



Laura Grundler: Well welcome back to the Creatively Connected Classroom. We're so glad to have you listening to the podcast and today we have our good friend, Kelley McGee as our guest on the Creatively Connected Classroom and we've known Kelley for a while. She's a fellow Texan and her big thing is curriculum writing, so we're going to talk to her a little bit about a chat that she recently hosted on #K12ArtChat and find out why she loves curriculum. So welcome to the podcast, Kelley.

Kelley McGee: Hey, thank you for having me.

Laura Grundler: Absolutely. Super excited to have you. So tell us a little bit about your educational journey and why you're such a curriculum ...

Matt Grundler: Go getter.

Laura Grundler: Go getter.

Kelley McGee: Well, I kind of fell into art education. I went to school at University of North Texas and I was in the art program, but I hadn't really found my home. I just knew I wanted to go into art and I ended up in art education and the curriculum writing part from day one was my favorite part. Planning out how everything was going to be and then I started teaching and I decided I was going to go to the University of Florida and all my capstone research and everything ended up being in curriculum too. Then my second year of teaching, the fine arts director at the time came to me and said, "Hey, we're starting curriculum writing through elementary. Would you be one of the elementary curriculum writers," and I said, "Yes." Being super new I was like, "Sure I'll do everything."

Kelley McGee: I've now been on that team for over six years and we've been writing and then rewriting, and then new standards came out and then we rewrote it again. Then we switched to nine weeks last year, or we're starting this year, so last year we spent our whole year reorganizing units. So I got my master's in art education and I just finished last year my master's in educational leadership. So I am just really passionate about how curriculum connects to why we're teaching, and why we're there, and why art is so vitally important to have curriculum and that we are a core subject.

Matt Grundler: Wow.



- Laura Grundler: I agree.
- Matt Grundler: That's a lot of ...
- Laura Grundler: Yeah. That was awesome.
- Matt Grundler: In a nutshell.
- Laura Grundler: Well I'm just curious what you're rooted in as far as your curriculum philosophy. I know a lot of people do ... Well, we've had a lot of talks about DBAE, or TAB, or even really curriculum design what your philosophy is around that as far as do you use backwards design? Where do you start?
- Kelley McGee: All of my learning is in backward design. My undergrad and graduate coursework was all in backward design. My district is a backward design model where they brought in Jay McTighe, then Dave McTighe. So I've been able to learn and I really think that that's so important to have those standards and the core learning, the understanding, the knowledge and the skills first before you go into that learning plan part.
- Kelley McGee: In regards to the different styles of teaching, if you are teaching in any school in any state, you are a teacher of the standards and you are there to teach the standards of whatever state you're at. So having that curriculum sets you up. So whether you love DBAE, or BTS, or visual culture, TAB even you have to have all of those rooted in the standards and have that organization to what you're teaching so that your practice models what the kids have to know.
- Matt Grundler: Okay. So I mean you were mentioning those standards and that's pretty much your root for everything there. What do you think about the national standard, the art standards? I mean how do you feel about how to pull them in? Are they something that can easily be pulled in? Are they something that teachers might struggle with? Or what do you think about them?
- Kelley McGee: Well, being in Texas we don't follow the national standards. So our curriculum and all our curriculum work is based in the Texas essential knowledge and skills, the TEKS, and so I think that they overlap in so



many ways that I don't actively look at the national standards. I have to look at those state of Texas standards and then teach that.

Kelley McGee: So if we're just looking at standards as a whole, laying out each of the standards no matter what area you're from to plan out what you're teaching is. You have to have a scope and sequence to your year or you're not going to fit it all in. You have to make a plan to when you're going to teach what and to what extent that grade level has to know that standard for the students to be able to learn it. If you don't know what they have to know, they're not going to ever learn it.

Matt Grundler: Gotcha. So how do you go about pulling in the general standards?

Laura Grundler: Or do you-

Matt Grundler: Or do you?

Laura Grundler: ... pull in any generalized standards?

Kelley McGee: You mean like arts integration, pulling in other [crosstalk 00:05:19].

Laura Grundler: Yes. Yeah. Any ELA standards or ELL standards or anything like that.

Kelley McGee: Okay. Well when it comes to those cross curricular standards, I think that we all support each other. We're all there with the same end in mind. If we're studying line and you are integrating line into your ... that's your unit that you are teaching in, then we should be using perpendicular and parallel. So if you are teaching something that aligns with vocabulary, using rulers terminology and things that apply like historical time periods, anytime that it blends over into other subjects is when it becomes more meaningful for students. When they can apply learning from place, to place, to place, that's when they truly know and understand.

Laura Grundler: So just out of curiosity, how would you work with a administrator that wants you to actively seek out or overlap standards even though we know they naturally align? I don't know if I asked that well, but sometimes-



- Kelley McGee: You mean teaching the other subject over your own? Is that what [crosstalk 00:06:33].
- Laura Grundler: Yeah. There are times and I guess I just need to be more blunt about this. There are times where I feel like, or at least some teachers I work with or teachers I've talked to around the country, sometimes feel like they have to be a teacher of literacy, or they have to be a math teacher. And they know as an art teacher that the art standards link in to all of that, but at the same time their administration is saying, "No, you need to put this at the front."
- Matt Grundler: They don't see how they tie in.
- Laura Grundler: So I guess that's what I'm asking. How would you help administrators or help those teachers speak to administrators about their content and their curriculum so that they can help make those natural connections more visible to administration?
- Kelley McGee: Okay. I of course believe that our standards are just equally as important to any other subject area and I try to advocate that in every moment that I am interacting with my administrators. So sitting down at anything as from my conference for an evaluation, anything as small as just having a science night, I set out my kiln and we put out the science of clay and the process of clay. Incorporating how art connects but it still be solely art is really important and that has really engaged my administrator.
- Kelley McGee: So somebody that's come in and say, "Hey, I really want to have literacy night." Well I was like, "Well why don't we have fine arts night and then we'd have that literacy section. But then we have artwork and we have the orchestra and all the other fine arts content areas engaged in that area too." So kind of showing them that we're our own entity, but we can apply over to those different areas. And when it comes to connecting to literacy, visual literacy is the first literacy that students have as small children. Watching my kid grow up, he can sit there and read a book by just the pictures, but he's three and he cannot read the words but he visually understands.
- Kelley McGee: So we live in a visual world and for the mass population visually is how you're in the world. I mean reading itself is a visual literacy. You have to understand the symbols and every country has a different symbol. So I



guess you just have to be an advocate for yourself and passionate about what you truly do and really understanding the standards, because if you don't understand your standards then you cannot advocate for what they are and what you have to be teaching. So if you don't understand what the standards are and you haven't thoroughly read, and dissected it, and understand the actual language that's inside, then you can't advocate for yourself.

Laura Grundler: Wholeheartedly agree. Which I think is why a curriculum design is so important. I think that I'm unfortunately a little older than you, but I don't know that I felt like I understood curriculum design until I had been teaching quite a bit longer than you have. It made so much more sense when it started to click and thinking in terms of units versus just a project that we're doing. Oh, we're just doing thinking of it a unit of drawing versus a contour line project. And really associating that with essential questions, and pulling out the inquiry out of the students, and getting that discussion and dialogue going, it just makes for such a much more rich experience for the students, a more rigorous experience. I wonder how you would encourage teachers to really understand or take the time to understand what curriculum design is all about.

Kelley McGee: Right and I feel like when I start talking about curriculum so many people's eyes just kind of start glazing over like, "Oh no, what is she gonna try to tell me I have to do?" And really when you start going in and saying, "I don't do curriculum. They're just giving it to me," you're really doing a disservice to yourself because just as you just said, if you kind of dig in and really understand, "Okay, I'm going to really understand this grade level standards," and then figure out when you have to teach them throughout the year, give yourself that scope and sequence.

Kelley McGee: And then in that language it tells you what they have to understand, and then within that language it tells you the knowledge and skills they have to know, so then it gives you this big overarching unit just by looking at it. By being able to dissect it out and then you come up that learning plan. So no matter what style TAB, DBAE, visual culture, all of the things that you align with, if you're teaching all of the standards and you are giving them all the knowledge and skills, then they're going to have a well rounded education.



Kelley McGee: I guess I kind of come from the belief that if you put yourself in one camp, then you can't do it all, you have to take a little bit out of everything. So giving the kids choice, setting your art room up with student centered a TAB kind of style, having art critique, having art history, having contemporary visual culture, having contemporary artists, you have to have all of those things for you to have a full curriculum.

Laura Grundler: I couldn't agree more. I mean, Matt and I have talked about that a lot. I have a hard time with labels and he's a big design thinker, but-

Kelley McGee: Oh yeah. That's another one I forgot to even say.

Laura Grundler: Yeah. Would you call yourself a design thinking teacher?

Matt Grundler: No.

Laura Grundler: No.

Matt Grundler: Because it's just thought, it's creatively thinking. I mean it's not that it has to be a certain way. That's just another piece you're pulling into the puzzle.

Laura Grundler: Right and I think that that's a great metaphor. It's another piece you're pulling into the puzzle because there's so many great pieces of pedagogy out there that to only use one and not pull the great things from all of them as needed, especially when you look at your students and put that piece to the puzzle too. What do your students need? That's huge. So I would have a hard time. I know it's a touchy subject probably, but I would have a hard time labeling myself as anything other than an art educator.

Kelley McGee: Right, and I like to label myself as an artist. That I'm teaching my kids how to be artists too through the state standards and I have a good friend in our fine arts director who always says, "You might be the one artist in this child's life. The one artist that they get to see in real life that they have a connection with, that they feel valued by, that they're getting input from and if you aren't teaching them all the things they have to know, then you're not doing your job. The standards are your job. That's why your state has hired you and said you have a position and they've



given you that place in your school. And if you're not there teaching all of the standards, then what are you doing?"

Matt Grundler: Good point. [crosstalk 00:13:30].

Laura Grundler: Yeah. Just ponder it because we've had a lot of discussions too, even in a couple of previous podcasts about what your why is. Really why are you doing this? I mean, it's clearly not an easy job. So think about it. What is your purpose behind it?

Kelley McGee: Well and I think, I know we've talked about this before, when I grew up I was homeschooled. I'm the elementary teacher that did not go to public school in elementary age and I love to make. My grandmother would throw all kinds of supplies in the middle of the floor, I would make things, I would draw, I would paint. I had all of the making and the love of art that I still have today. I love to make and I am an artist through and through, but then I grew up and I went into public school and I had all these things to catch up on and I didn't take art in middle school, but one year. I didn't take art again until my senior year of high school and I knew I wanted to do art when I grew up, but I didn't have the vocabulary, I didn't have the understanding because I just got these little glimpses throughout my life.

Kelley McGee: So I got to college and I was like, "Oh my gosh. I don't know. What is a color wheel?" I really, really could not mix a color. I had to teach myself stuff that I teach my five year olds in school now and so I always felt like that was such kind of shame, like weakness. I can't tell people I don't know this stuff. I am literally in college for this and I don't know it and I'm having to teach myself. So even as a beginning teacher I was like, "So am I saying the right thing? Did I learn it right myself?"

Kelley McGee: So now it's like I have gone through and seen the power of me having to know that stuff and now I feel so empowered that I'm able to teach those young children things that I had to take almost my lifetime to learn. It's so important to me, it's improved my artwork, it's improved my art making, it's improved my way I can talk about art, it's improves the way I look at art. And if I can get those skills to little baby five-year-olds all the way up throughout their entire educational career, that is power.



- Matt Grundler: That's awesome. Okay, so we actually have two questions I'm thinking about. The first one, because you were talking about building the student's skills. How would you suggest or what would you do to help build the student's skills in like talking because you were also mentioning about vocabulary and you knowing those words even at a later point versus earlier point. How would you build that with students throughout the year, because we kind of go, "Oh yeah. Here's the vocabulary. Okay, now we're going to move on. Okay." Then, Oh yeah, do you guys you remember them?" "No, I don't remember anything."
- Laura Grundler: And then you get into ninth grade and they're like, "I never learned that." Wait, I know you did.
- Kelley McGee: Well, I really am lucky at where I am and the support that I get. From day one, I was like, "Whatever the other classroom teachers are learning, I want to know those things," and I think that's what's been able to make me such a strong advocate because they don't get my language, but I get their language. So I am able to then transform that into something that they understand. In regards to vocabulary, our campus is an assessment for learning campus.
- Kelley McGee: The text by [inaudible 00:16:54] kind of guides our work and that means that we have learning targets posted. We have vocabulary posted in regards to what our targeted learning is, and then we have these overarching units that follow the elements and principles of the design. So if you just look at our curriculum from the beginning and you're just glancing over the scope and sequence, you're like, "Oh, you're missing it all," because you're just looking at the elements and principles. But layered within is contemporary artists, movement. We do art movement with my younger grade levels to teach them the elements and principles and teach them the vocabulary that's within it. So they're creating the artwork.
- Kelley McGee: My third, and fourth, and fifth graders have sketchbooks that they're writing learning targets, they're writing their contemporary artists of the day. They're participating in sketch of the day. They're having that routine and organization to your teaching schedule makes it to where they can look, they know where to find the vocabulary, they know to walk in and they know what the word media is. They know what the word skill is and



they can go in and read that learning target and they don't have to ask me what we're doing. It's not like a project that we're doing.

Kelley McGee: They come in, they know where places are that they're going to get their sketch books, they're going to get their stuff, and so it builds up their ability to guide their own learning and create their own work, but have it all deeply rooted in the vocabulary, and knowledge, and skills of the standards.

Matt Grundler: Wow.

Laura Grundler: I know. I'm just blown away, I'm like wow. I don't know that people understand how involved K-5 can be, or should be. Really, I guess that's what I should say, is that it should be. That's the way, what you're describing to me is this ideal, it's amazing. I love it.

Matt Grundler: It's this utopia.

Laura Grundler: You mentioned contemporary artist of the day. How do you include contemporary artists with younger kids?

Kelley McGee: Well, I went to a in-service by Ann Davies and Sandra Herbst and they talked about how students need that soft landing into class. So when I was thinking about having a soft landing, and they come into class, I'm always the one that's like, "All right, welcome to class. We're doing this, this and this and this is where you need to get this." So last year I took a really big stop and think about how my kids are coming into class and how I would want to come into class.

Kelley McGee: So my third, fourth and fifth graders come in, and they have sketchbooks, and we have them sectioned out into the learning target section, the sketch of the day section, a growth section, a self evaluation section, and then a free making section. So our sketchbooks are pretty involved and then they come in, they write their learning target. The contemporary artist of the day is up on the screen, and it's just their name.

Kelley McGee: When I started last year, I would give them a quick overview. This is who our artist of the day is, they have five minutes to write their learning target and write their artist's name and do their sketch of the day. So



then they close their sketchbooks, and we would talk about who the artist was and then we would watch a two minute clip.

Kelley McGee: Then throughout the year, so they have a new one each time they came to class, throughout the year I was like, "Okay, we need to make sure we're traveling all around the world." So then I put up a map, and I would show the kids where the artists was from to kind of get that global connection to them. Then I was like, "Well, you know what, I should show them a picture or two of what the artist's work looks like, or a picture of the artist." So then I added that slide in.

Kelley McGee: So it all is up on my screen. So I have the artist's name now, I have a picture and all of the names of the artists all around the world that we have studied throughout the year. Then I talk no more than a minute about the artist and why we're studying them, or why I want them to have that glimpse, and then we'll watch the two minute video. So within all of this stuff, it's never taken more than seven minutes of my class for them to come in, do their sketch of the day, write their learning target, and all of those things and then incorporate the contemporary artists.

Kelley McGee: I think it's really important to have those contemporary artists because I feel like the years before I would incorporate them when it kind of went with what we were doing, but I was really doing my kids a disservice. At one point I was like, "Okay, my big idea and essential question for this next year is what is art?" And I was like, "I feel like I'm getting real rudimentary here picking that." But I have done my kids such a disservice that they think of art, and they think just of drawing, and painting, and clay.

Kelley McGee: So many of them think that and so I was so intentional last year of using people like Carl Crowl, and Golan Levin that are doing technology based things. Then doing work showing Cayce Zavaglia that does the stitching work and then turns it backwards to start teaching some of that social, emotional meaning of who we are inside and how art can do that. Then we switched over to Ocean Soul the next week and talked about how we can make our world a better place and give people jobs by creating sculptures out of flip flops.



Kelley McGee: So my kids this year coming in, they are so much more into what could be than before. Before they would come in and be like, "Okay. We're gonna talk, we're gonna draw and then we're gonna paint, and then we're going to do this. We have the stations, we can pick what we want to do in each studio." Now they're like, "Okay, what can I do?"

Kelley McGee: I mean I had a student this week sit down, and he goes, "This year, if I want to make something out of animation, do you think you could teach me how to do that?" I was like, "You know, I think we could find the time to do that." I don't think we would have ever had that conversation if I hadn't given them a glimpse of what art could be. So I used to have big ideas and essential questions that rotated, but I was like, "This year my job is to teach them all the many things that art could be," because I don't feel like I had been doing that well enough before. So by using contemporary artists, I have changed so many kids' perceptions of what art is and what art can be.

Susan Riley: Hi there, Susan Riley from EducationCloset. As Kelley has pointed out in this episode, curriculum design can have a huge impact on the success of our students. If you'd love to integrate the arts into your curriculum but don't have time to create your own, checkout our integrated curriculum. It includes 109 lessons for grades K-5 with all the PowerPoints, assessments, and student materials that you need, and grades 6-12 are being added this January. Check it out at educationcloset.com/integrated-curriculum. Now let's get back to the conversation.

Laura Grundler: You know, it's interesting you're talking about the essential questions because I'm thinking about, as a curriculum coordinator, working with the teams that write the curriculum for our department and when we talk about essential questions, the same questions come up no matter the grade level. What is art being one of the primary questions and it's almost like you have a common vocabulary K-12 or at least we do, that these are terms that every child should know from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Laura Grundler: These are art terms they should know, and then it almost seems like there are some essential questions that just naturally repeat themselves because you know what is art? Well when you're seven, your perception



of art, if you have an amazing teacher like Kelley McGee, really well expanded, but for a lot of kids it's not as layered or as involved. But then hopefully by the time you get through 10th grade and then you're in AP art, you're like, "Oh, my what is art is so different than ..." So you said the term rudimentary. It's a simple question, but it's not as simple question.

Kelley McGee: Even for myself as a teacher, I knew these artists that I chose for my artist of the day, but then going through and watching the video clips of their why, their process to try to make a two minute clip of why I want my kids to know about them, has made my why about art different than it was a year ago. So I mean that's why it's an essential question. It's global. It will ever change. If your question could be answered, it's not an essential question. It can be answered one way, but it has to stay forever. It has to be able to grow and forever change.

Laura Grundler: I would agree. Yeah.

Matt Grundler: Yeah, absolutely. If it can't create a conversation because two people don't have the same answer, then it's a good solid, or I should say it is a good solid question if it can do that. For sure.

Laura Grundler: Yeah. Well just kind of on this same vein, I mean essential questions come from backwards design, or UBD however you want to call it. In thinking about enduring understandings are there any thoughts you have around enduring understanding or something? A lot of people, a lot of teachers didn't learn backwards design. It certainly wasn't something I learned in the nineties when I was in college. I've since learned that, but I think understanding really what an enduring understanding helped make it click for me. So would you explain really your thoughts around an enduring understanding?

Kelley McGee: Yes. Okay. That's so much pressure.

Laura Grundler: Teach us Kelley, teach us.

Kelley McGee: [inaudible 00:26:22]. Really I feel that enduring understandings are things that you have to believe that they're rooted in the standards, the things the kids have to know. But enduring understandings are understandings that transform time, that scaffold and build as you are learning and growing as a person, as an artist, as a community, that they're what the



kids have to understand. That we have to understand and we have to teach them how to build, and grow, and understand in according to that their ever growing learning in art.

Laura Grundler: I think of them as the sticky things.

Kelley McGee: Right. Yeah. I like that.

Laura Grundler: The things that, I know this sounds weird, but in my mind I imagined the kiddo that I had in the ninth grade. I think about that kiddo now that's much older and I hope that there was something that stuck with them in terms of art that they took away and maybe they've made that deep transfer. It was that stickiness that now when they go into a museum, they can say, "Oh, I understand that composition. I can read that piece of artwork. I can ..." Those kinds of things that I always think the thing that I want my students, if I have a five year old, maybe the thing that they remember when they're 30.

Kelley McGee: Right. Yeah. Yes, we're here to teach the standards and the curriculum and that's our job, but you're that artist in their life to make them appreciate their whole visual world. You could have an influence on how they design their house, how they pick out their clothes, how they design their letterhead for their future business, or what their logo will look like, or what their sports team uniform colors will be. So I mean everything is rooted so much in our visual world that if we're able to give them that enduring belief and understanding, I mean it's so important.

Matt Grundler: I mean, I just enlightened a middle school student today. We had been studying the past few days the elements of art and creating visual collages to help them understand what those elements were. Then we moved onto the principles of design and it was really interesting because they got to the point by the end of class today where they were like, "Well this could be this principal or this principal." And then they're like, "Well which one do you think it should be," and I'm like, "To be honest with you, it could be both." All of a sudden they were like-

Laura Grundler: It depends on how you use it, right?



- Matt Grundler: They're like, "Wait, it can be more than just one," and I'm like, "Yes, it can be more than just one." I said, "Art isn't just one element or one principal." I said, "It's all of them or a lot of them."
- Laura Grundler: It's the design and the organization of it.
- Matt Grundler: And so it was just so funny. I had several at different points throughout the day that we're just like, "Wait."
- Kelley McGee: Well and the elements and principles came way after. We've been makers since the beginning of time. Beginning of time we've been makers. We didn't all of a sudden decide everything has to fit in this little box in the 1900s. The words give us a way to make sense of what works and what doesn't work. So I mean the vocabulary itself within the elements and principles are one of those enduring understandings. That's something that's really important for kids to transfer on their learning.
- Laura Grundler: You're one of the most passionate people I know around this subject and it's really exciting to talk to you.
- Matt Grundler: Well and especially when you're in the midst of writing [crosstalk 00:29:58].
- Laura Grundler: Well yeah because you and I live a [inaudible 00:30:02].
- Kelley McGee: Hold on I'm losing you.
- Matt Grundler: No, in a good way.
- Laura Grundler: In a good way, a great way. Did you?
- Kelley McGee: Yes, I have no idea what you said. You were frozen like this on my screen, like laughing. Okay. You're there again, but I have no idea what you said.
- Laura Grundler: That's okay.
- Kelley McGee: It seemed really nice.
- Laura Grundler: I don't remember what I said either.



- Matt Grundler: That you live very similar lives.
- Laura Grundler: Oh, you know what? I was just talking ... I was thinking about curriculum and how important it is. Just I hope that for teachers that are listening to this that haven't really maybe had the opportunity to learn about curriculum design, that this sparks something for them to think about it in a new way, or that ...
- Matt Grundler: I think just to see the importance of it because we all go, "Oh yeah, we have busier things that we teach," but to see where the learning can really truly happen, to see where we can create that learning by making those connections and getting them to look further and look harder, then yeah.
- Laura Grundler: Yeah. Well and I think one of the things that's cool about Kelley is that she's always learning, she's always reading, always growing, and I love that about her. What would you suggest, Kelley, for people that they didn't learn curriculum design in college. That wasn't something they had and they've been teaching and they're plugging along, but maybe they want to learn more about UBD or backwards design. What resources, or outlets, or suggestions would you have for them?
- Kelley McGee: I mean, I know there's a lot of online resources if you just type in backward design or understanding by design. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins' work is a great start. The Davis Publications, the art curriculum books, that teacher series, I think it's called Art and Curriculum I believe is the title, actually if you look at it Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins are quoted in it. It talks about backwards design, so that's a great art resource to connect into that.
- Kelley McGee: But before you even get into that reading, if you just sit down with your standards and really decide if you are teaching everything. I think that's the perfect simple way to start to look at each standard, and not just teaching them, see what they have to understand, see what they have to know, and how you're going to assess that they know that and then you can come up with your plan. I think that's a really simple way, before diving into the deep end, but those are good resources.
- Laura Grundler: That's an excellent suggestion. I couldn't agree more.



Matt Grundler: We've been talking the whole time about making that impact on students. Sometimes there are those kids that just don't quite grasp the goal you're trying to get to. I mean, what does reteaching look like I guess for you? How do you handle that because I'm sure there's a lot of teachers that kinda are like, "Ah, why aren't they getting it?"

Kelley McGee: Right. Well and I think-

Laura Grundler: Or I don't have time.

Kelley McGee: Or yeah, I don't have time to do that. I think that having the plan in the first place gives you the ability to scaffold it in a way that gives you the time to have that flex day of digging in with those kids that don't get it. So if I know for my beginning five weeks of school, where the kids are sitting line rhythm and movement and how those connect, and I know that space and proportion is coming next that I am planning out what those meaningful little small things I'm saying, what videos I'm introducing. If I have those plans then the general universal learning is taking place.

Kelley McGee: Then throughout class I am actively monitoring, engaging with kids, having those visual check-ins each class to make sure that they are picking up that skill. If they don't get it that one moment and they're right next to me, why isn't me just bending over and saying, "Hey. If we're trying to make sure we know the different directions of lines right now, if he can't tell me one of the directions of line, why can't we do a fun little song or something to make sure we review over that," and if he can pull that back really quick, that was the quickest reteach ever. It didn't take more than 30 seconds of my time and that was a quick reteach.

Kelley McGee: If I can fix that misconception, then when we start doing different things the next week, then that's already been fixed. If it's some extreme case, like there's a mass group of kids not getting something, that's when you slow down and you have to reteach to the mass group. But if it's a couple of kids, I have real flexible seating in my classroom and pull a couple of kids over next to you and sit down and review over something or have that discussion, have them look at art work. Art Critiques are a great way, mid point check ins, having that system in place for kids to know how to



talk about their work and how to get positive conversation about different terminology within their work.

Kelley McGee: Gallery walks is a great way. Have them walk around the room and stop at a kid's art that they don't know whose it is and have them recall that to another partner. You could do an inside, outside circle to where the kids are communicating with each other and that they're able to misconceptions between each other by talking about concepts that way. I think there's so many quick, easy, five minute end of the class, middle of the class, things that you can incorporate in your lesson that is reteaching constantly.

Kelley McGee: If you say it once doesn't mean they know it, and I feel like that's what a lot of people do with some of the standards. They're like, I said it. I'm done." If you don't layer that into so much more learning, if I don't carry it into my next unit, it doesn't mean they're going to remember it. If I cover it three weeks out of the entire school year, then I'm kind of shooting myself in the foot for when I have them the next year because they have to know it even more into a higher extent the next year. So that layering, and scaffolding, and our work in our sketchbooks, and writing our learning targets gives me a good baseline that pulling those kids that don't get it the first time, it's really easy to just kind of come in and just talk them through.

Kelley McGee: A lot of people think reteach they're like, "Oh gosh, I have to do this whole thing and I have to have this other class and we're going to pull this group that doesn't get it and do it all over again." But really it's just kind of talking and checking. If you're sitting at your desk you're not actively assessing what's going on. So getting around, talking to the kids, knowing what they're doing because it might not look like they know they're learning, but they can tell you they're learning too and that is a really important part.

Laura Grundler: You said the word critique.

Kelley McGee: Oh, yes I did.

Laura Grundler: I have actually encountered situations where people have said, "Oh, they're too little for a critique." I know. I agree. I would make the same ohh. So talk to me about that.



Kelley McGee: I think when people say the word critique, they imagine their college class where the professor put one of their artworks up on the wall and was like, "Everything is terrible," and you were like, "It scarred me for life." So when they go to think about doing that with a small child, their understanding of what a critique and teaching kids to be critical of art, is kind of skewed.

Kelley McGee: So, I mean starting with my kids in kindergarten, we do simple things just looking at contemporary artists like, "What does this remind you of, and so then, "Where do you find lines in that artwork?" I mean, we're on that unit right now so that's what's on my mind. So breaking your class into really small segments of five or 10 minutes can give them skills to where from a young age, then they can hit third grade and we can sit down, and we can circle up, and we have a whole critique section of my classroom where we have places to put things up.

Kelley McGee: They might not be critiquing work of a student from our class, but it's the same age group from another class. It's not this free for all like, "I don't like that." It's guiding them through questions of, "All right, so we are looking for thick lines. Do you see evidence of thick lines in this piece of work?" Guiding them through that conversation doesn't have to be this big complicated thing. It's just another way of showing their learning and their understanding of what you're trying to get them to know, and see, and perceive within an artwork.

Kelley McGee: One of my favorite little art critiques, we'll have stations set up one day and you know all those big poster prints that we have? I mean everyone has those. If you don't have them, you've only been teaching for like two years I think, because all of our classrooms are just stacked with them. We've never ordered them-

Matt Grundler: [crosstalk 00:38:57].

Kelley McGee: ... and I just have them. So I have a lot of those laminated textured ones and so we'll set those out with dry erase markers. So this Friday one of our beginning to critique things with dry erase markers, we're looking for different types of lines and so each piece of work has this label, "Can you find a zigzag line," or, "Can you find a thick line? Can you find a line that



shows movement," and they get to draw right on a famous work of art that they're then learning about.

Kelley McGee: They're visually engaging with a historical piece of art and they're able to then group up in their conversation time and they're able to talk to each person in their group about like, "This is where I found the zig zag line. This line shows movement because ..." They're talking about artwork in a critique way that if I was doing it with the whole group, it would be really boring. Like, "We're all going to sit around and we're going to talk about this one piece of art. Does one person see one line?"

Laura Grundler: You've shared-

Matt Grundler: A lot.

Laura Grundler: ... so much wisdom. It's amazing.

Matt Grundler: That's awesome.

Laura Grundler: I think one thing we like to ask as we start to wrap up the chat is if you had something to share with just teachers in general about what curriculum design is all about, what would it be? What would be your parting words of wisdom?

Kelley McGee: If I could give you one tip or a word of wisdom, it would be start where you are and don't try to do it all at once. To go slow, pick one thing that you want to improve or incorporate, come up with a simple plan. Read those standards, come up with something where you're at to be your next step. You can't get to where I've been over the last six years plus my 10 years of teaching within that in one day if curriculum's not something that you have been involved in. So find that next step and what is simple for you to become a more curriculum focused teacher.

Laura Grundler: Oh, that's good.

Matt Grundler: I like it.

Laura Grundler: I like it. A more curriculum focused teacher. Excellent.

Matt Grundler: Awesome.



- Laura Grundler: Well, Kelley, we can't thank you enough. I know you're the working mom teacher everything and running around chasing a toddler and a puppy and all those cool things in addition to being an amazing teacher and leader. So we really appreciate you taking the time to visit with us tonight and be on our podcast.
- Kelley McGee: Well, I am super, super honored and you guys are fabulous and I am just super honored that you asked me.
- Speaker 1: Heads up seven up friends. If you've been enjoying these episodes, be sure to subscribe to the Creatively Connected Classroom Podcast. You'll get a notification every time we release a new episode each and every week, and take a screenshot and put it on your favorite social media, Twitter, Insta, Facebook you name it. Tag EducationCloset and #K12ArtChat so we can reach out and say thanks, and if you really love us with all the feels, give us a review and/or a rating over on iTunes. It helps others find the show and connect with our incredible community. Thanks for all your support.