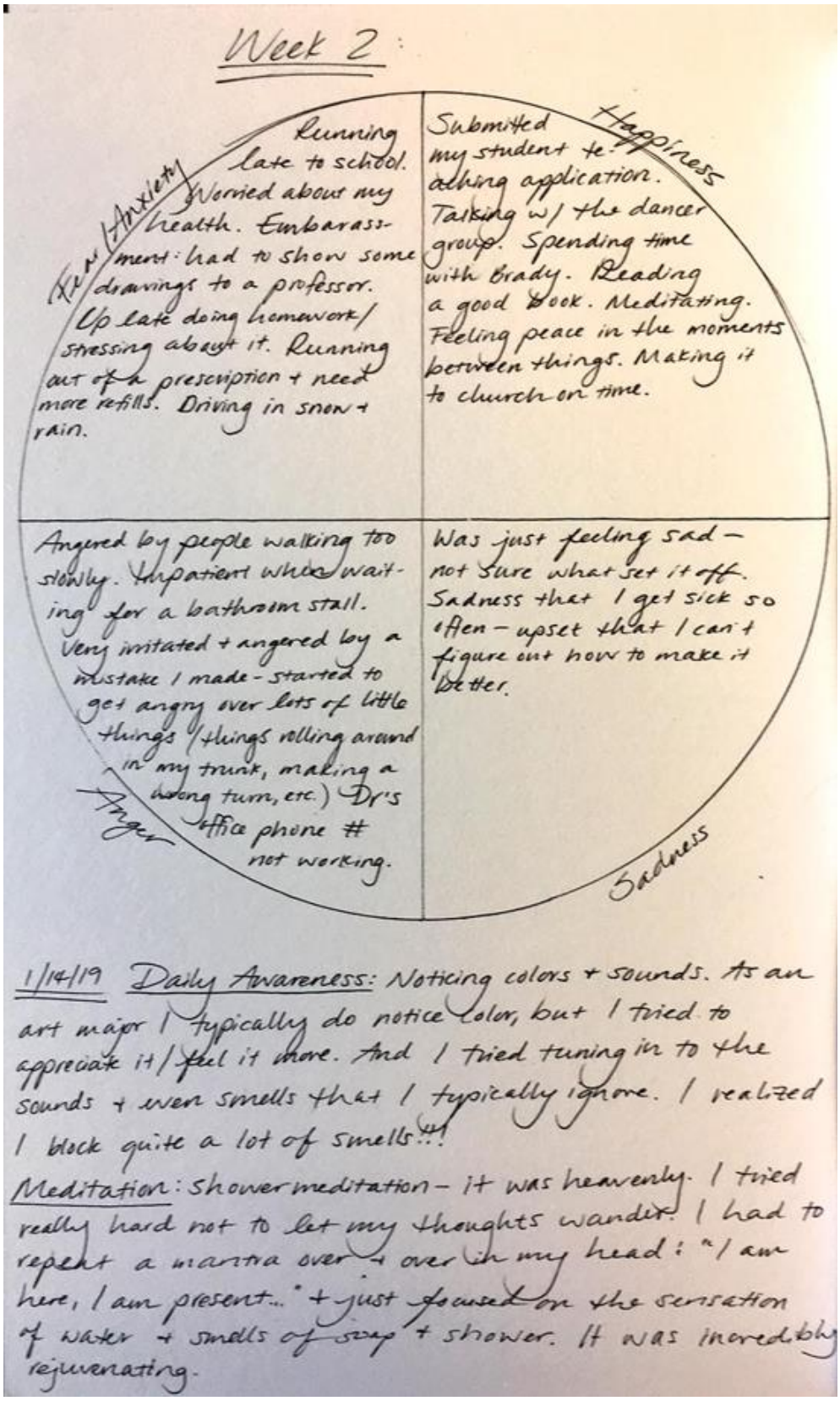

Figure 5. Mia's Emotion Wheel 2

It is significant that the process of engaging with mindfulness studies provided students with opportunities to reflect on their inner lives and awareness of things that normally go unnoticed. This is particularly apparent when looking at a series of Mia's reflections based on her Routine Daily Activity choice of being present as she cooks meals and on her sight Habit Releaser activities that were tied to her collaborative artwork presented at a university dance production (see Figures 6–7).

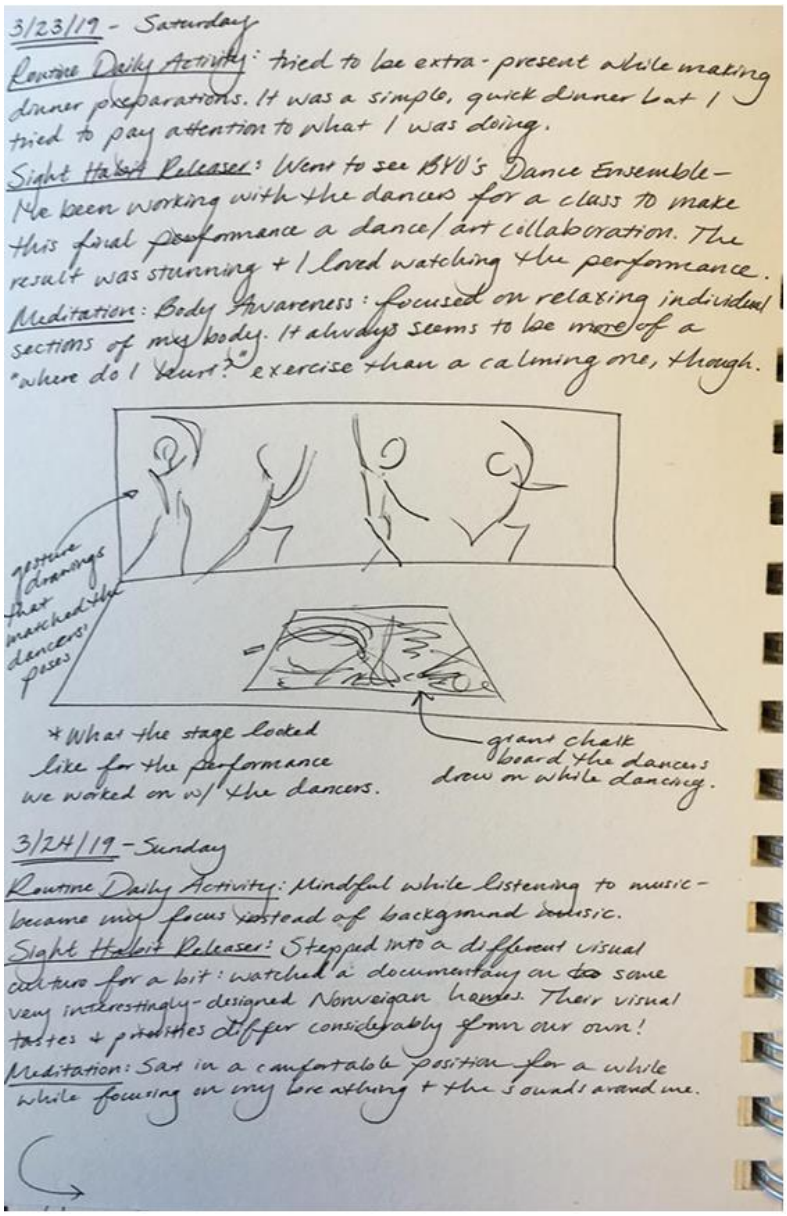

Figure 6. Mia's Routine Daily Awareness and Habit Releasers

Figures 7–8 also provide examples of both the weekly meditation assignment prompt and the student's (Mia's) response.

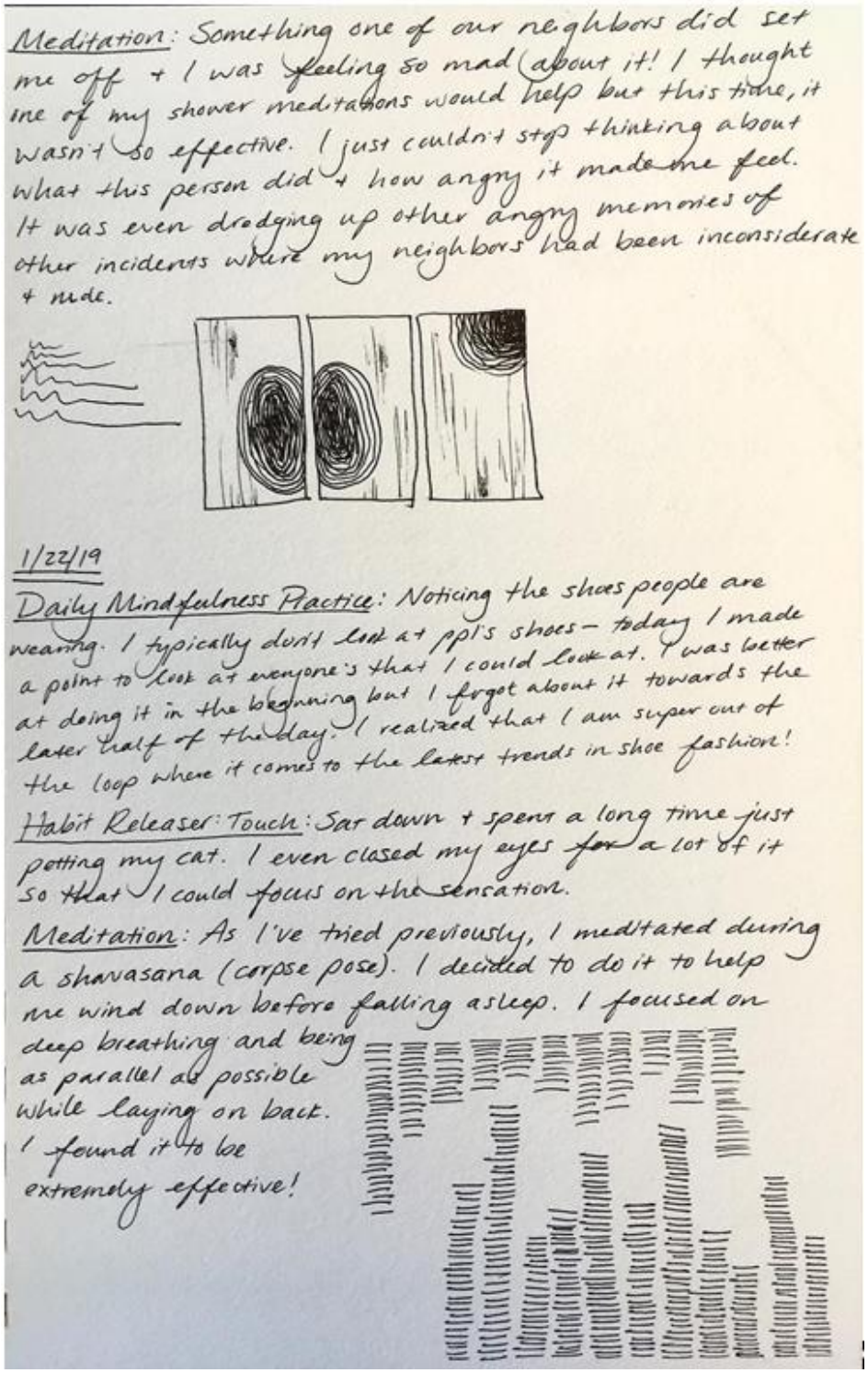

Figure 7. Mia's Daily Meditations and Habit Releaser

Mia, like several other students in the class, had difficulty dealing with stress. She observed, "I have got really stressed out. I had an ulcer on my mission. I have had to build in some destress things. . . . This has helped me to have more resources in this area. . . . I just like picking something every day and focusing on it every day. . . . You notice more things when you task yourself to notice things." As a way to counter anxiety, Mia practiced daily gratitude, as Figure 8 indicates.

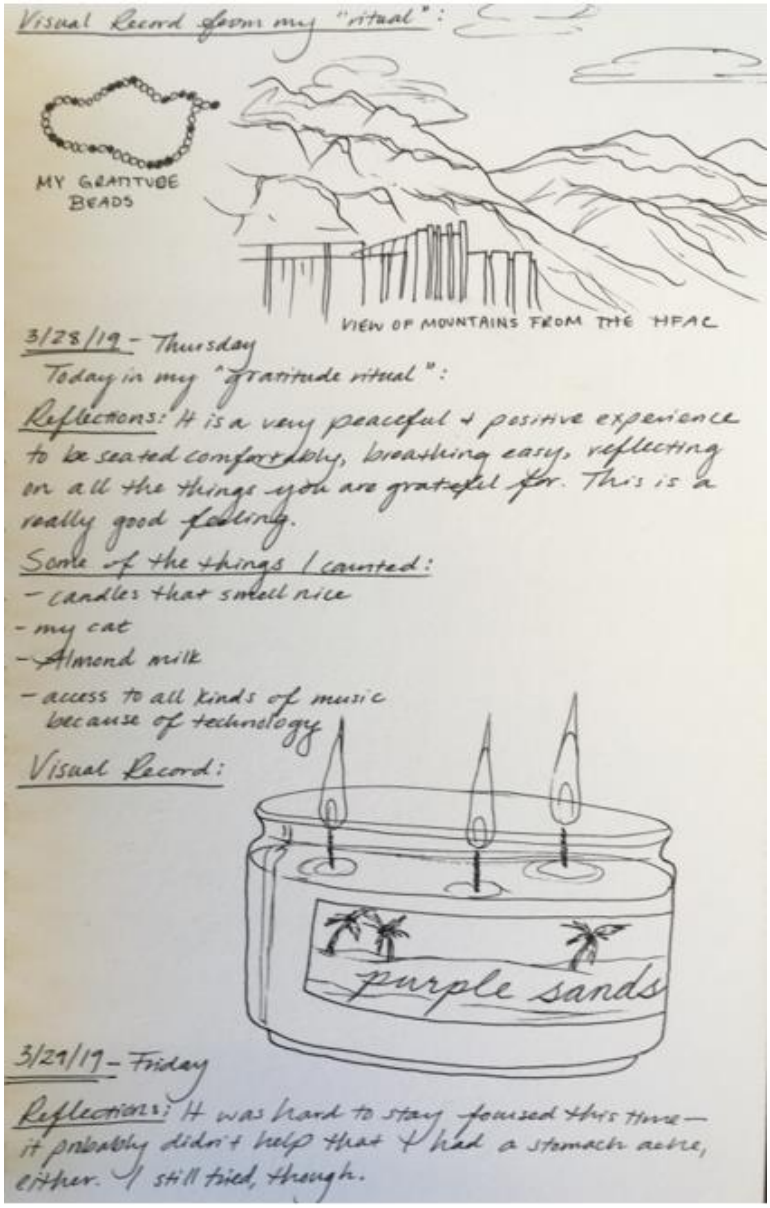

Figure 8. Mia's Gratitude Meditation

Mia: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Mia applied concepts of in-class breath and posture work using the Alexander Technique, which we demonstrated in class, to her ceramic practice, in which she reported decreased tension in her shoulders and back while working at the wheel. In addition, she implemented an awareness of breath while working with the clay with positive results and discovered connections between meditation and the repetitive aspects of glazing. Overall, she felt she was able to work at the wheel with less tension in her body and in a more functional/right approach while handling the clay on the wheel (see Figure 9). When art practice is combined with mindfulness, greater functionality can result. A concept in Laban movement methods that connects with Mia's experience and was discussed in class is that function promotes function (Hackney, 2002). I love seeing this kind of practical, mindful awareness of the body applied to individual art practice that transforms students' work and life skills.

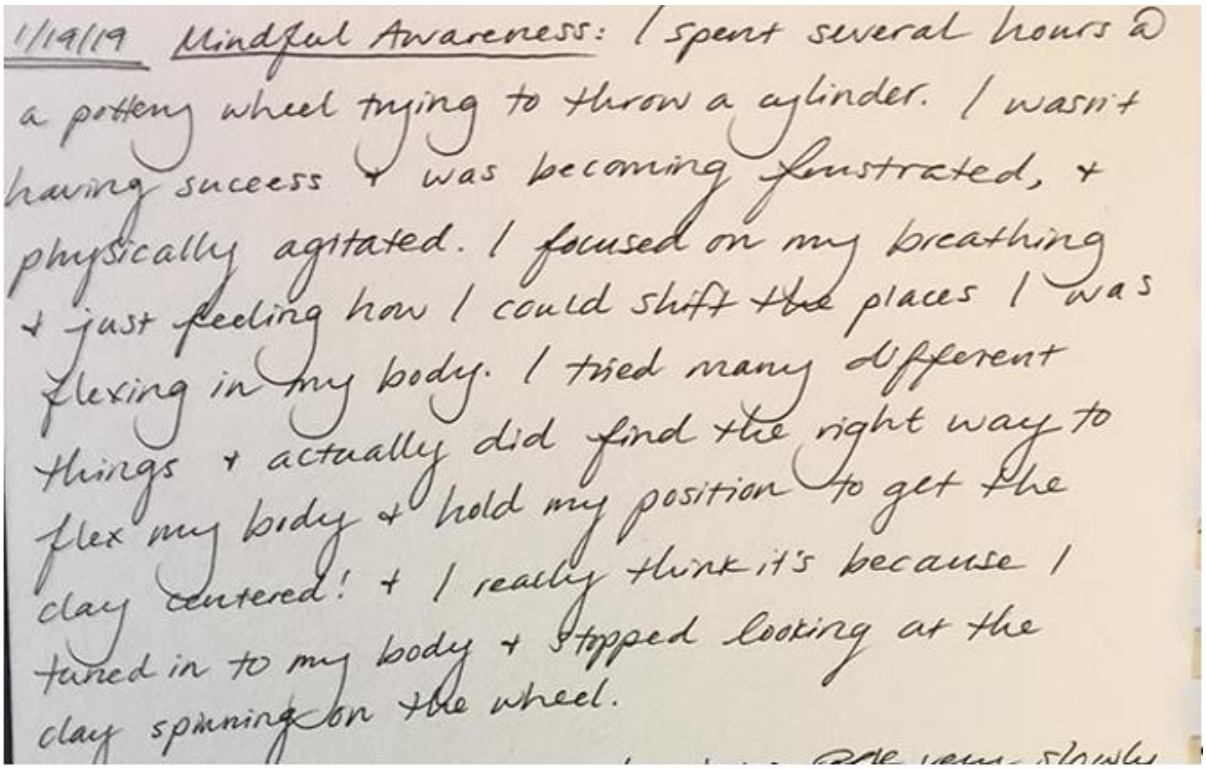

Figure 9. Mia's Mind-Body Work at the Wheel

Riley: Perceptions of self. Riley's work in formal meditation focused on an increased awareness of posture, of thoughts in general, and of being present and finding calm in stillness with positive results. She experimented with tracking her spatial pathways in her B.E.S.T. Practice using transparent paper. She commented, "As I practiced mindfulness and awareness of space, I learned how to reflect back on my day and consider how it went, and how that may have affected my day and how I felt about it" (see Figure 10). By combining elements of movement with mindfulness and art practice, Riley shifted from a "doing" mode of living to a "being" way of living, a fundamental concept in mindfulness that is proposed to increase overall well-being (Williams, 2011). Her transparent data visualizations of her use of space are an interesting platform for her art.

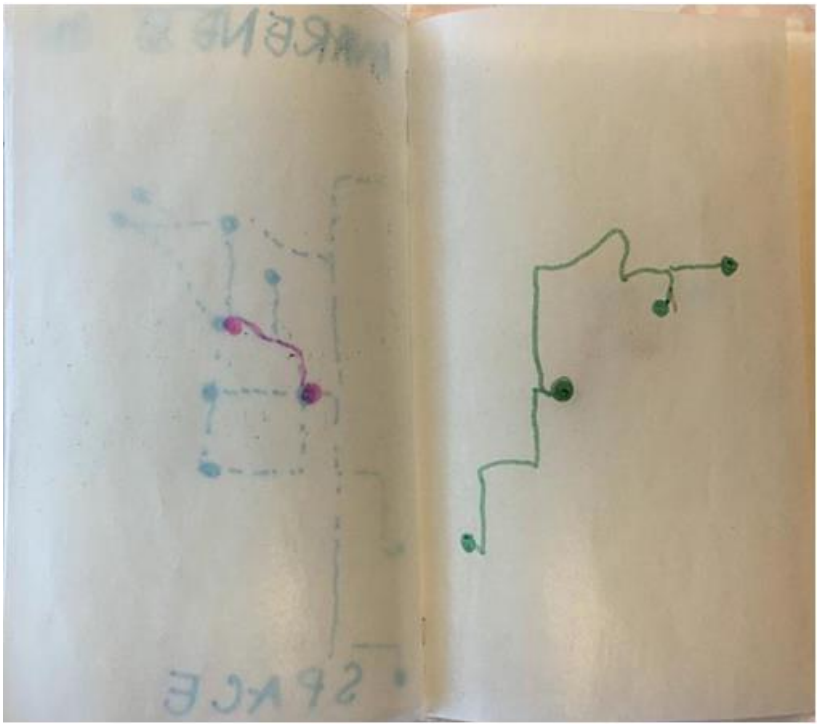

Figure 10. Riley's Tracking of Space

Riley: mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Riley found the mindfulness techniques applied to her fiber work we did in class to be therapeutic: "The slow,

repetitive movements of weaving the yarn in and out was quite meditative. I felt extremely calm as I sat in the same place each day to have a quiet moment to myself, as I felt the thin, supple material between my fingers. As I think about what I'm doing, I'm almost hypnotized as I stare deeply into what I'm creating. I feel clarity in my mind, even for just a moment." Practices of mindfulness seem closely related to repetitive artistic and crafts practices such as weaving or drawing, a concept that can be a powerful tool in focusing minds in a classroom setting.

Lucy: Perceptions of self. Some of Lucy's daily reflections were about becoming more aware of various senses, such as smell (see Figure 11). Lucy's work also illustrates some of the difficulties students have dealing with the stress of everyday life. In her case, she documented her difficulties with daily pain, creating anatomical drawings of her condition each day (see Figures 12–15). Other students in conversations recounted their struggles with anxiety. During the discussion of Habit Releasers, one student observed that habits can be comforting and that changing them can cause anxiety.

Lucy: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Lucy's personal observations about her mindfulness experience included:

> Each week I had to come up with a representation . . . to try and connect my mindfulness practice to my art practice. The last one was a mason jar of things I collected on my walk to and from school . . . mostly plastic garbage, receipts for an article of clothing. I started noticing relationships between the objects on the ground, it was interesting to study the relationship and how it could be an art practice. . . . It changed my time, as I rushed around campus. . . . People thought I was crazy, picking things up on our walk. I liked when my routine or habit tied into a goal I was already trying to do . . . if it could tie in.

One that was really helpful during the BEST was observing how much I was on my cellphone. . . . I loved when we were just doing that meditation for four weeks.

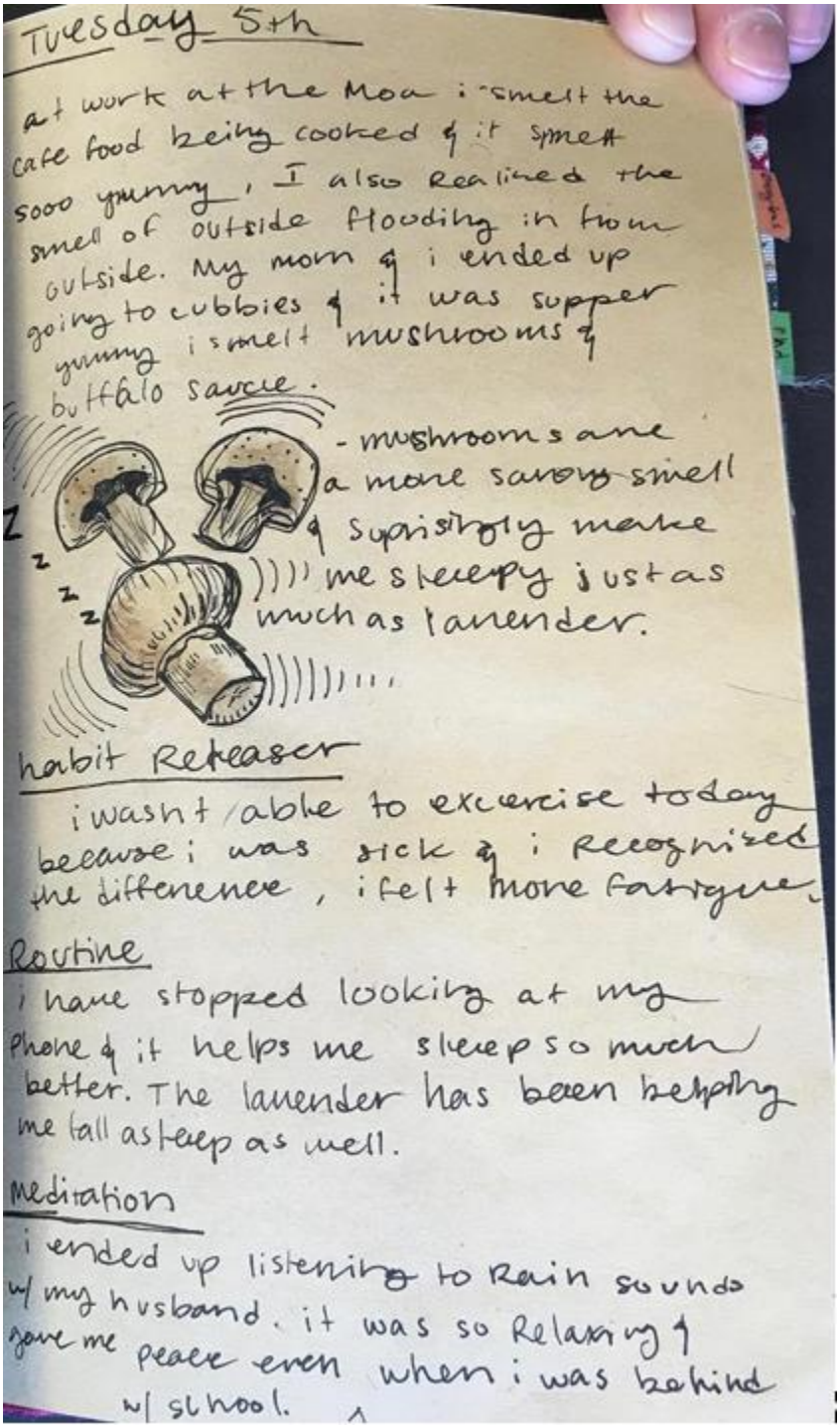

Figure 11. Lucy's Smell Daily Meditations

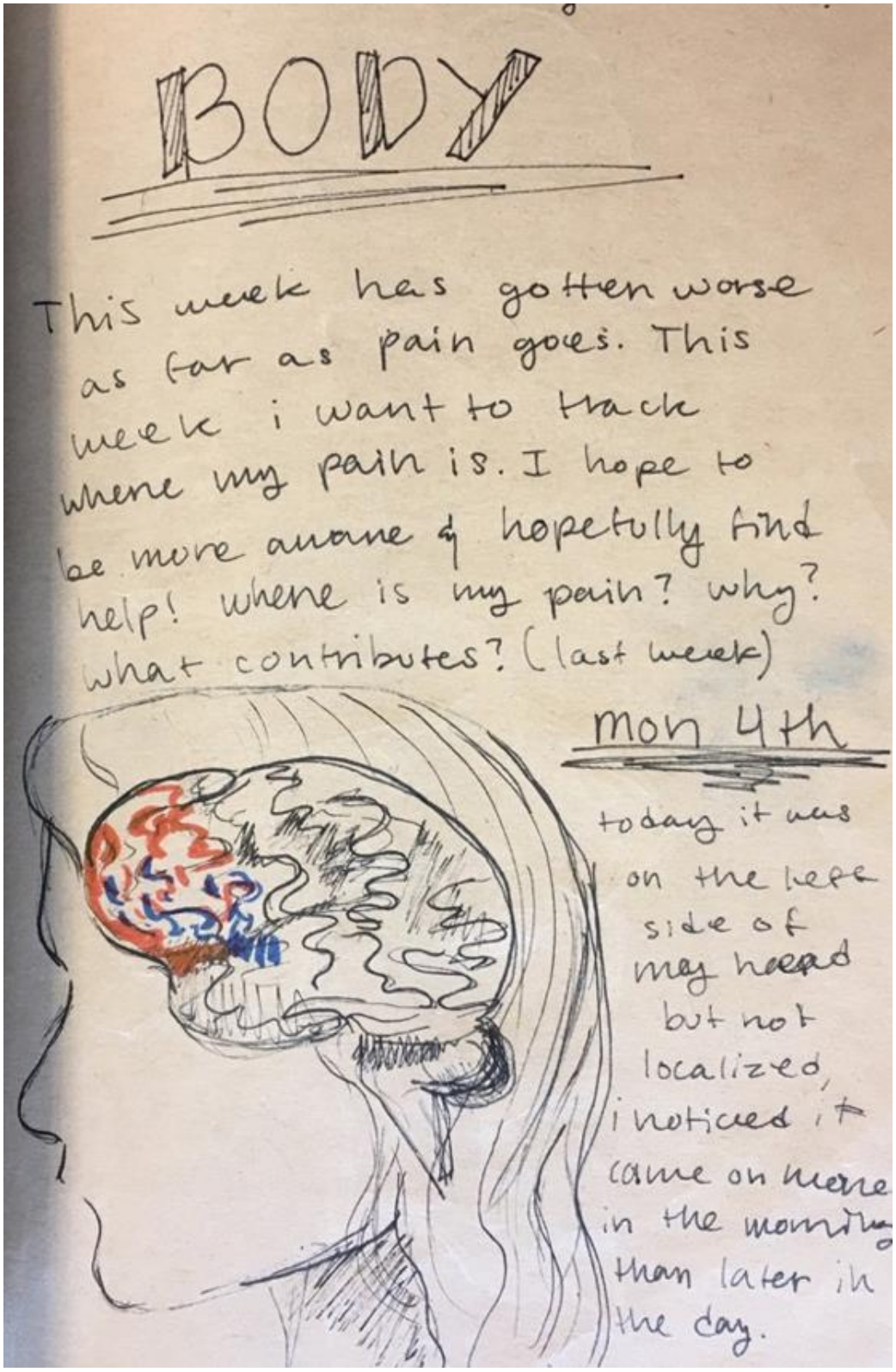

Figure 12. Lucy's Bodily Awareness I

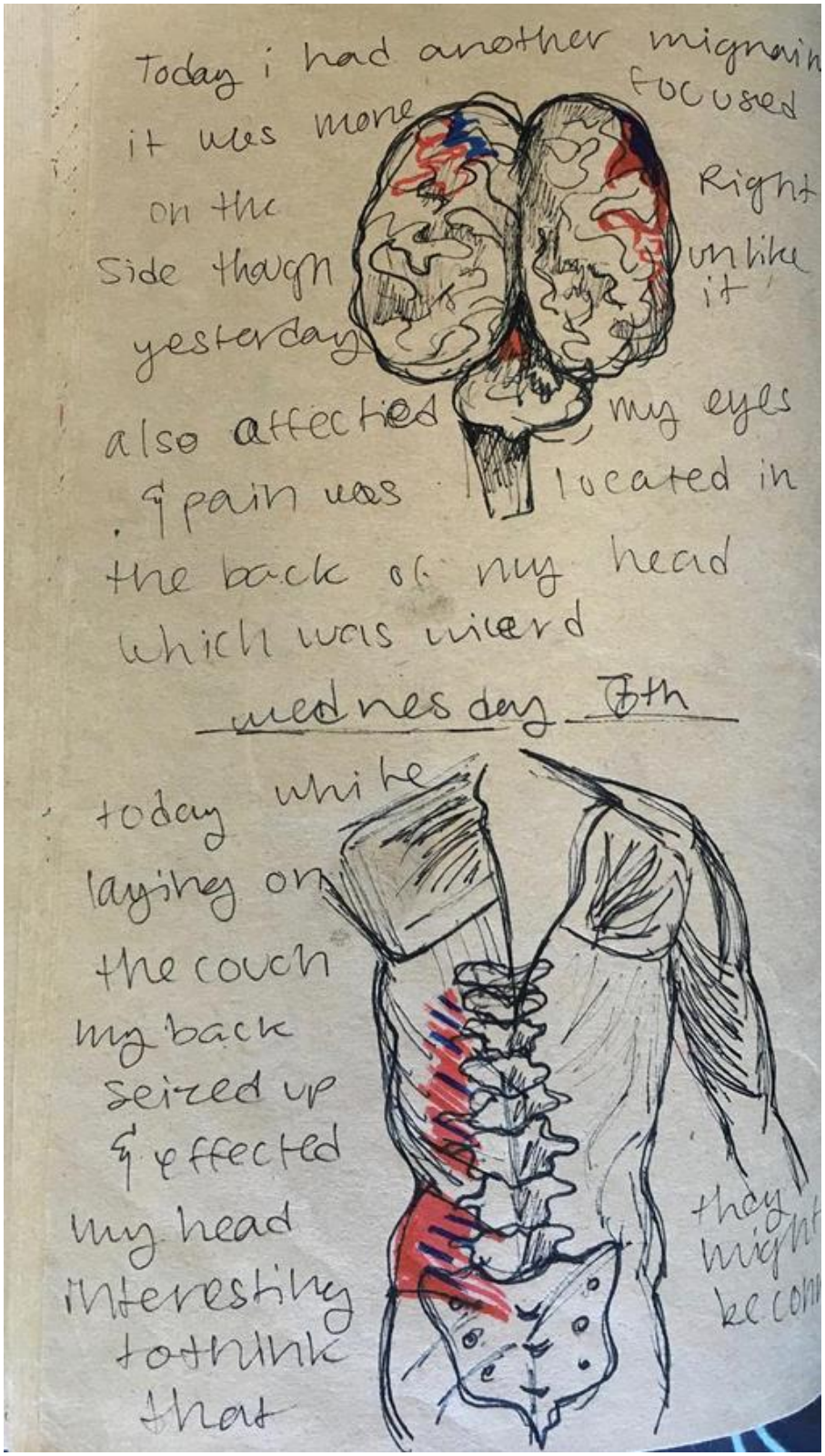

Figure 13. Lucy's Bodily Awareness II

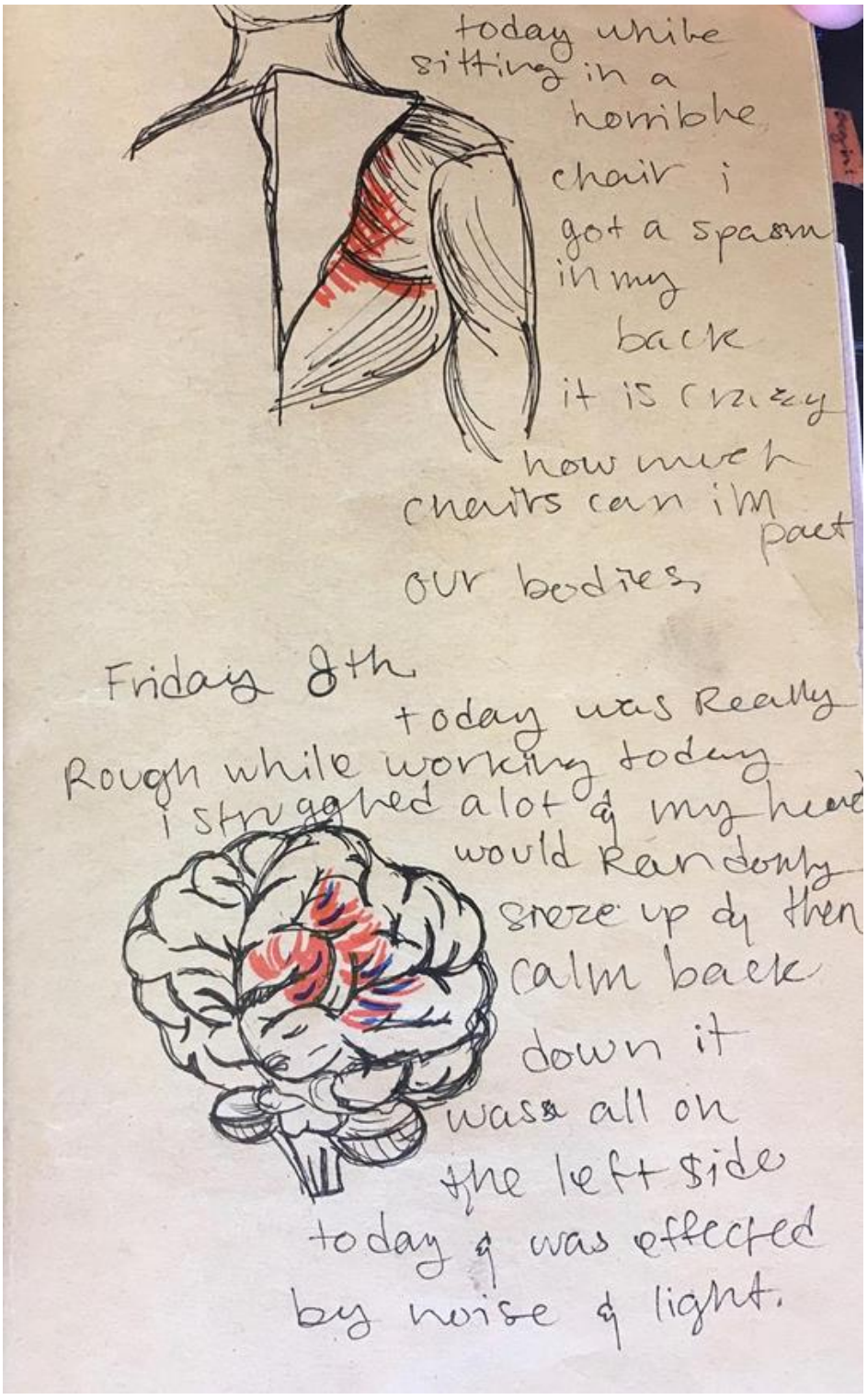

Figure 14. Lucy's Bodily Awareness III

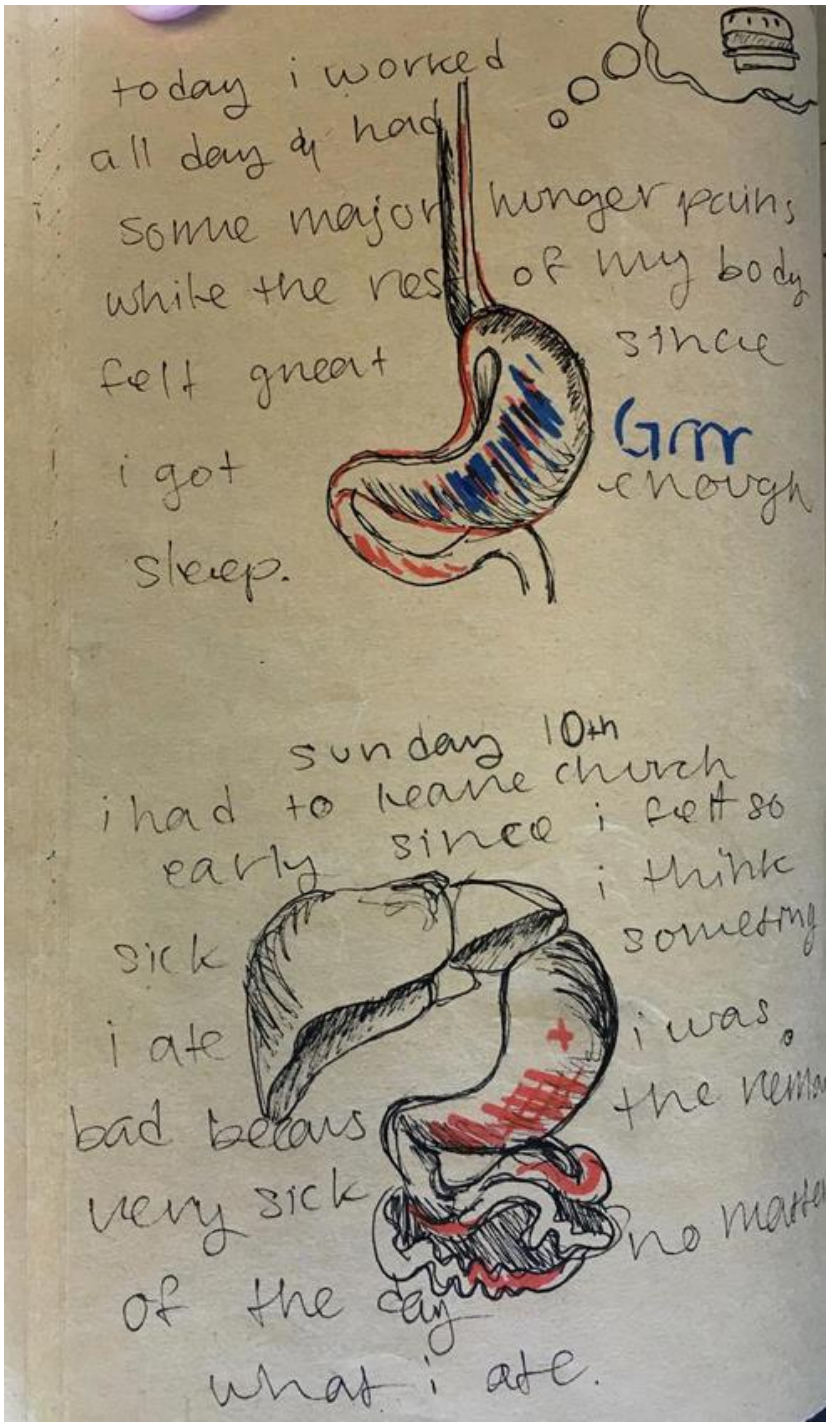

Figure 15. Lucy's Bodily Awareness IV

Lucy's work in her Habit Releasers focused on spending less time on her phone in the morning. She wrote, "I have not been checking my phone in the morning, which I love. It is a new habit that definitely makes me more alert and helps me focus on the moment." In addition,

Lucy found organizing her living space in her B.E.S.T. Practice to be helpful to her overall sense of well-being.

Sophia: Perceptions of self. Sophia focused on an awareness of her posture and breath for several weeks and on her body in general in her B.E.S.T. Practice, tracking her food intake and striving to make healthy choices in her meal decisions. She wrote, “I see how mindfulness really helps when considering how to take care of your body, and I hope to be able to continue this practice of being aware of the types of foods I eat each day and striving to eat healthy foods.” Sophia’s comments indicate that her self-inquiry with mindfulness and her body has changed her perception of how to take care of herself in a positive manner that she intends to continue beyond the classroom setting. This type of reframing of habit of mind that Sophia experienced is a relevant marker that a mindfulness curriculum can help students transform their lives in a positive way. Her work is also a thoughtful application of ideas about data visualization (see Figure 16).

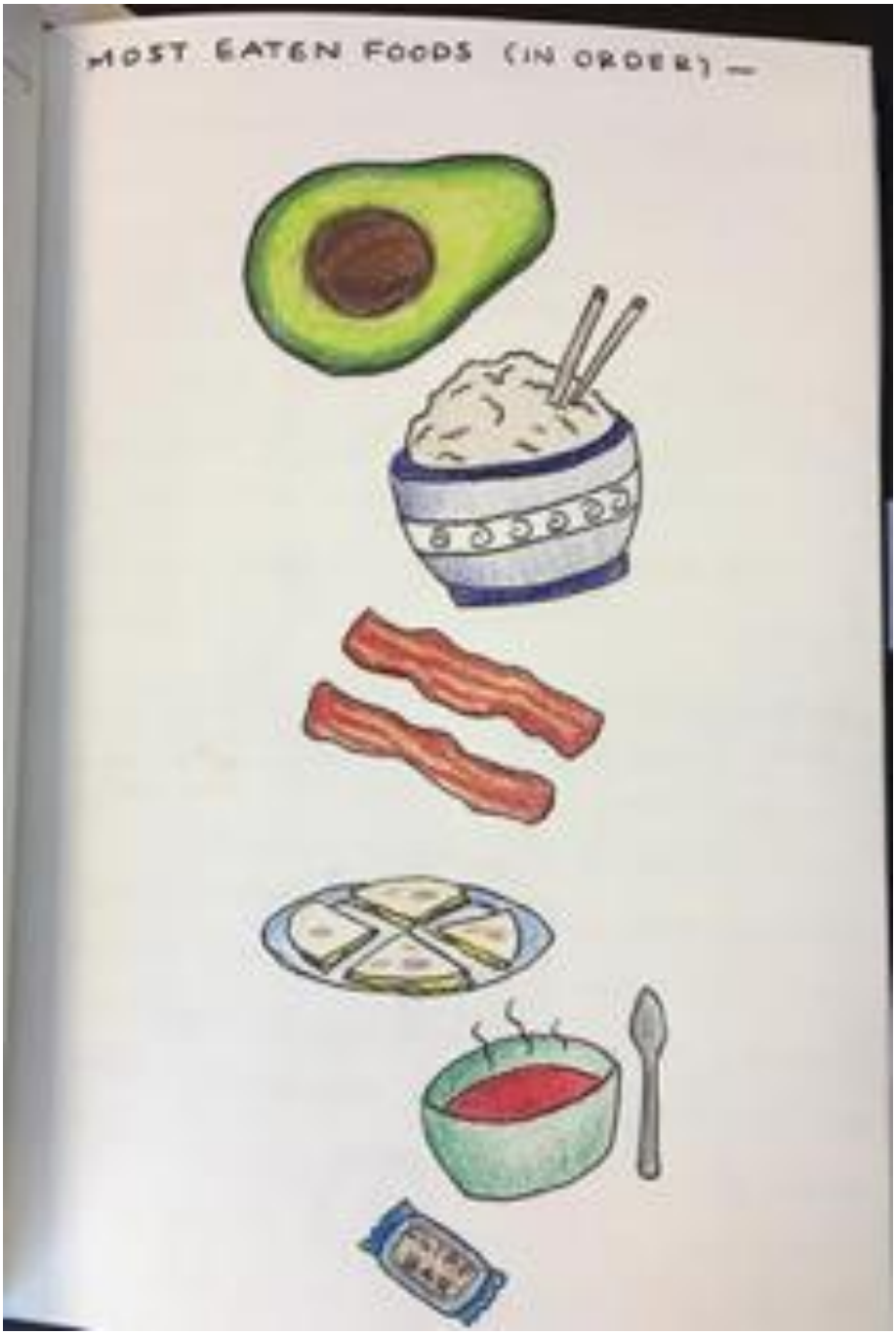

Figure 15. Sophia's Food Illustration

Sophia: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. As Sophia experienced an eight-week delve into the seven senses, she found her sense of smell to be especially acute. During the week our class was investigating an awareness of smell on a daily level, she noticed that her apartment had an unusual smell for which she could not find a source. After three days of trying to figure out what the smell was linked to, she discovered that there was a gas leak in her apartment. For Sophia it was a wake-up call to the importance of mindful living within the senses and a reminder that she has a particularly strong awareness for smell that can help her in her everyday mindfulness. It is difficult to judge whether or not the mindfulness curriculum focused on smell saved Sophia and her husband's life that week, but Sophia's experience with a mindful awareness of smell was transformative to her (see Figure 17).

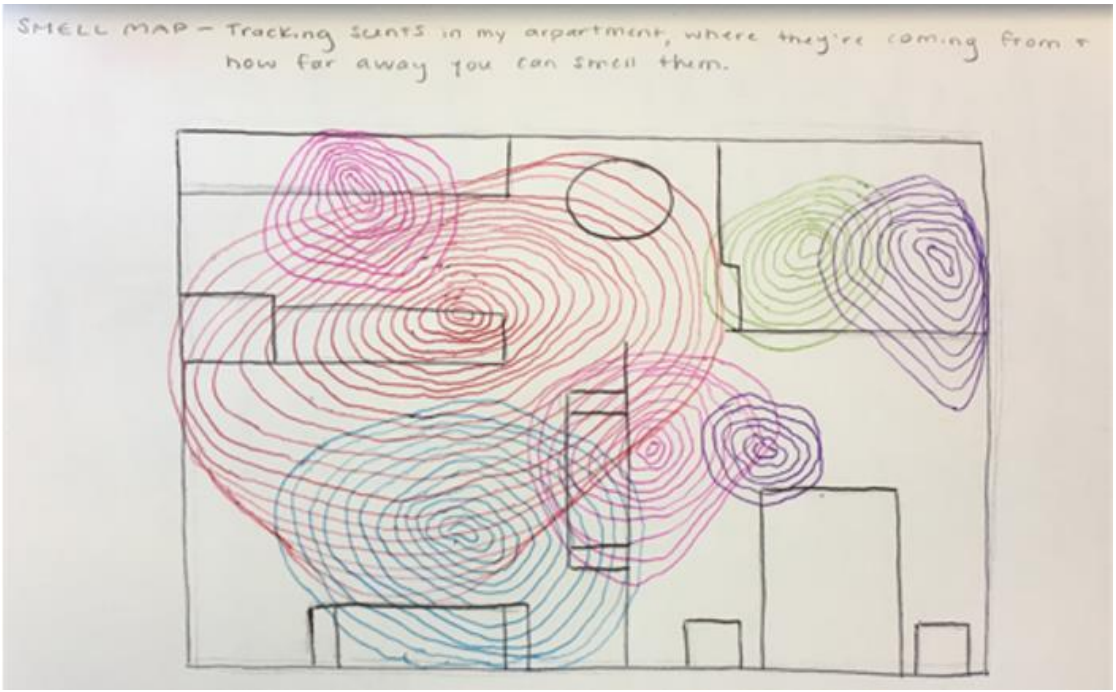

Figure 17. Sophia's Smell Map

Cora: Perceptions of self. Cora approached self-inquiry in our classroom with a great sense of curiosity, play, and investment. She was prolific in her writing, sketching, and application of concepts in her everyday living as the course progressed and contributed to

classroom dialogue openly about her experiences. For two weeks she kept track of her emotions on an Emotion Wheel and wrote, “Emotions Wheel was a lot more therapeutic this week as I had some tough experiences. I still noticed, however, that happiness was the first to fill up. Again, it’s great to see the reasons why I feel a certain way, and even if I don’t know why I feel something it helps to write it down” (see Figure 18).

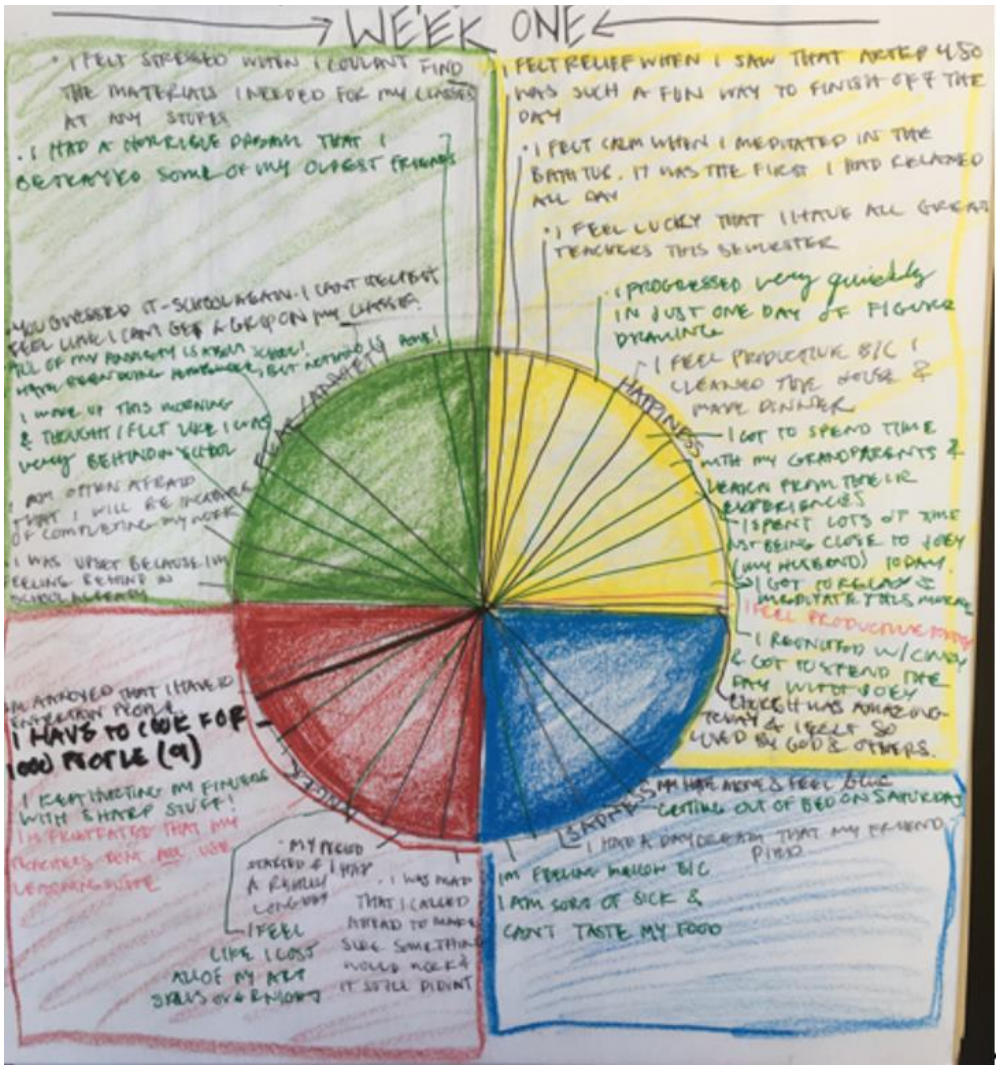

Figure 18. Cora’s Emotion Wheel

Cora: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Cora's exploration of formal meditation was perhaps the most in-depth of any participant. She commented, "My meditations have been great. Sometimes I do them even without the guided recording. I do them in bed or in class or whenever just to remember that I am alive and ok. Breathing (and noticing/appreciating breath) has been a great skill for me to learn." Positive results with mindfulness such as Cora's suggest that mindfulness may be beneficial to her as she continues her art practice, teaching degree, and everyday living (see Figure 19).

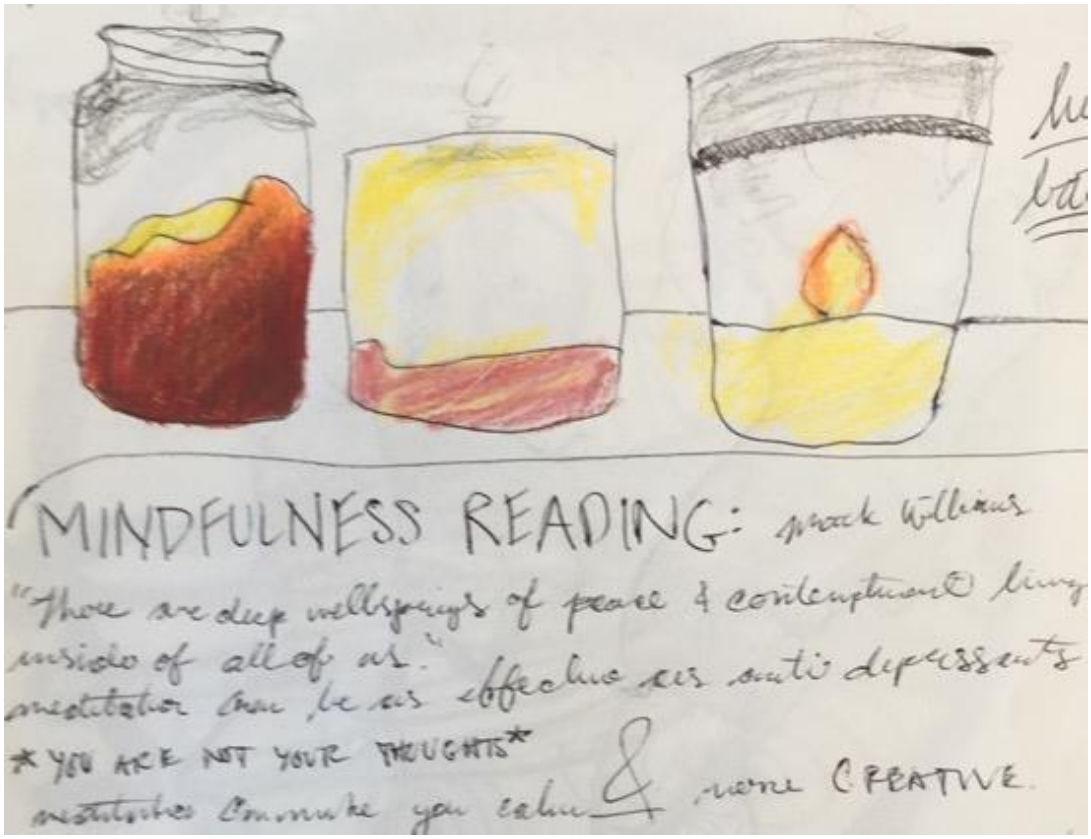

Figure 19. Cora's Light Meditation

Amelia: Perceptions of self. Perhaps more than any other student in the class, Amelia explored direct connections between real-time mindful awareness and art-making in her mindfulness and art-practice work. She wrote, "This has been a semester of growth. I loved all of the aspects of art that we worked with and all of the differences in art creating. I feel very

passionately that art is so necessary. Including mindfulness into art, and then making that a part of the way that I live, is something that I want to teach kids to do. I have looked inside myself and tried to make everything I made reflect this process of coming to understand this mindfulness. Looking over all of the artwork created, I have seen a progression of my understanding of mindfulness and myself" (see Figure 20).

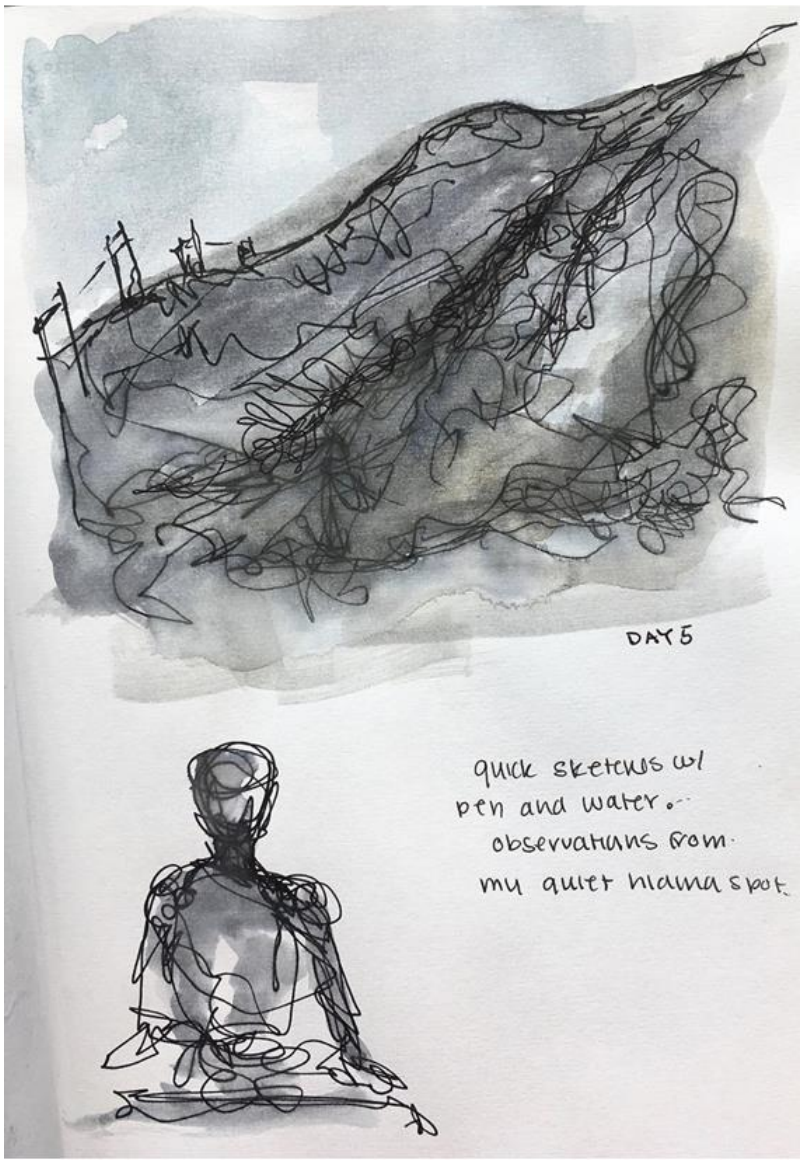

Figure 20. Amelia's Self-Reflection

Amelia: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Amelia was particularly attentive to the artistic possibilities of the mindfulness course and was quite creative in how she formed visual representations of her experiences. Amelia created some data visualization art as she worked with space in her B.E.S.T. Practice. For example, when she chose to organize her room, she created a before-and-after written reflection as well as color samples on how the room appeared to her. She wrote, "The other thing I did was manipulate space. For Tue–Fri I tracked how I felt in my room just as it was. On Sat–Tue, I tracked how I felt in my 'new room.' On Friday night, I went through my room and moved furniture around, I moved my things around, and folded a lot of clothes. The first few days I found myself staying out of my room, but after I gave it the makeover, I found myself constantly going in there, sometimes without a reason. I felt so comfortable in there" (see Figures 21–23).

Figure 21. Amelia's Space Color Map

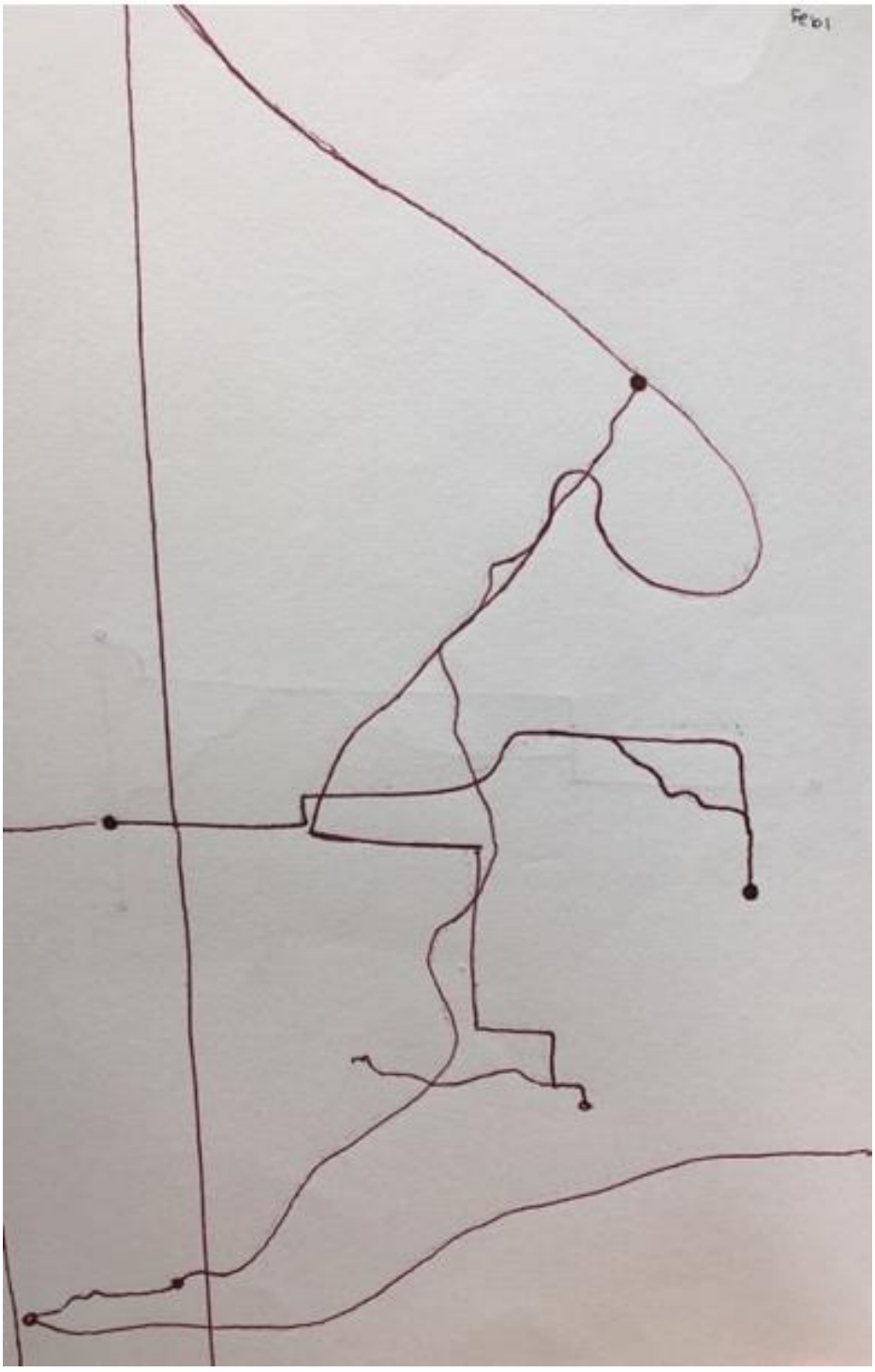

Figure 22. Amelia's Mindful Space Map I

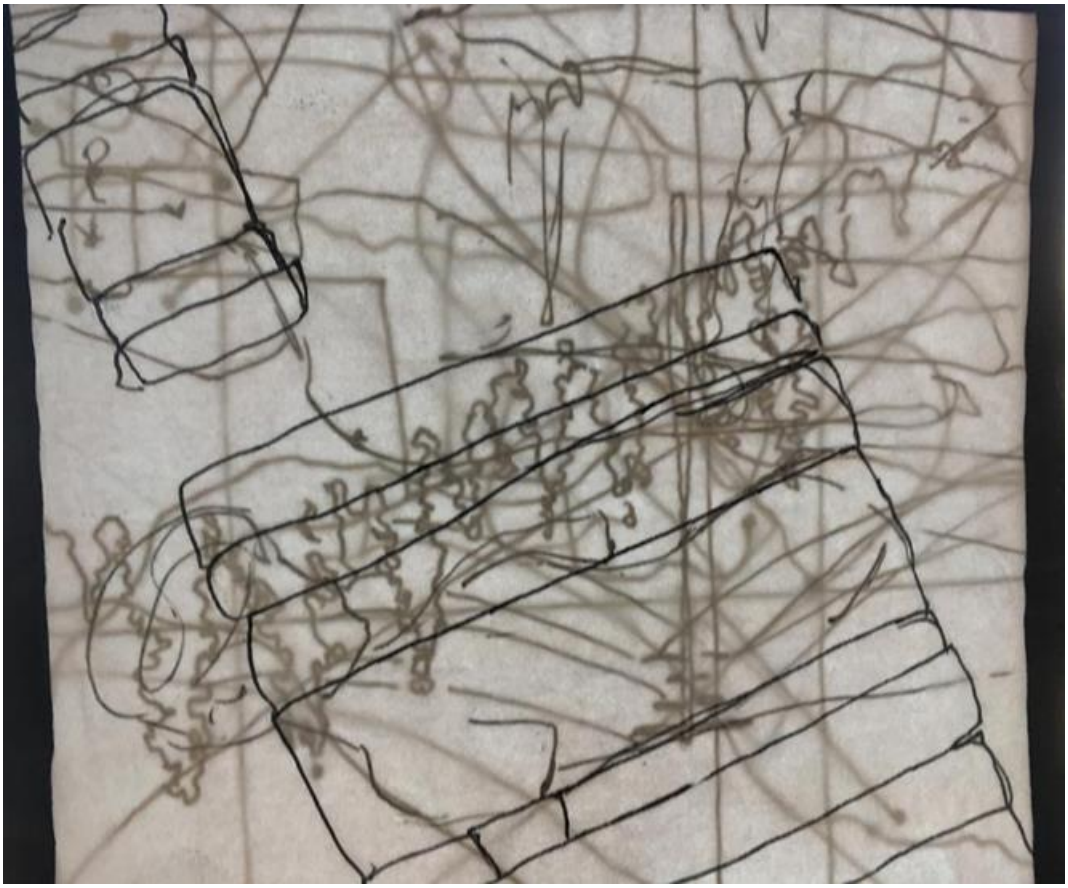

Figure 23. Amelia's Mindful Space Map II

Amelia took the course quite seriously, making it into a personal quest to improve her life, including her food choices, which she also documented using color samples via watercolor. She wrote, "I am going to take a picture of everything I eat, and then paint out the colors of the foods. I will also record how that food made me feel/affected me. Starting on Monday, I am going to do both, because it is the first day I can start the new schedule. I will also record how well the schedule works, and what I will need to fix on it to make it more possible" (see Figures 24-25).

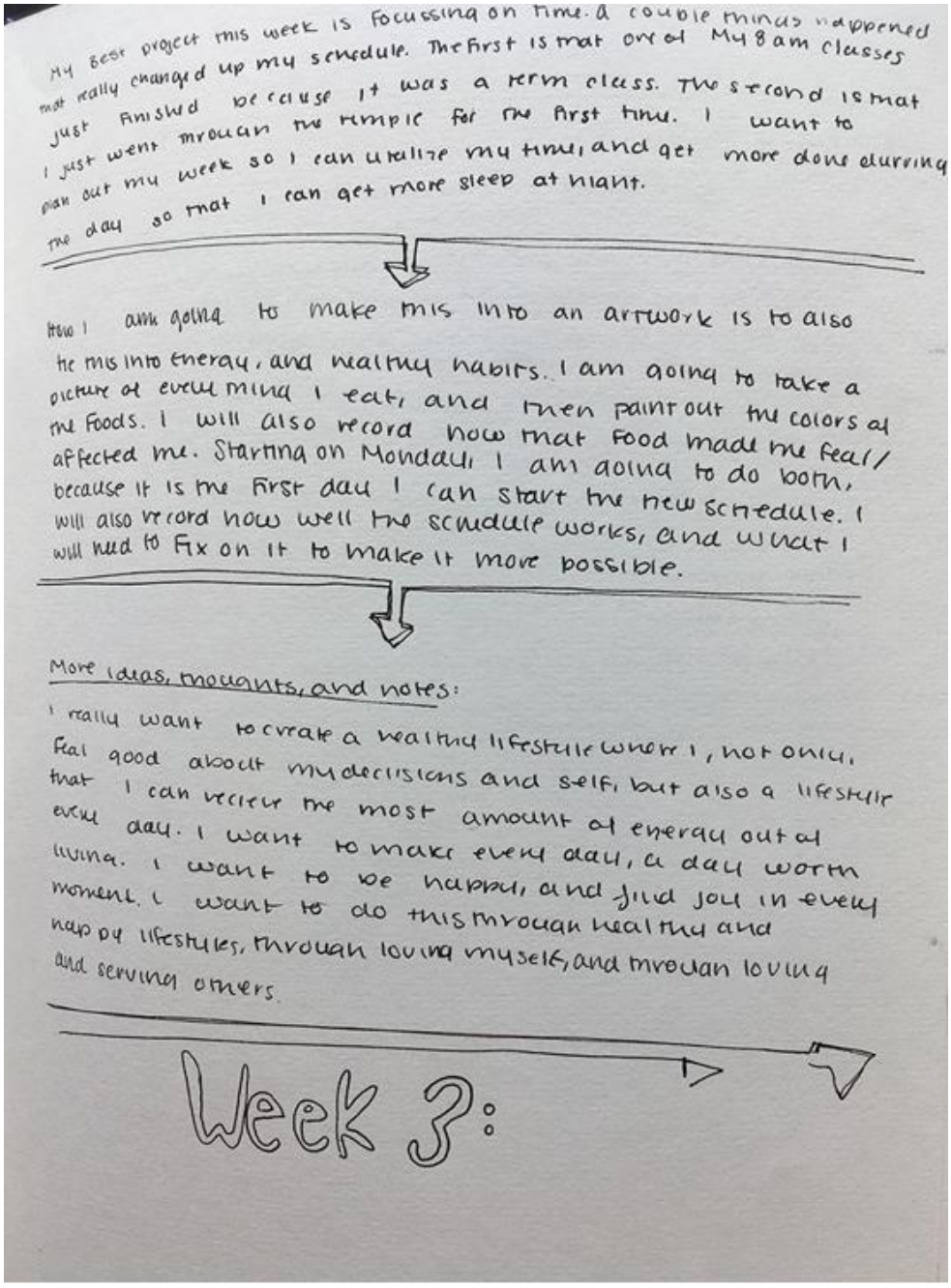

Figure 24. Ameila's B.E.S.T. Reflections

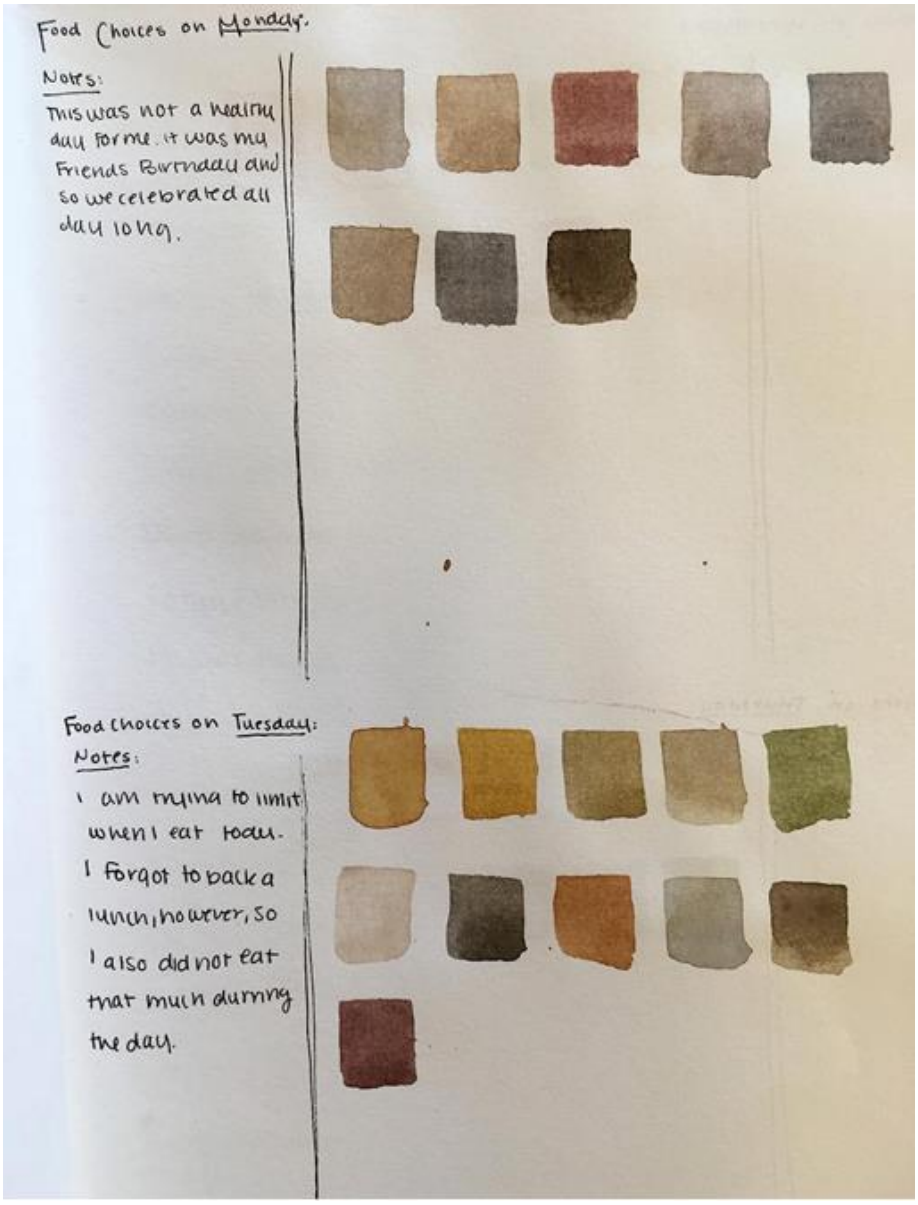

Figure 25. Amelia's Food Choice Color Map

Exploring her artistic process even further, Amelia then combined her mindful space map work with her self-inquiry on food choice and created a transparent data visualization piece that expresses individual interactions with concepts of both space and energy. I was so happy to see such curiosity, exploration, creativity, and artistic growth expressed in students art. This type of transformative art practice via mindful self-inquiry was astonishing to witness as students like Amelia brought their work into the classroom (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Amelia's Combined Map of Food and Space

As Amelia focused on her senses in our sense unit on sound, she created sound maps, tracking her sense of sound for a week and discontinuing her use of headphones for that time frame. I find Amelia's mindful sound practice to be intriguing and inspiring. I believe that some of these students will not long forget their experiences with the senses, their art practice, and the overall lived practice they pursue (see Figure 27).

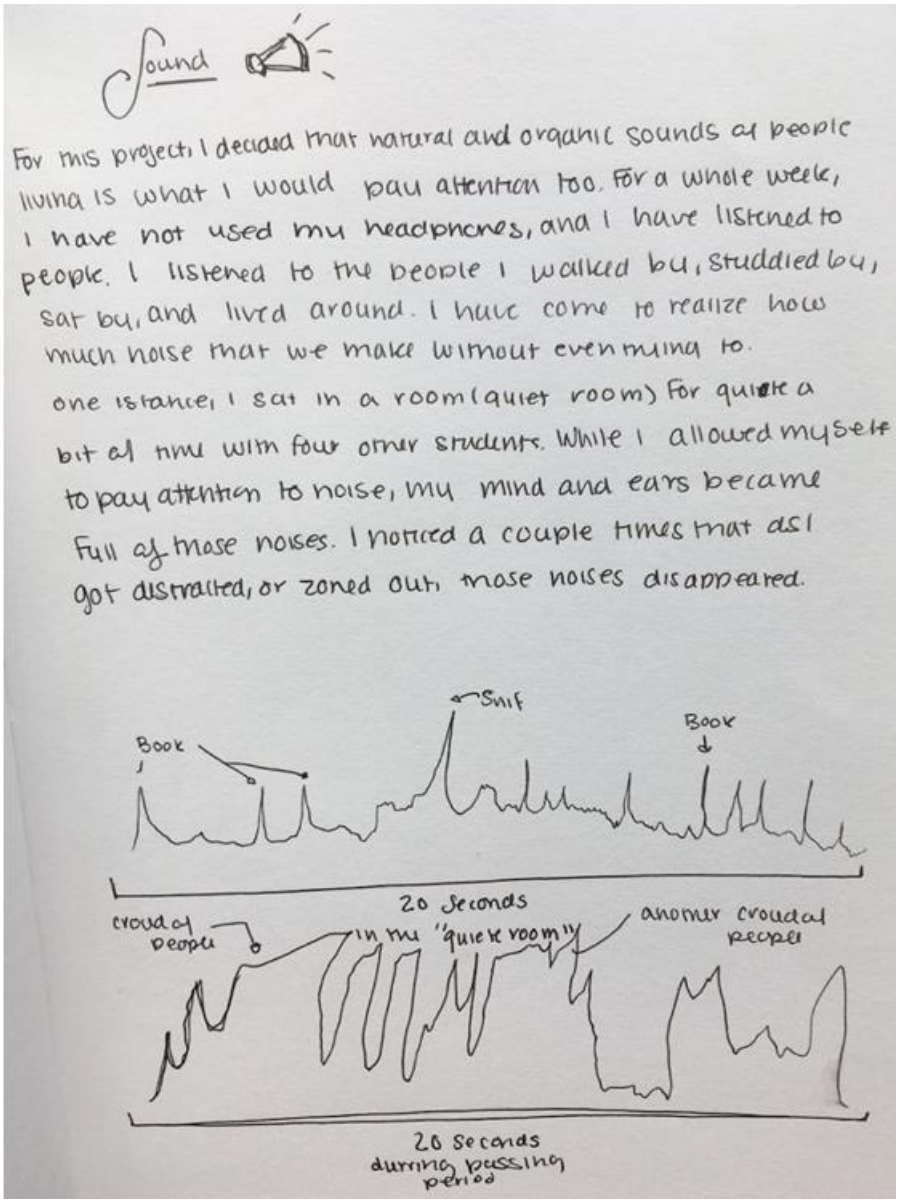

Figure 27. Amelia's Sound Map

In her exploration of the senses, particularly sight, Amelia was given the direction to go to the campus library, specifically the art section, and find a book that visually sparked her interest. Amelia found a book entitled *The City Out My Window: 63 Views of New York* by Matteo Pericoli (2009) and designed her mindfulness work based on sight by choosing to randomly find one window a day in a found building and drawing what she saw through the glass. I felt that this type of experiential, open-ended prompt connected to the senses and art

practice was critical to student self-inquiry; I was pleased to see what Amelia found in this creative process, and to me it was a sign of successful mindfulness components in the curriculum (see Figures 28–29).

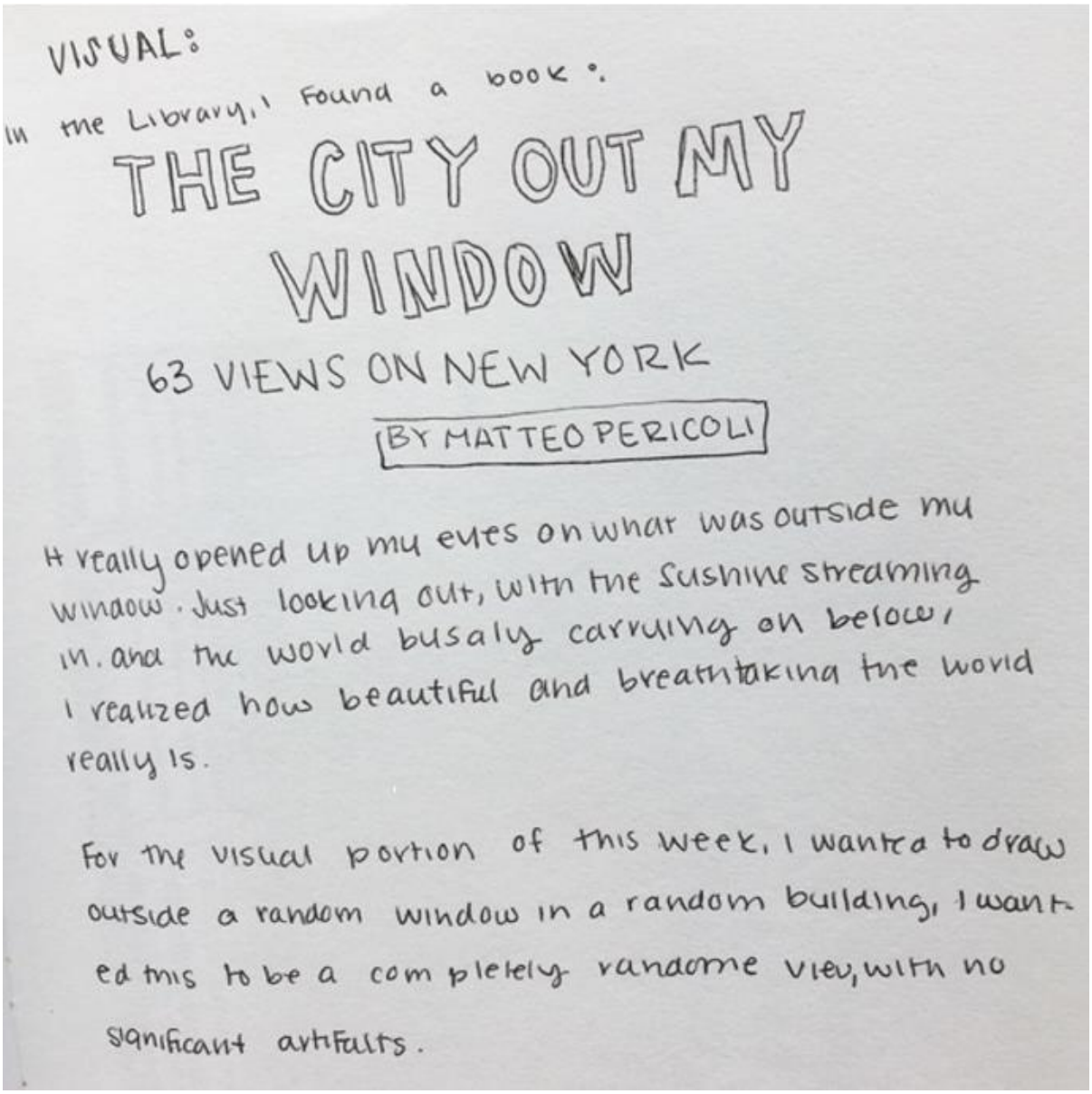

Figure 28. Amelia's Sight Exploration

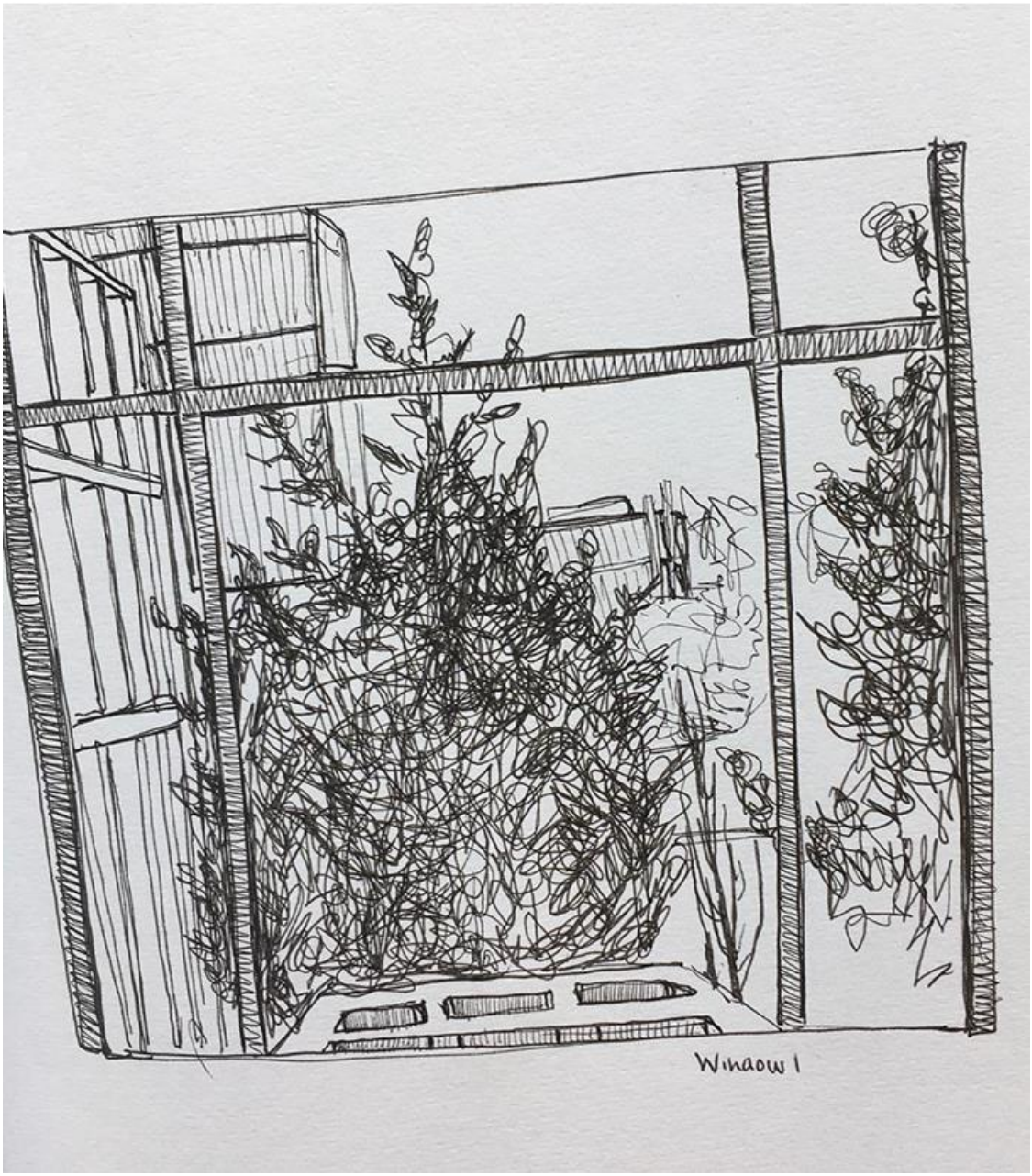

Figure 29. Amelia's Sight Window I

Regarding her art Amelia observed:

It was my stress relief, my personal artwork, I would just do it. I never really noticed my posture, but after our class I started to notice it more. . . . I really loved going outside. . . . I feel like every class was so different; every day we learned new things. . . . For my final

practice, I just tried different things every day to try something. It is one of my habits all semester that I have been doing these things.

Amelia noted the value of the mindfulness exercises in dealing with the stress of being in school, finding the experience to be personally rewarding. In Amelia's case, it seems that she found a generative way to blend the ideas of the mindfulness course with her own aesthetic sensibilities. As an elementary education major, she was very interested in how the materials of the course could be applied to her future students.

A good example of how we connected mindfulness practice to art-making is illustrated in the assignment to draw a chair daily for two weeks while documenting thoughts during the process (see Figures 30–31). Amelia's written description of her senses and thoughts as she was drawing chairs is interesting as to how it might change her artistic practice in the future if she continues in her mindful art journey.

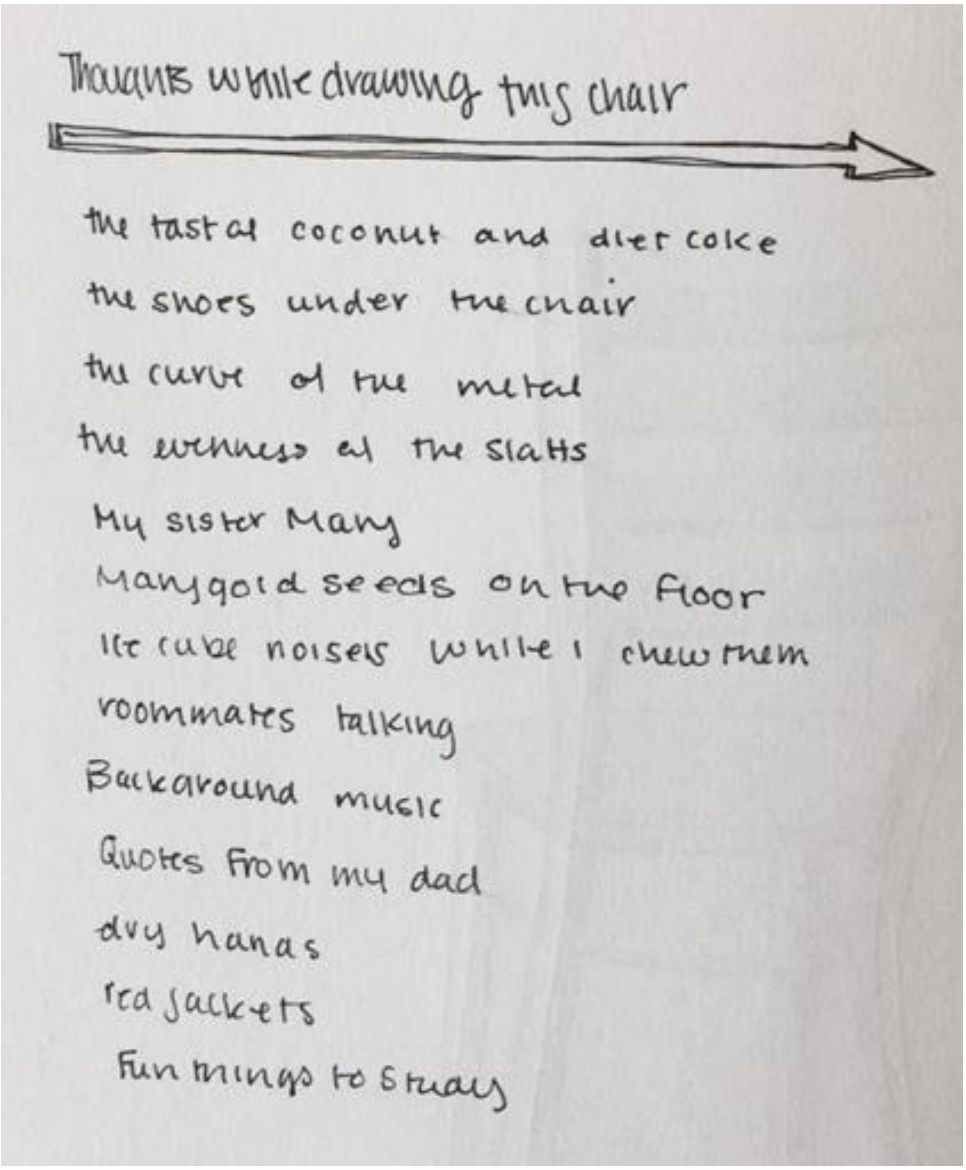

Figure 30. Amelia's Meditations on Chair Study

Figure 31. Amelia's Chair Study

Amelia's work in her individually designed mindfulness and art practice study for Day 9 (see Figure 32) gives a sense of the harmony she has found in exploring mindfulness and art as a lived practice together. There is a balance between rock and sky and color and neutrality, and a sense of journey as an artist expressed with an almost unconscious ease.

Figure 32. Amelia's Individual Mindfulness Practice Day 9

Mary: Perceptions of self. For students like Mary, who took time to not only be mindful of her posture but also to draw it daily for a week, self-inquiry via the body became more realistic and approachable, changing her everyday experience of her daily awareness of posture (see Figures 33–34).

Figure 33. Mary's Sitting Posture Study

Figure 34. Mary's Movement Posture Study

Mary: Mindfulness connections to her art/teaching practice. Mary also created expressive drawings and data visualizations connected to color, which was based on her sense of emotional energy as she exercised at the gym for two weeks (see Figures 35–36). Noticing her emotional substrate can empower her ability to bring positive energy into the classroom.

Figure 35. Mary's Emotions Data Visualization

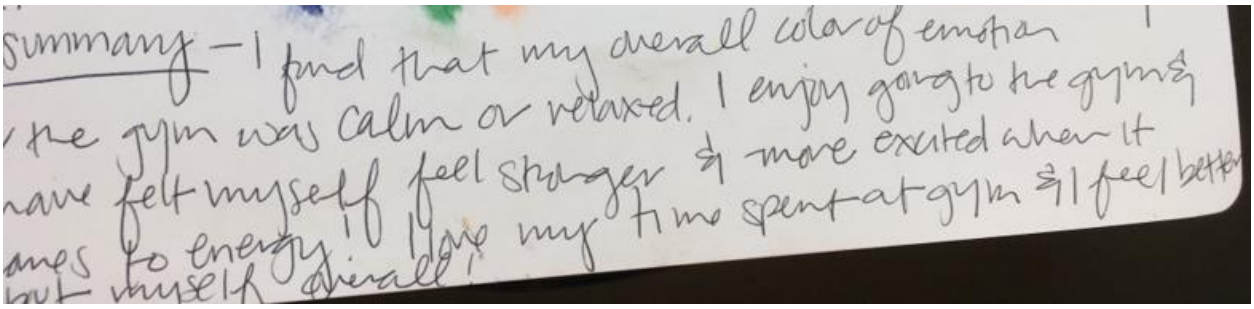

Figure 36. Mary's Emotions Data Visualization Summary

Student journals and data visualization. One approach to connecting art to our mindfulness practice in the classroom was using the concept of data visualization, as is apparent in the students' work described earlier. These experiments resulted in some interesting and artistically compelling graphic representations of experience. For example, Cora found numerous

visual outlets to connect her mindful practices to her art, including a self-inquiry regarding her conversations with others (see Figure 37). Data visualization became an interesting platform for producing original artwork in the classroom setting. Students, like Cora, processed their reflections on lived experience as a part of their artwork as their mindfulness work became a viable part of their lives. Below are examples of data visualizations from various students (see Figures 37–41).

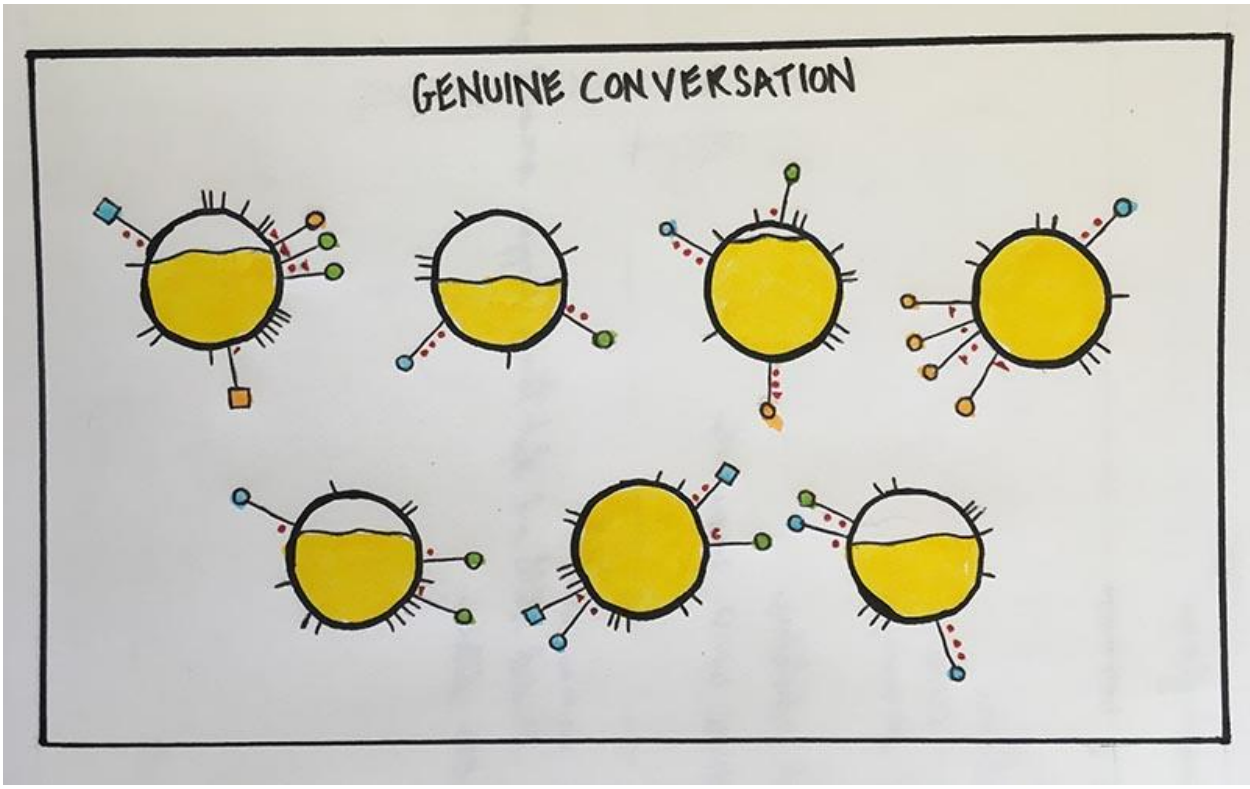

Figure 37. Mary's Genuine Conversation Data Visualization

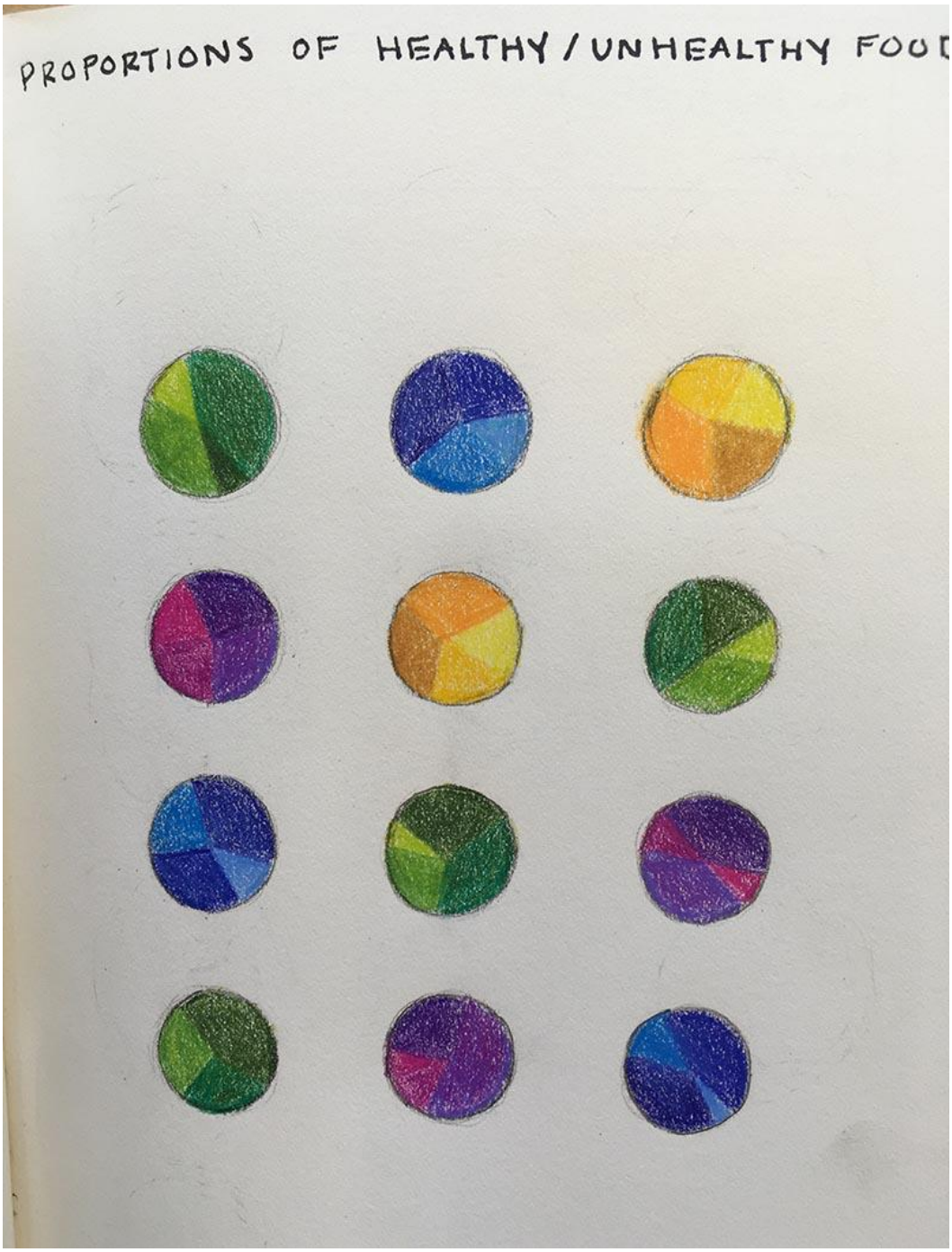

Figure 38. Amelia's Proportions of Foods Data Visualization

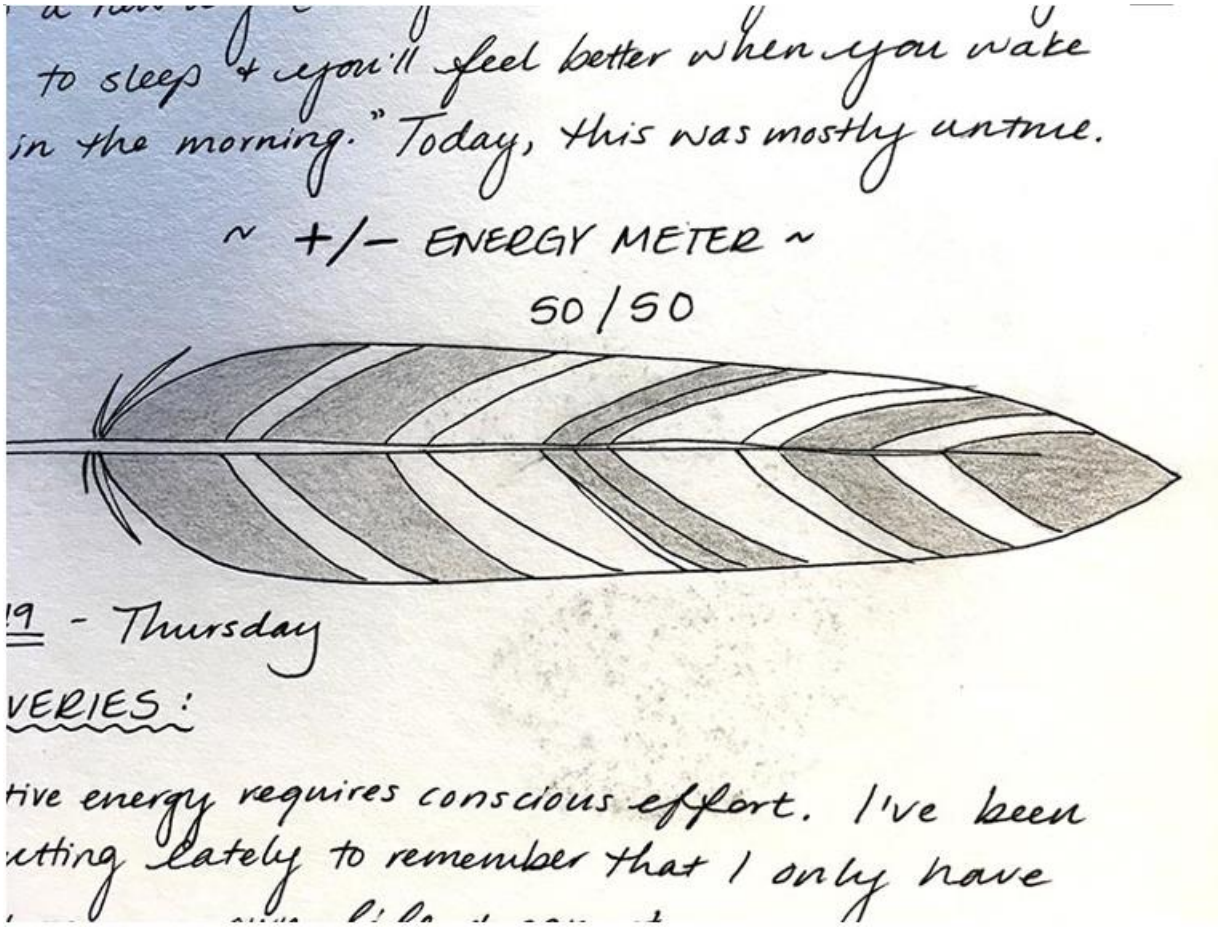

Figure 39. Mia's Feather Energy Meter Data Visualization

Figure 40. Amelia's Space Awareness Data Visualization

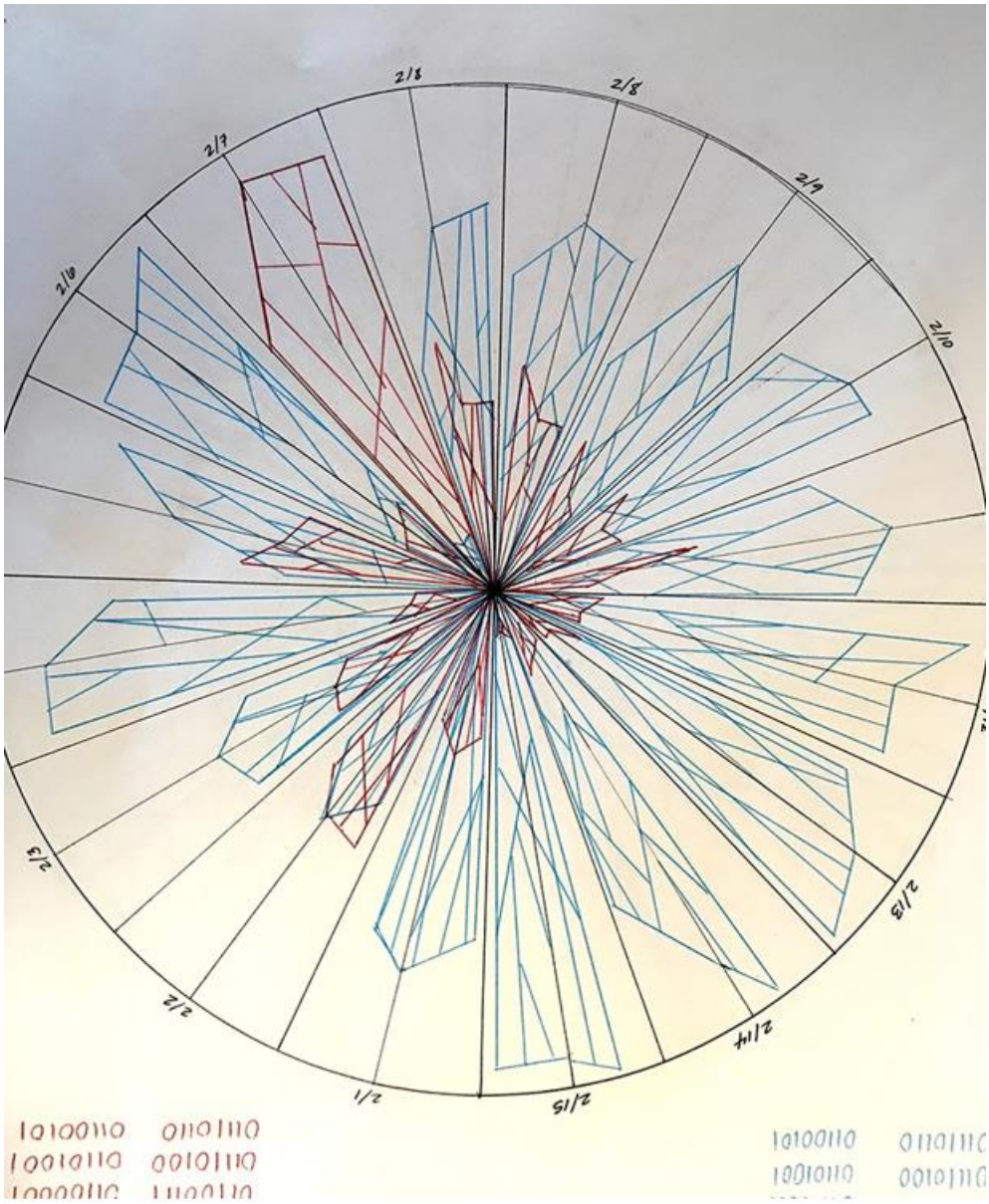

Figure 41. Mia's Data Visualization Emotion Wheel

One of the reasons data visualization can be a powerful platform for students who create it as well as for those who view it is because it relies on symbol-making. In the general education courses I have taught over the past 10 years at Brigham Young University, I have noticed that students are empowered with additional understanding of the self when they reflect on what specific symbols connect with their sense of identity, sense of security, and their intrinsic, aesthetic values. As symbols are intrinsically tied to frames of mind, habits of perspective, and

the ways we view ourselves and the world at large, it is important for students to see symbols, draw symbols, understand symbols, experience symbols, and apply symbols, as this type of experiential learning is foundational to transformative change and sense of identity.

Final Project: Individual Two-Week Mindfulness Designs

As students progressed during the semester through their individual mindfulness and art self-inquiries, they began to intuitively craft their own mindfulness exercises, which culminated in their designing and completing a two-week individual mindfulness and art practice as a final project. This section highlights some of their mindfulness design projects.

Mary honed in on her gratitude for water and for two weeks in the evening before bed washed her feet and reflected during that practice on how she spent the day and what she was grateful for that day. She also saw the practice as a symbolic renewal of each day, giving herself a fresh start for the morning and creating space for contemplation of how better to approach difficult aspects of her life. Mary created circular, colorful artworks that symbolize ripples of water with text expressing her thoughts (see Figures 42–44).

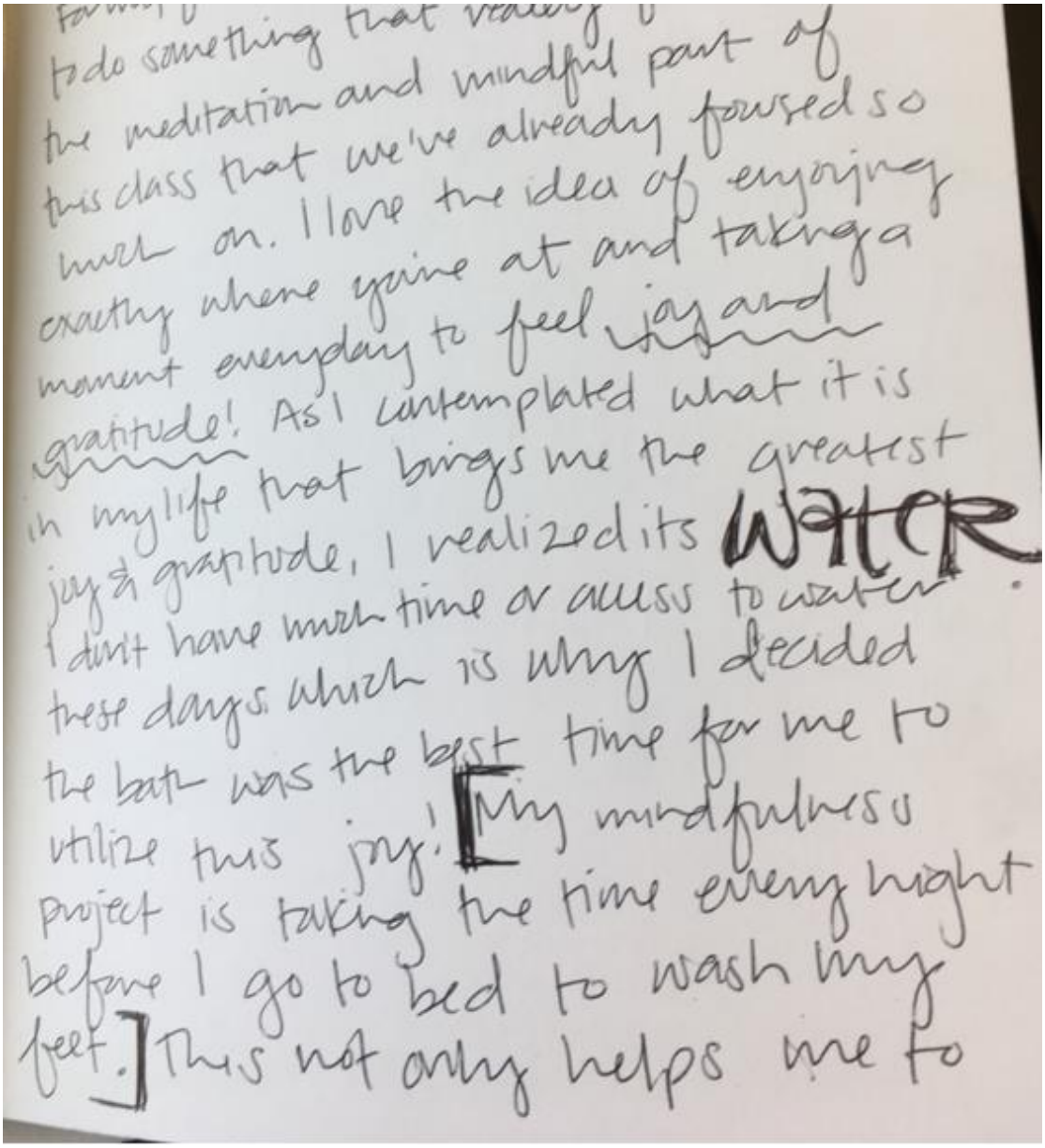

Figure 42. Mary's Gratitude Meditation on Water

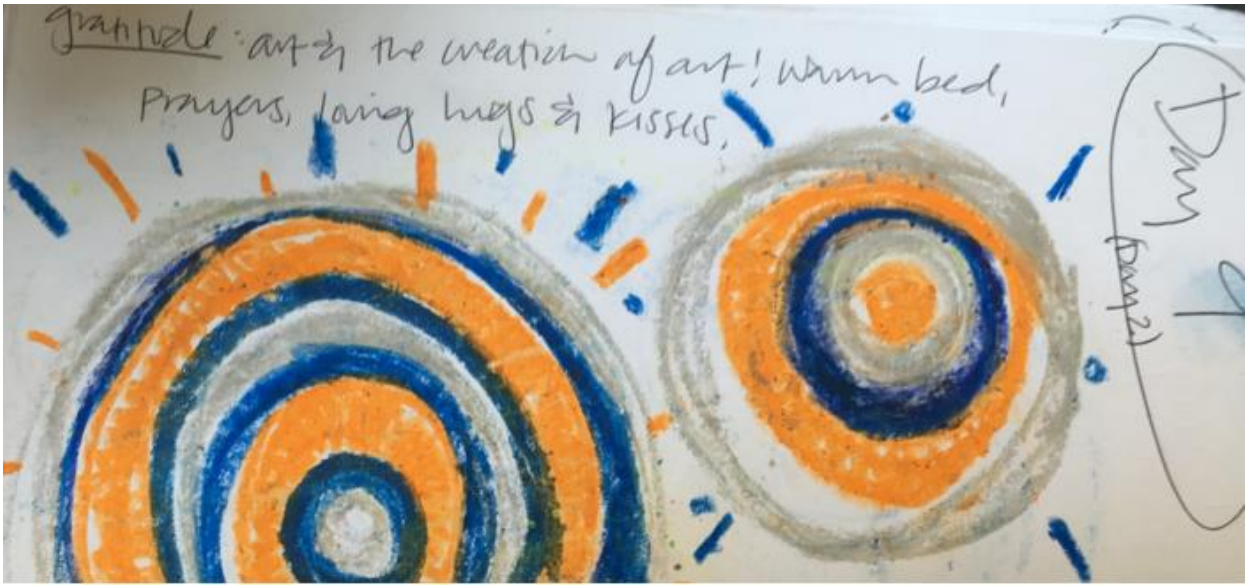

Figure 43. Mary's Gratitude Meditation Day 9

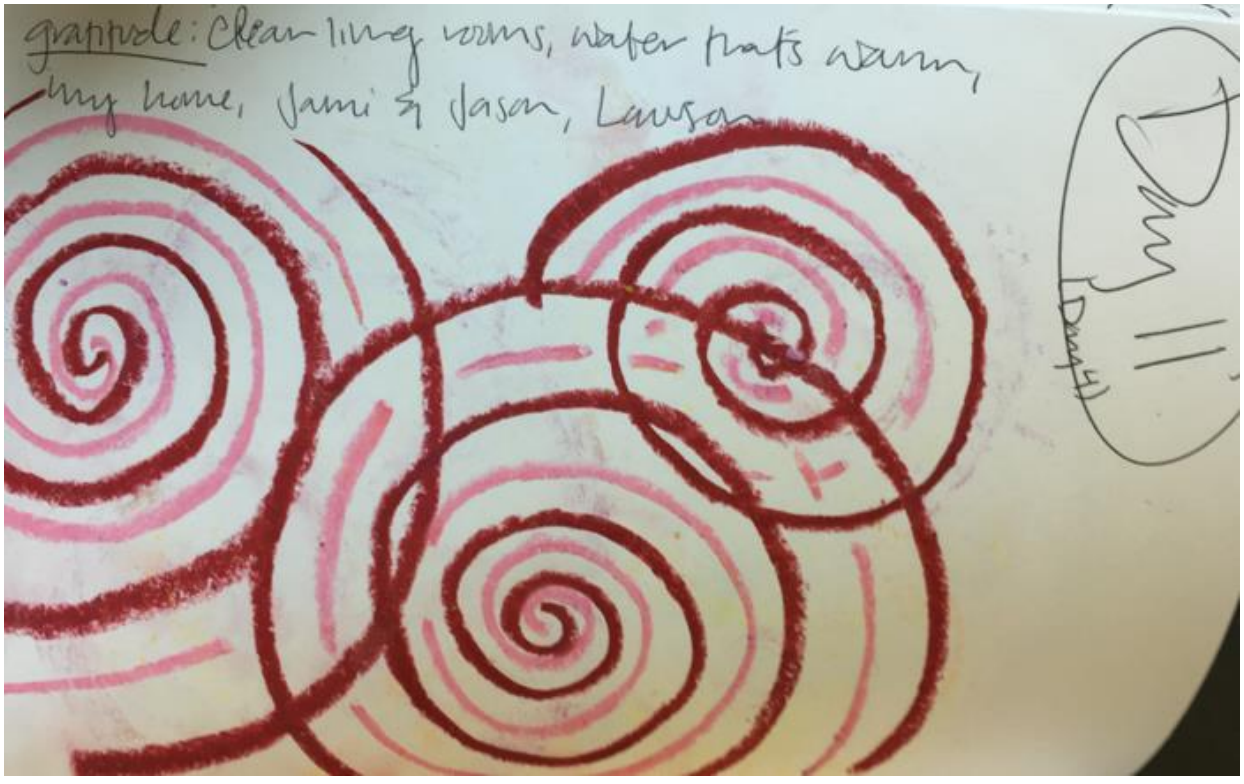

Figure 44. Mary's Gratitude Meditation Day 11

Lucy challenged herself to step out of her comfort zone every day for two weeks and visually document her experience, allowing herself an open framework for artistic expression based on the day's journey (see Figures 45–46).

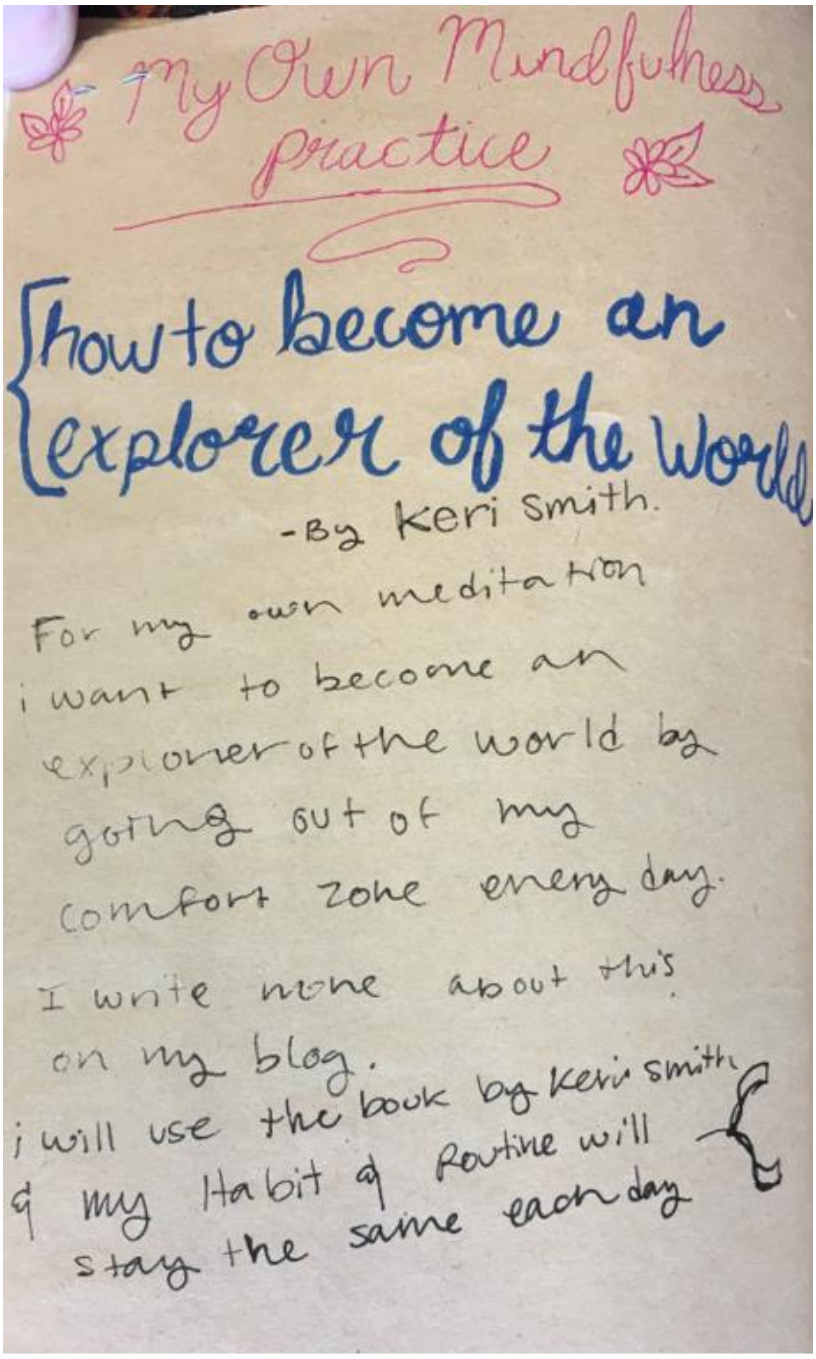

Figure 45. Lucy's Gratitude Meditation Individual Two-Week Practice

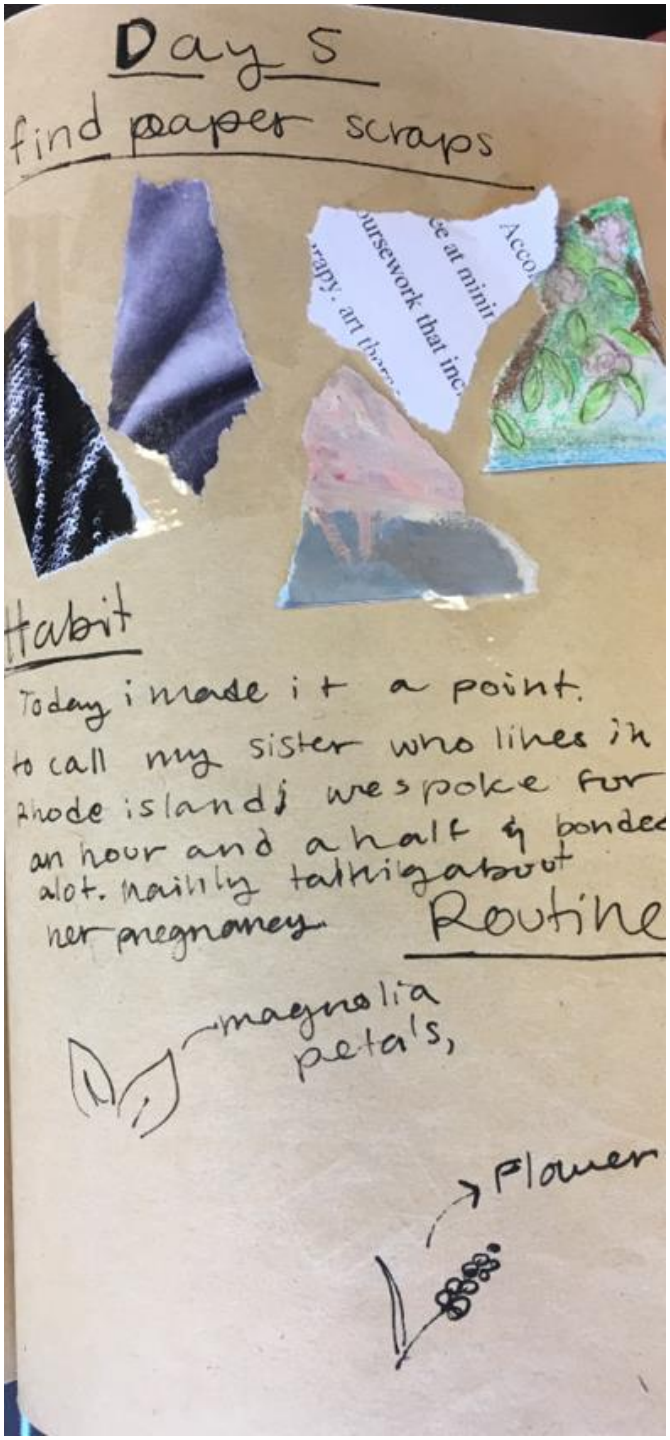

Figure 46. Lucy's Gratitude Meditation Individual Two-Week Practice Day 5

Both Mary's and Lucy's two-week mindfulness designs could be beneficial to pre-service art educators as they involve improving self-confidence and developing an attitude of growth, two key traits every teacher needs.

Sophia focused her two-week design on her awareness of the importance of her connection to the outdoors. Figure 47 describes her two-week individualized mindfulness process, and Figures 48–50 illustrate her work.

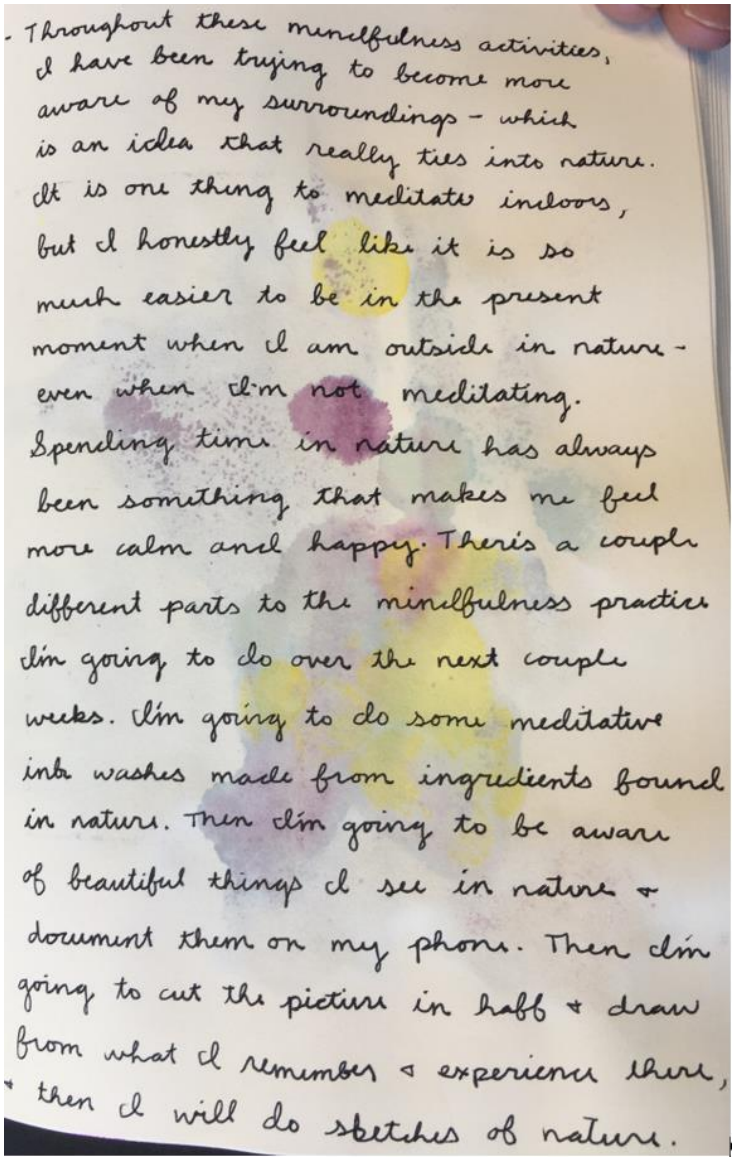

Figure 47. Sophia's Meditative Ink Wash Two-Week Individual Practice

Figure 48. Sophia's Meditative Ink Wash Image

Figure 49. Sophia's Photographic Drawing Meditation I

Figure 50. Sophia's Photographic Drawing Meditation II

Sophia's ability to recognize how mindfulness can connect intrinsically to her art practice and sense of self could be a powerful tool for her as a future art educator.

Overall, the self-inquiry art journals were a vital, expressive component of the art education curriculum and research, allowing students to process and reflect intermittently as they created different artworks and approaches to their individual mindfulness studies, which culminated in a final project where students designed and experienced their own two-week mindful art practice.

Pre-Post Survey Questionnaires

A pre- and post- mindfulness survey was given at the beginning and end of the semester. The survey used a numeric scale of 1–6 as a basis for rating, with 1 being "most aware" and 6 being "least aware" for the following categories: *almost always, very frequently, somewhat frequently, somewhat infrequently, very infrequently,* and *almost never*. Of the 17 students who took the pre and post survey, 17 reported increased awareness in one or more of the categories. Questions on the pre and post survey asked students to rate their awareness of the five senses (taste, touch, sound, sight, and smell) and of their posture and breath on a daily basis. In addition, students rated their awareness of the five senses and of their posture and breath in relation to art-making. They also rated their awareness of their emotions and thoughts while art-making and their sense of being present in the classroom. Results showed a general increase in awareness of self and emotions in art practice and in the classroom setting as well as of the senses, posture, and breath. While some students reported only a slight rise in these areas of mindful awareness, others experienced a more pronounced increase, for example changing their rating from a 5 to a 2 or 1 by the end of the semester.

Final Mindfulness Questionnaire

A summative questionnaire was completed by each student at the end of the semester as a means to distill their overall experience in the course and to give them an opportunity to provide feedback. The following are questions from the survey and a sample of students' responses.

Question: How did our semester-long study of mindfulness and the spiritual dimensions of art and art-making influence your ideas about art?

> "Art is, in my opinion, all about noticing things that others might not notice. That's what artists are—a set of lenses through which others may look to see what is underlying, what is felt, and what is subtle. A mindfulness practice makes artists better at doing this" (Mia). "That art can reflect your spirit and well-being. That art is about the way you feel, see, hear, smell, taste, and in general experience life and the world" (Michelle). "I was able to see art in a slightly new perspective, seeing the spiritual side of art in the spotlight. I could see art as a very important form of identity and expression, and a form of healing" (Riley). "I found that as I was more mindful of my surroundings (and specifically the beauty I saw), I created more meaningful and deeply rich art. My art no longer was purely for aesthetics, but now stood for deeper purpose and meaning" (Mary).

Question: How did our semester-long study of mindfulness and the spiritual dimensions of art and art-making influence your ideas about your own personal art-making?

> "I have grown personally as an artist; I find art has become my form of meditation and has helped me explore more mediums and contemporary ideas" (Lucy). "I think more about how I'm feeling while I make art and try to find time to stay in the present through art-making. I incorporate more of my thoughts and feelings about mindfulness into my

art" (Michelle). "I've had more flow moments this semester than any other" (Cora). "I found my personal art-making to have a greater significance. What I create says something. My creation can be quite meaningful if I let it. I feel more aware of why I do what I do, why I create what I create" (Riley).

Question: How did our semester-long study of mindfulness and the spiritual dimensions of art and art-making influence your ideas about your sense of self?

"I feel more aware of my stress levels, and I know more about how to calm down/manage my stress. I recognize my senses more and when one is stronger/influencing my perceptions more than others" (Michelle). "I have noticed both the good and bad things about myself while being mindful. I see how poisonous I can be and how generous. My meditation has given me a moment to reflect on my behavior and desires" (Cora). "Through exploring art and mindfulness, I have discovered more and more of myself. I have rediscovered the parts of art-making that I truly treasure and the parts that push me to better my process" (Amelia).

When students were asked which of the mindful approaches used in the course were most useful, seven out of ten students indicated that they felt that the mindfulness art journal was a valuable tool in their process of self-inquiry. Five out of 10 students selected their B.E.S.T. Practice study, in-class breath and posture meditations, the senses unit, and the mindfulness text book and accompanying meditative practices.

Question: How would you improve this course?

"I would only have one or two aspects of mindfulness in the daily/weekly practice" (Kylie). "I would rather have mindfulness be something I do every day but only write about once a week" (Mia). "I would focus on B.E.S.T. for longer. More specific prompts

for making art outside of class in response to each part of the course" (Michelle). "My least favorite part of class was writing stuff down because my sensing time had to be followed by a write-up. I would put more emphasis on the artistic part since many of my weeks resulted in paragraphs rather than images just based on how the assignments were worded" (Cora). "I personally struggled with the daily tasks that piled up with meditation, routine daily awareness, habit releasers, etc. I would stick to main focus of awareness w/senses/mindfulness and art-making" (Riley). "I have been doing meditation for a while so this isn't anything new. The most useful resource for me has been 'Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics.' I didn't like the drawing chairs bit; drawing isn't meditative for me" (Sadie).

In-Class Writing Observations

Periodically throughout the semester students were given the opportunity in class to assess how they felt the mindfulness curriculum was working for them. Students were provided with small blue notebooks to record their thoughts, which were collected after each class period to ensure availability for future in-class writing. The following are students' observations from these notebooks:

Mary: "My overall experience with meditation the last three weeks has been great. I have enjoyed trying to think of times in the day that I find peace. I have found peace comes when I shower, take care of others, do ceramics, spend time with my husband, and meditate before bed.So far, I've been meditating almost four weeks now, and here's what I've learned: meditation should be mandatory for all college students/human beings with any kind of responsibilities. If meditation cannot be implemented, religion should be, sitting properly really makes my back hurt, my favorite meditation occurs in places where

water is present, and creating art of some kind each day is essential—but even more so, creating something that makes you happy."

Michelle: "So far for me I've become much more aware of myself, of my mental state, through my meditation experiences. I was already on a sort of self-discovery path before we started this class, but I think I've gained more tools for my mental health toolbox through this experience. I notice more when I am agitated or not quite aligned physically or mentally, and am able to calm down faster now. I am able to focus better. I was almost concerned I had ADD or something going on before, and I now have a clearer head. Through this experience I have had some different artistic promptings to shift my style of art to a more open and loose style. I've brought more of my emotions and mindset and reflections about mindfulness into my art-making, and I think there is a lot more to discover and more I can do with this in my art."

Sophia: "I feel like mindfulness is a great practice to employ in art-making—art is all about noticing and disrupting routine and thinking about the way we go about our lives and our habits, so I do feel like these last couple weeks have helped me with my art practice to become more aware. I've also really enjoyed doing meditative drawings in my book on a small scale. I feel like I've developed some ideas that could be used for a larger study with repetitive lines and patterns, and it's almost a mediation to draw them, so I wonder what kind of response viewers would have if I continued it on a larger scale. I am going to try to take more moments to be mindful, just aware of my body and breath and what is happening in the present moment instead of always focusing on the future."

Madison: "So far, I don't like meditating. My brain likes to wander, and I like to get lost in my thoughts. It gets really boring trying to bring my brain back to the present. I just

ended up getting irritated. I did find though that constantly bringing my mind back to the present was really nice when I was in conversations with people. It helped me pay attention better and communicate better."

Kylie: "I do truly love learning all of these meditation techniques and principles. Some of them, like breathing and posture, I've been subconsciously applying in my everyday activities, and it's been great."

Amelia: "We sat as a class and meditated. Like always, it felt so good to sit in complete control. I felt relaxed and peaceful. I felt as though I was living through forever in a moment."

Riley: "As I sit and breathe deeply, I feel calm. I feel slightly hyper-aware as I am surrounded by others, but also complete silence. I try to focus my thoughts on my breathing alone. It feels good to actively do nothing. I do not do this enough."

Revisions between the Pilot Study and the Second-Semester Study

Action research is based on observing, implementing, and reflecting and then using that experience to experiment further. This section discusses some of the differences between the first and second mindfulness curriculum studies.

Pilot study. The first mindfulness curriculum study was implemented midway through the course as an eight-week unit, and we found that students had a hard time integrating it into the existing curriculum. Feedback indicated that most students saw mindfulness as additional homework to complete and not as a tool to help them reduce stress in their lives or connect to their art practice. In addition, students wrote and sketched most of their observations on worksheet-type forms that were collected in class as data and reported their time spent meditating online on a grading system used by the university. All of the above implementations

seemed to associate mindfulness with homework, stress, and academic expectations and fragmented the process of a mindful self-inquiry.

In the first study the senses were not tied to the Routine Daily Awareness and Habit Releasers recommended in the text. Students did not have a consistent, guided connection between mindfulness and individual art practice outside of the classroom. For example, they were asked to consider their sense of smell outside of class for a week, but there was not a requirement to create work based around their experience with their sense of smell during that time frame. Instead, there were a few experiences provided in class that tied mindfulness to art practice, for example, weaving and basic fiber art studies, and students were encouraged to explore their own individual art practices for connections to mindfulness throughout the semester. Despite the many challenges, results at the end of the semester showed that the eight students participating valued to some degree the opportunity to engage in the mindfulness curriculum.

Second-semester study. Student feedback, as well as our own reflections, was essential in revising the pilot study. The second-semester mindfulness study began as a dual instructor course, with mindfulness introduced as part of the curriculum on the first day and continuing throughout the semester. A mindfulness art journal was the main receptacle for self-inquiry and exploration; anything discussed, assigned, or explored in class or out of class connected to mindfulness would be recorded in these individual journals that students could take home daily. Every two weeks these student journals were collected and assessed for progress based on engagement with the curriculum and were returned the same day so students could continue with their work. The Routine Daily Awareness and Habit Releaser exercises were tied to the senses, but students had the option to choose unrelated activities. Each week students completed an

artwork in their journals that was connected to mindfulness and relevant material within the curriculum.

By streamlining everything into one holistic process that was recorded in their mindfulness art journals, students felt an ownership in their work and in the course as a whole. As a result, we increased overall student engagement with mindfulness as a lived practice that encompassed and influenced their art practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this section I will discuss the formative and summative observations of the three main questions of the research study (as noted in the Introduction), including best practices of a mindfulness curriculum within a visual arts course, potential student benefits of a mindfulness self-inquiry curriculum woven into a pre-service art education course, and the impact of the research study on my own teaching methods and everyday lived practice.

Mindfulness Curriculum Reflections

Considering the unknown expectations connected to our explorations of the question of how mindfulness might be best taught and practiced within a visual arts class, I was pleased to see Amelia's summation of her experience in the mindfulness and art curriculum. Clearly, to Amelia, the mindfulness curriculum was laid out in an approachable and useful way. Her reflections and work show that she feels that mindfulness has increased her sense of self and artistic ability and her love and understanding of art, and she intends to use mindfulness as a tool for teaching art and the whole self in her future art classroom someday. Amelia's reflections indicate that she has been through a transformative learning process and that mindfulness woven into an art education curriculum can be a powerful vehicle for positive results in teaching and learning about the whole self and for broadening artistic practice in applicable ways.

Not every student, however, engaged with mindfulness and art practice. Some students, depending on their individual circumstances, felt that the mindfulness curriculum could be overwhelming and frustrating, as was the case with Kylie, who wrote early on in the semester, "While mindfulness techniques have been beneficial, the home practices have been causing me alarming amounts of unnecessary stress. As a full-time student with five other classes, I already

have a lot to keep track of." Although Kylie mentioned that mindfulness was beneficial, she clearly felt some anxiety about having to complete mindfulness assignments at home.

In my view, mindfulness is most needed by those who are sometimes least prepared to practice it. Similar to the Christian view that the publicans needed Christ the most and yet were the least prepared to walk the ways of truth, mindfulness offers functional pathways out of real ailments like anxiety and depression, but practicing it will feel overwhelming to those already in the ditch, so to speak. One way to teach mindfulness to individuals dealing with anxiety is to cultivate empathy and strive to understand their relative placement in their experience of mindfulness, and then from that orientation offer tools to help them navigate their own mindfulness journey. In other words, what works for one student might not for another; flexible constraints and creative adaptations are essential.

In Kylie's case, I responded to her feedback with openness and adjustments that seemed to alleviate some of the stress she was feeling about the mindfulness curriculum. Open class dialogue consistently provided a soundboard for how things were going for students individually. At the end of the semester Kylie wrote, "Personally, I'm better able to gain back control over my body when anxiety arises, so it's definitely helped me over and over in school and work. I've also been more effective at decluttering my home."

One of the most striking successes of the study was data visualization. I knew students would be making art connected to their mindfulness inquiry, but I did not predict the kind of deep and transformative art connections Cora, Amelia, Lucy, and Mia in particular would make in their art practice and work. It was intriguing to see this type of lived practice emerging in the classroom as evidence of individual, authentic questioning and artistic journey.

Data visualization is a powerful way to process mindfulness, art practice, and lived experience—it connects intrinsically to action research as a lived practice, as students create visual accounts of research questions, often without realizing they are conducting research. I feel that students' data visualization work was important because it was a new vehicle of art expression that communicated individual, experiential concepts in a language that was visually recognizable and eye-opening to the artist and his or her audience. In a future class, an entire course curriculum could be built on producing art based solely on mindfulness inquiry.

Revisions for a third study of mindfulness within an art education curriculum would include clearer grading expectations on artwork completed for the mindfulness art journal, with student examples provided as well as specific instructions for self-inquiry writing observations of the at-home mindfulness practices. A rubric that could be included in the journals would be used for the biweekly mindfulness art journal evaluations, providing students with accurate and immediate feedback. A section in the journal could be allocated for private writing to provide students with greater privacy and authentic space to work. Journals would be gathered every three weeks instead of every two, which would promote the development of mindfulness and art habits, as research indicates a new habit requires 21 days of consistent practice (Achor, 2011). If possible, more time would be allotted in class for reading and discussing mindfulness material related to teaching and art practice. Students would have an increased opportunity to discuss their mindfulness art practices with classmates and increased class time to work on their individual artworks. More time would be allotted for movement sessions. Students would have a one-on-one discussion with the instructor midway through the course to allow reflection on progress and provide opportunity for specific feedback. Anonymous questionnaires would also be provided every three weeks to gather student feedback.

Potential Student Benefits of a Mindfulness Self-Inquiry

Based on student observations in their mindfulness art journals documented in chapter 4, some potential benefits of mindfulness were evident. For example, as Mia noted, practices of mindfulness seem closely related to repetitive artistic and crafts practices, such as pottery, weaving, and drawing, a concept that can be a powerful tool in focusing minds in a classroom setting**.** In addition, comments like Sophia's in her mindfulness work on nutrition indicate that her self-inquiry with mindfulness and her body can change a student's perception of how to take care of herself in a positive manner in ways that can extend far beyond the classroom setting. This type of reframing of habits of mind that Sophia experienced is a relevant marker that a mindfulness curriculum can help students transform their lives in a positive way. Furthermore, as Amelia discovered, mindfulness combined with art practice can produce compelling artwork as there is a viable connection between personal awareness, mindfulness practice, and the ways artists go about working.

Perhaps the most useful tool mindfulness can provide the practicing pre-service art education student is that of replacing the perpetual eye of the critic with one that can shift to a lens of objectivity and curiosity, something that Cora in particular noted in the study. The ability to examine thought without judgment—to look at individual thoughts and accept them for what they are without coloring them as good or bad—is a key mindfulness technique. According to Williams and Penman, "In mindfulness, we start to see the world as it is, not as we expect it to be, or what we fear it might become" (2011, p. 35). While rigorous criticism is an important component in artistic realms, there should be a space designed for the practicing artist as naturalist, who is examining the nature of his or her individual landscape and the animal therein with open inquisitiveness and compassion.

One unique aspect of this study was the way in which the student participants shaped the inquiry as it progressed. Throughout the project, the students were considering the same questions that we were contemplating and enthusiastically added their own insights and experiences as they experimented and practiced various approaches to mindfulness as it connected to art-making. Their authentic embrace of the research questions as co-researchers added to many lively discussions about their experiences. This process embodies Freire's concept of "problem-posing" education where in the student's learning is based on action and reflection, incorporating learning into his or her awareness of the environment via dialogue with a teacher (Freire, 2018).

My Self-Inquiry

I agree with Mark Twain, who said:

> I think we never become really and genuinely our entire and honest selves until we are dead—and not then until we have been dead years and years. People ought to start dead, and they would be honest so much earlier. (n.d.)

In a proverbial sense, it takes being lost to be found, and a transformative lens will do the trick. Often what is transformative can be traumatic. Many of us have been through arduous ordeals that we would not wish to relive, and yet we would not wish to relinquish the knowledge and development we gained. Aldous Huxley's view that experience is what we make of it, not what happens to us, relates well with the schema-shifting platform inherent in transformative learning theory (qtd. in Illeris, 2018, p. 44). In other words, we must become conscious of our situation, framework, habit of mind, and point of view. Like a goldfish exiting the bowl via a net and for a few seconds experiencing the earth's atmosphere, mindfulness offers a similar change of experiential landscape and what we "know" of our relative self and our relation to the world.

Before I encountered mindfulness, I was not fully aware of my thoughts as separate from myself nor of the agency available in the realms of the mind. I went from day to day for 40 years like the Israelites, wandering through the distraction and disorder my thoughts provided on automatic pilot—to a large extent, I still do. Mindfulness, like action research, does not resolve itself but rather expands exponentially the relative options available with increased clarity as to cause and effect. The process for me has included five years of yoga, probably 50 walks in nature, a study of Christian scripture, reassessment of my knowledge and experience of movement and awareness of the body, an eight-week mindfulness course based in the UK, two professors dedicated to the spiritual dimensions of education and holistic habits of teaching as a living practice, 30 weeks of mindfulness curriculum brainstorming and implementation, a stockpile of books, and an increased tendency to analyze the body language of fellow pedestrians.

While I still fall prey to zero awareness of my thoughts, now, however, there is a narrow pathway I can choose to access where I can cultivate stillness and observe myself with objectivity and empathy. The mindfulness training and experiences I have had in graduate school have helped me embrace what is and hold difficult things close. On a daily basis, I live with less judgment, more acceptance, less anger, and more hope both for myself and others around me. I am less inclined to fly to action and more inclined to watch and wait. I noticed throughout my work this past year especially that I took more time out during the day to notice my breath, my posture, my feelings, my thoughts, my relationships, and my sense of being versus doing. I have found more contentment in the small tasks at hand and greater gratitude for the everyday opportunities of living.

It has become more natural for me to be consistently aware of tension in my body as I sit, stand, walk, talk, cook, clean, write, drive, teach, dance, paint, and more. When I recognize tension, I am more capable of releasing that tension with breath and awareness. Overall, I have a more functional, conscious mindset that leads to greater accountability in my daily living, which is completely empowering. This daily internal and external objective awareness is priceless to me but comes with a price of practice, without which there is no progress.

I feel in particular that my teaching over the past two years in the Department of Dance has been critically empowering to some students as I have been vulnerably engaged in the kind of lived practice mindfulness affords and demands. I am grateful that some of my students have expressed the opinion that my general education course was one of the most important they enrolled in during their time at university because of the personal insights they gained. For myself, regarding my time spent in graduate school learning from my professors, I share the view of Samuel Scudder about his experience learning how to learn from Harvard professor of natural sciences Louis Agassiz in the 1850s. Scudder said of his educational experience, "A legacy the professor left to me, as he has left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part" (qtd. in McCullough, 2007, p. 26).

I am grateful to be in a position to continue to teach and research the subject of mindfulness and for the continual opportunity each day offers to practice awareness. I hope that through natural curiosity, the senses, the opportunity to observe with alert attention and compassion, and the self-inquiry processes connected to mindfulness and movement, students may be inspired to be more conscious of the workings of their mind, body, and environment in a way that promotes well-being.

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Appendix A

Pre-Post Mindfulness Survey

Eight-Week Pre-Post Mindfulness Survey adapted from the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) developed by Kirk Warren Brown, PhD, Department of Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University

Name:
Date:

Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1–6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

1-Almost Always, 2-Very Frequently, 3-Somewhat Frequently, 4-Somewhat Infrequently, 5-Very Infrequently, 6-Almost Never

1. I notice my posture when I am at work, home, or school.
2. I have an awareness of my breathing on a daily basis.
3. I give attention to my sense of hearing on a daily basis.
4. I give attention to my sense of touch on a daily basis.
5. I give attention to my sense of taste on a daily basis.
6. I give attention to my sense of sight on a daily basis.
7. I give attention to my sense of smell on a daily basis.
8. I notice and recognize my emotions on a daily basis.
9. I am aware of my senses as part of my art-making practice.
10. I am aware of my posture as part of my art-making practice.
11. I am aware of my breath as part of my art-making practice.
12. I am aware of my emotions as part of my art-making practice.
13. I am aware of my thoughts as part of my art-making practice.
14. I feel in the present moment when I am in the classroom.

Appendix B

Touch Mindfulness Experience

Name:
Date:

Directions: Look at the objects in front of you. Each one represents one of the five elements: fire, soil, metal, water, and wood. These elements are associated with the following attributes: fire (outward, expressive), soil (downward/settled), metal (inward/concentrated/contained), water (flowing/flexible/regenerative), and wood (upward, active/new hope). These elements tie into spirituality and have a tactile influence in your life.

As you pick up and handle each object/element, pay attention to how you feel and what you think about and/or see in your mind's eye, and write in the space below next to the appropriate element. Also consider your dwelling and describe an object that fits within each of the five elements.

Fire:

Soil:

Metal:

Water:

Wood:

Appendix C

Soundscape Survey

Name:

Instructions: For 15 minutes in an area of your choice on campus:
• Write down every awareness of sound you experience in that space in order of the occurrence.
• Notice your awareness of sound: duration, proximity, direction, start/stop, pattern, and sequence, as well as your overall experience and feelings completing this soundscape assignment, and write down your perceptions.
• Sketch a few images of your choice that relate to your experience. For example, you could create a sound map or chronological sound grid that reflects the sounds you experienced.
• Reflect and write about your overall awareness of sound as it may relate to any aspect of your personal life.

1. Please describe your awareness of sound (as directed above) here:

2. This space is for sketch purposes.

Appendix D

Sight Survey

Name:

Instructions: For 15 minutes in an area of your choice on campus:
• Write down every aspect you notice in your field of sight in order of seeing it.
• Notice your awareness of sight: color, object, size, dimension, pattern, texture, line, symmetry, etc., as well as your overall experience and feelings completing this sight survey, and write down your perceptions.
• Sketch a few images of your choice that relate to your experience. For example, you could create an abstract watercolor based on objects, colors, and individuals you observed.
• Reflect and write about your overall awareness of sight as it may relate to any aspect of your personal life.

1. Please describe your choice of area and awareness of sight (as directed above) here:

2. This space is for sketch purposes.

Appendix E

Taste Survey

Taste 30-Minute Survey
Name:

Preparation: In a seated position, find your sits bones and place your shoulders over them. Allow the ears to float over the shoulders and the neck to free while the head moves forward and up. Breathe deeply through your nose three times.

Directions: Look at the food in front of you. With each type of food, notice things like texture, color, shape, line, pattern, and value and write them down. Slowly pick up the sample of food and take about 10 seconds to savor the flavor before swallowing. Notice your thoughts as you eat. You may encounter memories, have a distinct feeling, etc. Write these down. Take a sip of water to cleanse your palate between food choices and repeat the process starting with the preparation as directed above.

Record your observations here:

Salty: (Saltine)

Sweet: (Smarties)

Umami: (parmesan cheese)

Bitter: (chocolate)

Sour: (lemon wedge)

From this experience, what ideas, symbols, expressions, feelings, and memories come to mind? Represent one of them in a sketch, drawing, painting, collage, etc., of your choice in the space below or in your mindfulness notebook.

Appendix F

Smell Survey

• Walk for 20 minutes outside—preferably in a park, canyon, or a quiet place connected to nature.

• Along the way, choose to be attentive to your sense of smell. Draw or describe what you smell and thoughts related to what you smell in your sketchbook.

• Create a work based on your smell inquiry.

Appendix G

Example of a Mindfulness Home Practice Prompt

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to pay attention to the senses as you complete a different daily ritual, for example, brushing teeth, showering, folding laundry, washing dishes, taking out the trash, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Taste-Food (Choose aspects to focus on related to eating this week, for example, slowing down; noticing color, texture, taste, hunger, cravings; planning a menu; planning a meal; setting out a place mat and table napkins, etc.)

Fill out a new Emotion Wheel this week.

Continue to listen to Meditation 1 (three times a week/set a time and place):
https://www.booksforbetterliving.com/mindfulness-meditation-downloads/

Self-Inquiry Art Journal: In addition to completing the in-class taste survey/art assignment, record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice, both formal and informal, in your self-inquiry art journal.
https://1drv.ms/w/s!ApA4mNvITTaSgn0z2zsUB9ed6DhS

Appendix H

Mindfulness and Art Home Practice 14 Week Self-Inquiry

Home Practice Week 1: Proprioceptive

Mindful Awareness: Finding a Quiet Place at Home, Routine Daily Activity (Choose to pay attention to the senses as you complete a daily ritual, for example, brushing teeth, showering, folding laundry, washing dishes, taking out the trash, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Chair (Choose a new place to sit within your established routine, and fill out the Emotions Wheel.)

Listen to Meditation 1 (three times a week/set a time and place):
https://www.booksforbetterliving.com`/mindfulness-meditation-downloads/

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Draw a chair daily. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice, both formal and informal.

Home Practice Week 2: Taste

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to pay attention to the senses as you complete a *different* daily ritual, for example, brushing teeth, showering, folding laundry, washing dishes, taking out the trash, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Food (Choose aspects to focus on related to eating this week, for example, slowing down, noticing color, texture, taste, hunger, cravings; planning a menu; planning a meal; setting out a place mat and table napkins, etc.)

Fill out a new Emotion Wheel every day this week.

Continue to listen to Meditation 1 (three times a week/set a time and place):
https://www.booksforbetterliving.com`/mindfulness-meditation-downloads/

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice, both formal and informal, in your mindfulness notebook (provided in class). Design and create a visual representation based on taste.

Home Practice Week 3: Touch

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to pay attention to the senses as you complete a *different* daily ritual, for example, brushing teeth, showering, folding laundry, washing dishes, taking out the trash, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Touch (Choose aspects to focus on related to touch this week. For example, ask yourself, "What is your overall awareness of touch in a day?" Write down what you notice in your meditation journal. What objects do you like to touch/most often touch/dislike touching at home? Are there rooms in your house that offer a more diverse experience as far as touch goes? What is your awareness of touch as you go about your day? What are the objects made of? How much wood, rock, ceramic, metal, glass, plant fiber, plastic, and other types of objects are in your dwelling, and how do they influence you? Write these down in your meditation journal.)

Listen to Meditation 2, The Body Scan (three times a week/set a time-place): https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-two-the-body-scan

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation based on touch or your experiences with touch. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice.

Home Practice Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7: Best Living Practice: Body, Energy, Space, Time = B.E.S.T.

For four weeks choose to focus on an individually applied aspect of body, energy, space, or time as explored in class. For example, you may choose to track your time for one week and see what you've been up to. You may keep the same individually chosen prompt for more than one week, or you may choose four different prompts over the four-week interval. Track your progress in your Mindfulness Practice Art Journal.

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation based on your B.E.S.T Practice (this could be a drawing, collage, series of photographic documentation, a performance, etc.). Record your thoughts and the things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice of B.E.S.T.

Home Practice Week 8: Sound

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to pay attention to the senses as you complete a *different* daily ritual, for example, brushing teeth, showering, folding laundry, washing dishes, taking out the trash, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Sound (Choose aspects to focus on related to sound this week. For example, ask yourself, "What is your overall awareness of sound in a day?" Write down what you notice in your meditation journal. What sounds do you like to hear most often/dislike hearing? Are there places that offer a more diverse experience as far as sound goes? What places are those? Write these down in your meditation journal.)

Listen to Meditation 5, Sounds and Thoughts, on SoundCloud (three times a week/set a time-place): https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-five-sounds-and-thoughts

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation based on sound. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice.

Home Practice Week 9: Smell

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to be mindful as you complete an everyday activity, for example, walking to class, eating lunch, fixing a meal, folding laundry, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Smell (Find aspects to focus on related to smell this week. For example, ask yourself, "What is your overall awareness of smell in a day?" Write down what you notice in your meditation journal. Are there places that offer a more diverse experience as far as smell goes? What places are those? Write these down and other thoughts about smell in your meditation journal.

Listen to Meditation 7 (three times a week/set a time and place)

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation of your experience of smell. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice.

Home Practice Week 10: Sight

Mindful Awareness: Routine Daily Activity (Choose to be mindful as you complete an everyday activity, for example, walking to class, eating lunch, fixing a meal, folding laundry, etc.)

Habit Releaser: Sight (Find aspects to focus on related to sight this week. For example, ask yourself, "What is your overall awareness of sight in a day?" Write down what you notice in your meditation journal. Are there places that offer a more diverse experience as far as sight goes? What places are those? Write these down and other thoughts about sight in your meditation journal.

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation of your experience of sight. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice.

Home Practice Week 11: Kinesthetic How to Walk, Walking Meditation

For 20 minutes each day find a path to walk on, preferably outdoors. While walking, create an awareness of your breath and your posture, noticing tension in your shoulders in particular. Remind yourself to see out and notice details. Notice the space between your big toe, little toe, and heel, and center your weight on that area as you walk, keeping the arch of your foot directly

above and not leaning toward the inside or outside of your shoes. Allow the back to lengthen and widen and the neck to release forward and up.

Mindfulness Practice Art Journal: Design and create a visual representation of your experience of walking. Record your thoughts and things you noticed, experienced, and became aware of as you completed your home practice.

Home Practice Weeks 12–14: Individually Designed 2 Two-Week Practice
Based on your self-inquiry with the above 11 weeks of mindfulness and art concepts, develop your own uniquely structured daily artistic practice that includes aspects of mindfulness. Your daily practice should be at least 20 minutes each day; after the first week, reflect on/record your results and make adjustments if needed.

Appendix I

Consent to Be a Research Subject

Introduction

This research study is being conducted by Dr. Mark Graham and Rebecca Lewis at Brigham Young University to determine how an investigation of mindfulness experiences in an Art Education 450 secondary education curriculum class influences students' learning, attitudes toward learning, awareness of self, and art practice. You were invited to participate because the researcher is inviting students enrolled in the course to participate.

Procedures

In this program, students will:

• Have the opportunity to learn the basic practices of mindfulness, the origins of mindfulness, and how a mindfulness practice might influence their learning, art-making, self-awareness, and art teaching.
• Learn from scientists' and artists' explorations in mindfulness and holistic art and teaching practices.
• Create a small book incorporating their individual perceptions of their mindfulness practice blended with their art-making throughout the course.
• Visit art museums and local canyons and attend a free class at a local yoga studio.

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

• You will complete surveys, which will include questions about your perceptions of your senses.
• The researcher may contact you later to clarify your survey answers for approximately fifteen (15) minutes.
• Total time commitment will be eight weeks.

Risks/Discomforts

Students will be asked to consider their thoughts, emotions, and senses and how these components connect to their art practice and everyday experiences (including their relationship to self and others). This type of self-analysis may prove uncomfortable and even disconcerting; however, the realization of difficult feelings can be beneficial to individuals' overall well-being. Students will be closely monitored and given clear instructions on what they can do to help alleviate difficult emotions and thoughts.

Benefits

Student Anticipated Learning Goals:

• Students will understand and practice various mindfulness methods on a daily basis for eight weeks.
• Students will have critical conversations and create meaningful work that connects to the purposes of holistic education, including self-inquiry via mindfulness and art practice.
• Students will question the Western tradition of materialism in their lives and evaluate their individual concepts of identity.
• Students will gain experience and facility with traditional forms of drawing and painting and the artistic conventions of movement and performance art.

• Students will become deeply engaged with the physical, playful processes of art-making. They will make work that is informed by contemporary practices.
• Students will surprise me by their unexpected, unpredictable responses in discussion, conversations, and art-making.

Confidentiality
The research data will be kept in a secure location and on a password-protected computer, and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed, and the data will be kept in the researcher's locked office.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely.

Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, contact Dr. Mark Graham at mark_graham@byu.edu for further information.

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Student's Name: Signature: Date: