

A C4 JOURNEY

By Karmyn Metzger
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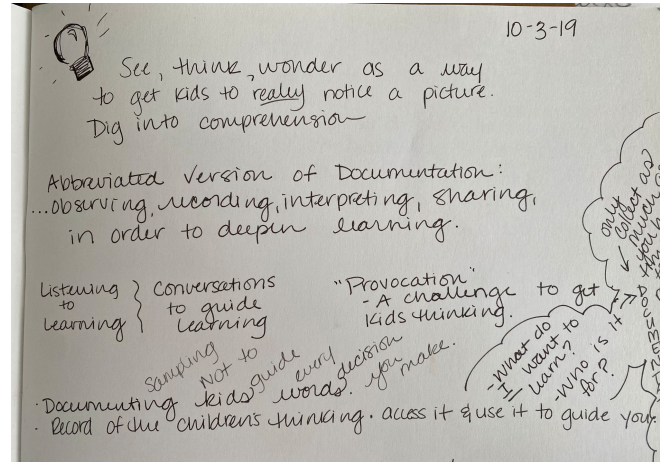
There once was a teacher who dreamed of inspiring her students to be kind, curious, agents of change in the world. Fresh from an incredible week at the Teach For Creativity Institute at the Columbus Museum of Art, the Teacher was excited to start the 2019-2020 school year with fresh new ideas.



The Teacher was even more excited when she was invited to join a group of inspiring educators to work on a new project with CMA and researchers from Harvard's Project Zero. What an honor to get to work on something new and innovative!



At first the Teacher was intimidated by the work that the group would do. Creativity made sense to her, but what about Civic Mindedness? Would she have anything of value to contribute? Excited to keep her learning from the Teach For Creativity Institute moving forward, the teacher pushed aside her self-doubt, and dove into the project, never looking back.



From the very beginning, each time they met, teachers, researchers, and thinkers all shared ideas and had opportunities to practice new ways to find the intersection of creativity and civic mindedness with their students. The teacher looked forward to the meetings at the museum, and also to meetings with other teachers who were involved from her district.

Idea- what a gift is for & can do
 Could revisit w/ documentation
 Could be nice w/ interviewing the recipient
 to really have an intention behind
 the gift creating & giving.
 -could incorporate w/ community building
 "How did it feel to get/give your gift?"
 "Why do we give gifts?"
 -could be a good documentation
 to see what's going on with the kids who did the challenge



[@MrsKMetzger](#)

Our Creativity Challenge made us think! I asked them to make gifts for 3 people in the room, using only the materials that I gave to them. I saw flexible thinking & I also loved listening to the thought that they put behind their gifts! [#itsWorthit](#)
[@WoHillsHawkeyes](#) [@RealJenLehe](#)



She reflected on her teaching practices and looked for opportunities for students to share in leading the learning, and making their thinking visible. Immediately she noticed a shift in student engagement, and in her questioning as well. Thinking ahead, she looked forward to having a better understanding of the trajectory of the project, and how she could be more intentional with her planning once she saw the bigger picture.



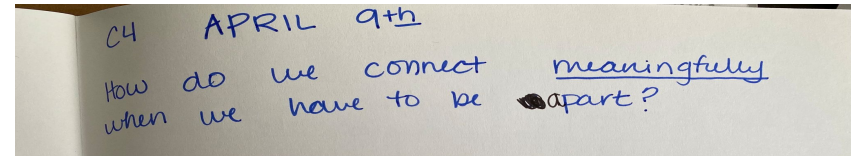
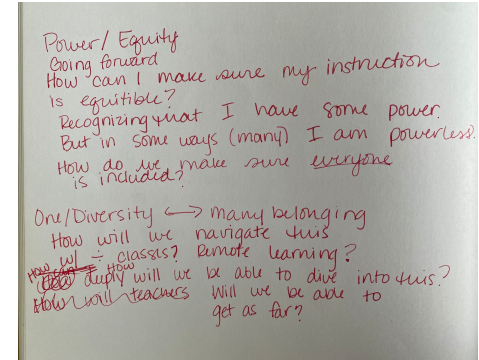
Empathy \leftrightarrow tied to stories
 Have we taken the time to empathize
 w/ our own stories.
 "What you do after the thinking routine
 is just as important!"



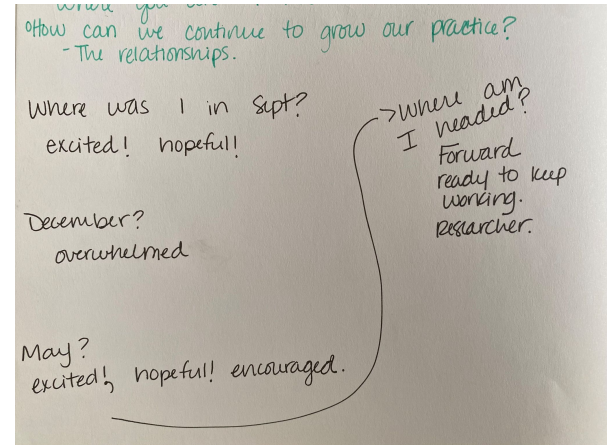
Then, the unthinkable happened as the pandemic began, schools shut down, and time became divided between “the before times” and “the new normal.”

Everyone was forced to adapt, and the Teacher found ways to contribute to her school community from a distance.

Creativity Challenges designed to inspire the imagination of students using what they had at home brought comfort to children when hugs could not be shared.



The first year of the C4 project ended with a Zoom celebration that year, and the Teacher was thrilled to be with these colleagues, as they discussed their learning from the year (submitted as posters), and looked forward to what the project might bring the following year. The virtual celebration was magical, but the Teacher looked forward to the beginning of the next school year, when the group would be able to meet again in person.



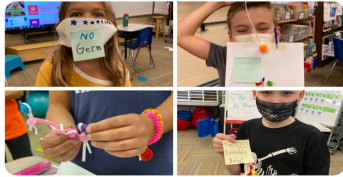


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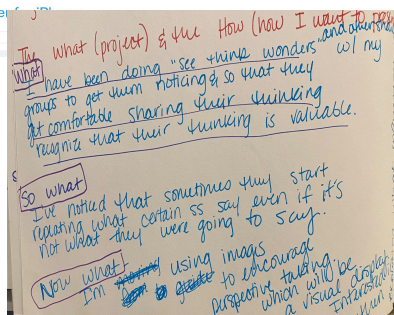


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First Creativity Challenge of the year! Both groups had fun thinking of an invention that will keep people from getting sick 🤒 Listening to the thinking behind how they came up with their ideas was the best!
#itsWorthit @WoHillsHawkeyes
#C4PZCMA

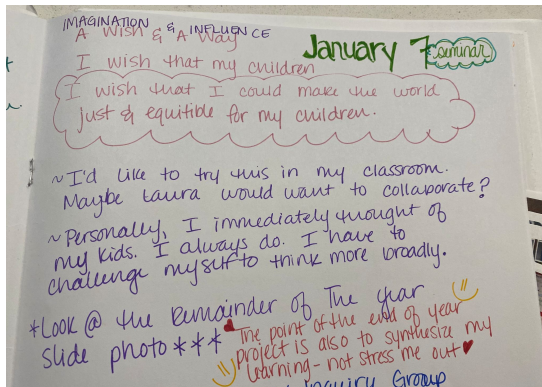


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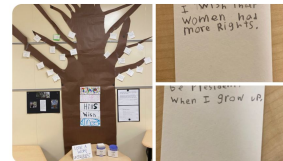
Of course we know that the 2020-2021 school year was anything but predictable! As the Teacher shifted back and forth from teaching virtually, to teaching different groups of students on alternating days, and eventually to teaching her whole class of students at once, the virtual C4 meetings became a place of refuge, joy, and encouragement. Throughout the chaotic year, C4 helped the Teacher find peace, and the drive to stay curious as a learner herself. The C4 space became less mysterious, and the Teacher noticed the intersections between the Is (Investigation, Imagination, Influence, Interconnectedness) in the world, her community, and in her classroom. She continued to refine her questioning skills to as she intertwined creativity, civic discussions, and required second grade content in a physical and virtual space. That year, she worked especially hard to use what she was learning to make sure that her students felt safe and loved in a world that did not always make sense.

Her students learned to feel comfortable asking big questions and problem solving together. The Teacher also felt comfortable and spent less time worrying about whether or not what she was doing in her classroom was C4 focused, because she knew that it was! Class projects were created based on student investigations, and students regularly used their imaginations to explore independently, and together.



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We were inspired by our learning about Rev. Dr. MLK and Yoko Ono's Wish Trees to create our own Wish Tree. Students each wrote 1 wish and a way they will make it happen. We hope our Hawkeye friends will + to our tree! @WoHillsHawkeyes #C4PZCMA #itsWorthit





At the end of the year, as the teacher looked forward to the following school year, she wondered where her C4 journey would lead to next. This wondering was bitter-sweet as she realized that she was about to begin her final year on the C4 project that fed her curiosity. It also brought her moments of great joy during such a challenging time in history.



Karmyn Metzger @MrsKM... · 4/29/21 ...
Clean up project: Inspired by a classmate, these 2nd graders picked up trash, made posters, & wrote a letter to THE @TBowers3 asking for help. They were so excited to hear that he wrote back, and said yes! @WoHillsHawkeyes #ItsWorthit #changetheworld





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We celebrated Earth Day all week!
We had a creativity challenge where the class invented a new way to help the Earth including reducing consumption, reusing, or recycling. Check out these innovative ideas!
[🌍 #EarthDay #itsWorthit @WoHillsHawkeyes](#)



8:21 PM · 4/22/22 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

The 2021-2022 school year was in some ways more challenging than the previous year, and again, C4 was a beacon of hope and inspiration that kept the Teacher going. The monthly meetings with all involved, in addition to meetings with her Inquiry Group were so important to her that she did not want to miss them, even when she got sick herself!



Thread



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All feelings are normal! It can be tricky to learn how to self regulate to get yourself to a calm ready to learn zone. I asked the class to incorporate a tool we have, or imagine a new possibility for self-regulation. Check out their cool ideas! [@WoHillsHawkeyes #itsWorthit](#)



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As the school year wound down, the Teacher knew that she would continue be a C4 learner. Each school year, new groups of students bring different perspectives and opportunities to ask questions and investigate what matters to them. It is the teacher, who gets to lead and learn along with the class, by offering opportunities for creative and civic engagement by asking the right questions. Students learn that their thinking is valued and will want to ponder and share by hearing a simple, “What makes you say that?” or, “Tell me more about that.” Because of C4, the Teacher knew what questions to ask, and how to take time and proceed from there along with her students, to the places where ideas intersect, or to places where there may be tension. That’s where the magic happens.

Artist's Statement

I chose to write a short story about my C4 journey. As the project concludes, it was important to me to give myself an opportunity to reflect on my mindset when we started, through my current thinking. The Teacher is me, and while I could have written so much more, I included my big takeaways from my time with the C4 project. It fundamentally changed the way that I teach and interact with my students (and my own children!) for the better. I used to think that I was giving students opportunities to share their thinking and explore their interests. Now I know and have seen that my students are capable of so much more than people give them credit for. We have to encourage their curiosity with thought provoking, authentic material, asking them questions, and really listening to their ideas. We can learn so much from them.