



Matt: All right, everybody! This is Matt and Laura and welcome to the Creatively Connected Classroom. We have a special guest with us today named Kimberly Snodgrass. And, I think, you know, we're gonna just jump right in to it and just have people introduce, kind of, talk about who you are and how you, kind of, came into this occupation that we have.

Kim: Awesome. I am so glad to be here with you guys today. Super exciting.

Laura: So, tell us a little bit about your educational path, you know? How did you become a teacher? What are you doing now? What brought you to this place of thinking about disruptive thinking and all of that?

Kim: All right, I'm just gonna say, I always say I'm, like, an odd duck and I kind of feel like education choose me. I never set out to be a teacher, it's kind of a weird path, I just followed the doors that kept opening and ended up here. So, my first degree is actually in advertising. I went to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and got an advertising and marketing degree there and I worked for the Lincoln Journal Star. I'm from Nebraska and I worked in their advertising and then I took a job for them in Omaha, moved up there and just ... It was a really small office and I love people, love being around people and got connected with somebody that had a human resources firm and ended up switching careers. And, while I was there, I got a masters in business.

Laura: Wow!

Kim: Yeah, and I worked there for about eight year and then I worked for Conagra in their human resources. And just, kind of, was at the point where I'm like, not diggin' all the cubicles and the same thing. Like, I love people, but, even though it's human resources, you're in the office a lot and, through a random conversation with a principle in a small town in Nebraska, ended up taking a position at his school in their Language Arts Department without a teaching degree. He told me and we have a job opening. And, I'm like, "I'm not a teacher." Like, that's okay, the University of Nebraska at Kearney has this program from transition to



teaching, you just have to have the content. And, because of the College of Journalism, I had the content for language arts.

Kim: So, I literally, my first day teaching high school english, had no experience as far as education goes. I had never taken an education class or been in a classroom besides as a student. So, it was ... Talk about, like, feeling like you're drownin' a little bit, but I wouldn't turn back now. Being thrown in to it like with no preconceived ideas other than how can I make this so it's not boring? And then, with my creative background, always, kind of, pushin' on the edge of me. So, just, dabbled with different things and always have kind of been pushin' the envelope a little bit to try new things that maybe haven't been done before, just because I don't have your stereotypical teaching and instruction instilled in me. It's kind of weird path, but I love it.

Matt: That's awesome.

Laura: Yeah. That's really cool. So, how long have you been teaching now?

Kim: This is my ninth year.

Laura: Awesome. And are you still high school?

Kim: Nope. This is my fifth year in middle school, really. So half in high school and then dove down into the craziness and [crosstalk 00:03:49]

Laura: Could you elaborate?

Kim: ... soul to be with middle schoolers.

Matt: See, where as I went from the elementary level, where I taught for 13 years and now I've jumped up to the middle school level. So, I'm in the middle school level now as well.

Kim: I love it! Like, it's just the perfect age. They're not too cool that they won't put themselves out there and get crazy and ... But, yeah, they're old enough you can have some meaningful conversations.

Matt: Absolutely.



- Laura: [crosstalk 00:04:16] It does take a special person to really to understand the uniqueness of middle schoolers.
- Kim: Exactly! We just say, embrace the crazy. Just embrace it. The first day, actually, like, the first half-day on Wednesday we would always leave with Oreos, give the kids Oreos on the way out. And our thing is, the good stuff's in the middle.
- Matt: There you go! All right.
- Laura: That's cute. I like that. Gonna have to use that.
- Matt: All right, well, I have to say that I was totally amazed and impressed by the topic that you chose to host our chat with because the way you led up Question #1 was just ... It wasn't a, "Hey, talk about yourself." It was, like, right into, here are these four words that are really strong, really strong words and to have them ... You had to choose one and I loved the response that you gave from it because you used one but then you tied them all in. And the whole time I'm thinking, "How can I do that?" All of a sudden I saw your answer, I was like, "Oh, I see what you did there. Yeah, that's awesome."
- Matt: So, that was so cool, which was to create, improve, transform, and disrupt. And I thought, we're gonna cover that because, it's always important. How did you come up with that idea to use those four words to base a whole chat around it?
- Kim: Okay, well, this is kind of random too. I'd been to the "Explore Like A Pirate" gamification in my classroom and so I always have my radar out as far as, like, games that I can somehow incorporate into my classroom. And there's this game I heard about and, of course, by the time I got around to looking into it, it's like nowhere to be found. On Amazon, or anything. But there is a link to the instructions and it's about having images. Like you have two images and then you can either create something new, transform what is there, disrupt and come up with a totally new use for those objects. It's super cool, it's called "Disruptus."
- Laura: We're gonna have to create our own for the Art Room.[crosstalk 00:06:32]



Kim: Well, exactly! And, I mean, the instructions PDF is right there on their website, but ... So, I had that in my head, honestly, trying to think how I could use that in my classroom and then I'm like, "Okay, this is an Art Chat." This is, you know, creative. I wonder if I could try dabbling a little here and originally I was gonna try and play it as a game, but I thought that might be kind of hard at as a chat. I just went with, like, the key concepts behind the game and thought we can play with this. So let's just see how it goes.

Matt: It went well. It was awesome.

Laura: It was really, I mean it was ... I think what I liked about it, we were chatting a little bit before the podcast recording started, but, that, as we have grown as a chat on Twitter, we have also noticed that we have a lot more educators that are not necessarily art educators coming into the chat because they are looking for creative outlets. They're looking for those ways to connect things into their classroom, which is what we want to help do. And what I liked about your chat is that it had, kind of, the creative process really (create, improve, transform, disrupt), like this whole idea of always continuing to change and develop and improve, and that reflective process almost. And, so, I thought it was really a strong set of questions.

Laura: One of your questions was, "How do you disrupt the status quo in your school?" And, I wanted to know more about what you meant by disruptive thinking?

Kim: Okay, like I said, I'm always pushing the envelope, like, questioning, why do we do this? Is it because it's always been done? Or is this what's best for kids? When I get on a tangent I just can't let it go. And that's how I can of dove into Twitter in the first place was because I took my own child's experience with homework and kind of a clash with belief systems between me and the school that he was at. It's like, dove on Twitter looking for some research or just other people's thinking on things to try, and validate or challenge my thinking, and came across, like, Matt Miller ... Had some, just ... The homework kind of stuff I was reading and started just retweeting like crazy and I was getting a ... I got a response from him and a response from Dave Burgess. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, there's really people here!"



Kim: I started connecting through that and it's just, kind of ... It literally has transformed my classroom, like, I would say some of the most innovative ideas you can find on Twitter through chats, like yours, people share out, just things they don't even think are special. But, you see that and it sparks something and, oh my gosh, my classroom, I can't even imagine if I was a non-Twitter teacher, what disservice I would be doing to students, because I'd just be doing the same old thing every day. I'd be flipping through the textbook guide and say, "Okay, now we're on page 79. Tomorrow's page 80. Do one through ..."

Kim: Because that's, kind of, how it rolls, but when you immerse yourself in the culture that is the PLN networks of Twitter you're always energized with new ideas and things like that. So, for me, it kind of evolved from homework into ... I'm a reading teacher so I have some strong feelings about AR and kind of push that envelope in my school system and then ... When you think about what employers or what these kids are gonna need for their future careers that aren't even developed yet, it's not necessarily our core content areas. It's not history, it's not necessarily the math they're learning.

Kim: Although, there's components of it, don't get me wrong. And they need good communication skills, but do they really need to know the vocabulary definitions to all these words or do they really need to have the state capitols memorized? No, they need to know how to think creatively and problem solve and work collaboratively and a lot of those things are art elements. So, I think that's kind of how, I'm always looking for ideas to incorporate, kind of, those art elements into my classroom and just recently we did sketch notes and the kids loved that. And then we take it from paper, pencil, marker and we go digital with it, always trying to up the next thing. And then we'll Flip Grid it so they have to share it out, but, yeah, I would say now my new thing, since I just have to keep moving, would be grading. I'm always questioning why [crosstalk 00:10:59]

Laura: That's a whole 'nother conversation.

Matt: The assessment component of it is hard, you know, you always get the people that are in the traditional mindset of assessment, assessment, assessment. And then, you have the other people that are like, "Well,



can they use it? Can they show that they understand it in their way? And how do we assess that?" And then the standard of, you know, whatever. So, it's just always ...

Kim: It's so subjective, especially in my content area. It's not like, you solved the math problem did you get it right or wrong, you know? It's your ideas and a lot of your creativity and things like that. And I just feel pretty strongly, like, there's other ways to assess their capability than putting a number on it.

Laura: We also agree, that's something we talk about constantly in our content area as well, because ...

Matt: Even in our own family.

Laura: Even in our own family, that's ... You mentioned your son earlier, we also had some struggles around that because of ...

Matt: Really, all three of our kids.

Laura: All three of our kids are very creative and sometimes the way that they would show that they know something is maybe through a song.

Matt: Their doodles, or ...

Laura: To do a Sketch Note or to be able ... Instead of a Scantron. You know? I think what, something you said a minute ago, just when you were talking about the things that they're gonna need for their future careers, and who knows what those will entail, they're gonna be able to need it to access that information, analyze that information, connect it, and then use it, transform it and make it into something new.

Kim: [inaudible 00:12:42] regurgitate. I mean and that's ...

Laura: Exactly.

Kim: Well, I found it really interesting what you just said a few minutes ago about the comparison of being a teacher who is connected through Twitter versus a teacher who's not. And, you said, it would be a disservice and I find it interesting because we just had a conversation with a friend the other day who used that same term. It's a "disservice" to the kids.



And, so, I just find that really interesting because we haven't heard that conversation and then you use the same phrase.

Laura: Almost the exact same phrasing. And she felt very strongly as well that it has transformed her educational profession and in the way she works with teachers and students and I don't know it has to be Twitter, but there has to be some connectiveness somewhere. So, I don't know what your thoughts are, we could, kind of ... I'd like to expand on that idea.

Kim: Yeah, I think it's a great medium to access, like at my other schools I was the language arts department, there was no one else. And, you know, so other forms of PLNs or professional development just really didn't exist besides reading books and that's definitely beneficial. But those conversations that you can have in a Twitter chat and people will challenge your thinking if you say something and they disagree. And I think that's something you don't always get in the regular, school, professional development because people are lookin' at the clock, like is it four o'clock yet, or whatever?

Kim: The less we talk, the less we have to sit here. I'm not gonna challenge your thinking at all. It's just been crazy. As a person, would you want your doctor to always, or your healthcare provider, just do what they've always done? Or do you want them constantly looking for the newest, best ... Best is a loose term, but, just new ways to try things. And it might work, it might not, but it's something that is worth pursuing and worth looking at. You know, you just think if every profession stayed stagnant there would be no innovation, no moving forward.

Matt: Yikes. That's a yikes for sure.

Laura: But if you think about it, like, there's been several documentaries out the past couple of years about how education really, for a very long time since the Industrial Revolution, has not changed a tremendous amount. That's kind of a scary thought, to think of about forever, I mean ...

Matt: For these industries that do change constantly and then to have an industry like education that doesn't, which is what feeds into those industries. [crosstalk 00:15:18] everywhere else. That is pretty scary to think about.



- Kim: I'm super fortunate, I'm doing another Masters degree in Instruction and the way that the program is, it's a community learning and it's a constructivist approach.
- Laura: Oh, cool.
- Kim: Our instructors are titled "facilitators" and that has changed my view on a lot of things too, because we'll have conversations, we do a lot of circle discussions and they'll provide us with literature or readings or videos or whatever to give us some content to look at, but then the way that we demonstrate it, they never ... You are supposed to construct your own meaning, they never tell you, you need to write an essay on this. It could be, like the other day, this is so random, but we made bracelets and each thread represented a different concept that we had read about and we verbalized that in class and it was so much more meaningful and I will remember that versus had I typed out a five paragraph essay quick and turned it in.
- Kim: But, that format of learning is something that's really struck me and we also validate ... When we're talking about grading, it's all through validation and submitting materials to back up what grade you think you earned and by how much work you've put in or how much you've created. So, when you have to back yourself up and validate your learning that way, rather than if they would just say, turn in that five paragraph essay and that's an A-minus or whatever. I just think there are so many things out there that are maybe not ready, all schools aren't ready for. But if you keep looking into them I think that's the direction that things are gonna go.
- Laura: It's really interesting that you bring up the constructivist approach, 'cause that's something we talked about a lot in the art world over many years and it's something that people keep going back and forth about because I agree with you, I think that finding something that's relevant and has the ability for someone to make meaning of themselves is gonna stick a lot more than if I'm just asking you to read the vocabulary and match the definitions, right?
- Laura: But, it's also, it's kind of a Catch-22 because if your school district isn't in a place where you can make that happen. You have to kind of sneak it in.



- Kim: It happens behind closed doors.
- Laura: So, I guess, on that note, one of your questions was, that you challenged everyone to think about create, improve, transform, and disrupt the school year and infusing that into their classrooms. So, how are you doing something new, or, what are you transforming in your classroom this year?
- Kim: Well, here's something I'm starting with, last year I incorporated a lot of tools that I learned, or was exposed to through Twitter. A lot of metacognitive tools that ... Just a variety helps students, kind of, learn the way that they learn. You obviously have to have choice with that, because not everyone is going to learn the same way. It might be drawing with those Sketch Notes or maybe they're more of, like, an audio person and they need to speak it out, or maybe they're a listener and they need to hear it.
- Kim: So, to start the year off, the first two weeks I'm not really touching content, we're just doing "get to know you" activities, through the different tools that I want to introduce to them. And then, they're just gonna have this toolbox and when we are learning or demonstrating our learning, I'm going to say, "You pick which of those tools you want to dig out of that treasure chest. Demonstrate your learning with one of them." So, that's something I haven't tried before. I've always given choice but it was this or this. You can do a Do Ink video or you can act out a skit, or something like that.
- Kim: But, I'm gonna try and start out with just total choice. So, I'm gonna give them those tools and even if it's something I didn't teach them, but they have an idea, I will be open to that. So, that's a starter for something I'm dabbling with to get started.
- Matt: That's cool. I think that's a good idea.
- Kim: My other thing too, I guess, which I brought ... We have really huge classes this year, we had a ton of transfers right before school started and got rid of most of the furniture in my room.
- Laura: Wow!



Matt: Oh, wow.

Kim: I have some standing desks and, like, a high-top table and a couple low-top tables. And then just a ton of floor cushions. So, we start out everyday kind of, just on the floor. And that's kind of where I'm teaching the lesson and giving the instruction and then they break off and just go where they're comfortable and if they want to sit at coffee shop style table together or if they want to be off in the corner on a pillow. Just some flexible seating options too. So, those are my two biggies so far this year, but I'm sure there will be more.

Matt: That's cool. You had mentioned something about Do Ink, which I'm a big fan of, Do Ink. But, other than that, how else do you use technology in the classroom? How do you incorporate that into your ... ?

Kim: I'm a tech junkie! Tech junkie. And that's why I'm trying to incorporate a lot of that at the beginning of the school year 'cause it does take out some time in your instruction teaching those tools. Especially at the grade level I'm at, they don't get a lot of that in elementary and very little in sixth grade. And I have seventh grade, so I'm layin', kind of, the foundation for them as far as the Google Suite even. That's the first time they've really used Google Classroom. So, just developing from those tech tools at the beginning, but I love #BookSnaps, so the other day we all created Bitmojis so we're good to go there.

Kim: I'm totally open to devices in the classroom and so I let my students read on Kindle or their phone or whatever. Audio books. However you want to take in the information, you do that. And then the other tech tools besides BookSnaps, I love using Paper 53 or Sketch Notes ...

Laura: We've got those too.

Kim: Oh, it's so easy and the kids love it.

Laura: It's so easy. [crosstalk 00:21:20] anyone.

Kim: Stylus pen and boom. It's awesome. And then, of course, I'm kind of GIF person so we've already dabbled a little bit with edgy GIFs and we'll be doing more with that too. I'm excited to pursue that, but, really, if there's any tech thing I encounter throughout the year I'm all about trying it, so,



when we were talking about DoInk, that was something I just dabbled in last year a little bit. We did puppet shows with Do Ink and had the green screen in the background and that was super fun, they created their puppets and wrote the skits for their play, I guess, and that was a kind of an end of the year thing. Flip Grade we've had a lot of fun with. We had GridPals which was a cool way to connect with ... We had a class in California and we worked on Sketch Notes together with them. There's just so many things, we're on tech every day. My tech guy is like, "How many devices do you really need in your classroom?" [inaudible 00:22:14] iPad cart. "60 devices for 30 kids?" Yeah.

Matt: Yes, yes we do.

Kim: [inaudible 00:22:25] mashing, you know, so sometimes it's like I need the iPad and the Chromebook and, yeah, it's my thing.

Laura: That's awesome.

Matt: That's cool.

Laura: So, I guess the question around that, though, is sometimes we hear that there are people that just want to use tech for tech's sake. What's your thought about that?

Kim: Well, I'm gonna say it amplifies the learning, I think, so if you're just doing it to type something, or you're just doing an online worksheet, it's no different. In my writing class, for example, we start out, a lot of the stuff, paper, pencil, you know, we sit in a circle and we write in our writer's notebooks and we pass around in a circle. And when it's to the point where we need the online tools for editing and things like that, then we do it, but, we don't just do it to do it in the beginning. I think there's still value in a lot of non-techie things and that's why I'm teaching the Sketch Notes in a non-techie way first, just with the marker and the paper because then they can use it regardless of where they're at. Whether they have internet access or not, I was just telling them, I take that type of notes in my college class and I've been a student since kindergarten.

Kim: I basically haven't stopped going to school. So, I found that that was a way that I process information really well. That isn't techie at all, and the



same thing with my schedule. I try using my Google Calendar, I just can't do it because I ignore my notifications. I have to go ... A paper planner for that too. So, I mean there's definitely places for both of them, but you have to be willing to click and just see what happens. If you're gonna go the techie route a lot of people want to have everything planned out and try it first. But it's okay to dive into it and have it fail.

Kim: That happens all the time in my classroom and I think the kids learn more from me messing up the technology because then they get to witness me troubleshooting. And what happens when stuff doesn't go like you planned and ... This tool didn't work so she Googled and she found a different tool that could fix that problem or band-aid the situation. You just gotta do what works for your classroom, but always challenge yourself to be trying new things because that troubleshooting is what kids are gonna need in their future careers.

Susan: Hey there! It's Susan Riley, founder of Education Closet. Isn't this conversation with Kim incredible? I love this whole idea of the create, improve, transform, and disrupt cycle. Now, if you're looking to use this cycle with arts integration and Steam, then I highly recommend checking out new Accelerator program. This program is only open for enrollment through November 1st and then we're closing the doors for the rest of 2018. You can learn more at educationcloset.com/accelerator. I hope to see you inside. Now, let's get back to the conversation.

Kim: When we were talking about the constructivist approach my favorite question is, "What do you think?" I have kids come up to me all the time, "How do I do this?" Or "My Chromebook isn't working, what should I do?" I love saying, "What do you think?" Because, they sit there, and like, "You're not gonna just tell me how to fix it? You're not gonna just give me the answer?" They feel cheated at first. There's definitely an adjustment period, but then they just stop.

Matt: I use that, I mean I use that at the elementary level. Kids, from the art standpoint, kids will be like, "Is this okay? Did I do this all right? Is this good?" And I'm like, "Well, what do you think?" And, they're like, "I don't know." Well, do you like it? Do you not like it? And then, all of a sudden, they're like, "Yeah, I think I did pretty well." And, so then and that's pretty much where you get to leave it. But, the face that they're



like, "No, I don't really like it." And I'm like, "Well, then how can you make it better? How're you gonna improve it?" And then all of a sudden they're like, "Well, I guess maybe I could try and do it and see what happens." So, that becomes my next follow-up sentence, which is, "See what happens."

Kim: You just sparked my mind here. I've discovered, in just teaching in general, but a Sketch Note thing that we just did, kids are not comfortable in their own creativity. They think because theirs doesn't look like mine, or doesn't look like the other one next to them that it's not good. So, when you say, "I don't know, what do you think? Do you like it?" Like, that's what matters and if every artist in the world had ever worried about what the person next to them was doing [inaudible 00:26:44] look the same. You know, you wouldn't have any crazy, awesome art out there because everybody's would look traced, you know. And that's something I'm also gonna try and work on this year is getting students to be comfortable with their unique fingerprint of creativity, their style.

Matt: Well, I think what a lot of art teachers do, depending on the level that they are teaching, a lot of them do what they call a gallery walk. And that's basically, like, a mid-process kind of thing where everybody gets up. Yeah, there's gonna be ones that are gonna be like, "Oh my gosh, I'm not doin' it!" And I guess that's kind of the whole point, but to get them to walk around the room to take a look at what other people are doing and, you know, as artists always do they go, "Oh, you know what? That's kind of a neat idea. I might try that and so, then they get that experimental piece and then that creativity builds. And then they start to find what works for them and what doesn't and what becomes their own personal style.

Laura: I think, actually, Kim, you have a really hard grade level. Seventh graders are so in that place all the way around, like, they're not just comparing art. They're comparing everything at that age level. "Oh, I'm taller than that girl. Or that boy's whatever, like ..." They just, everything is a comparison at that age level. It's getting them past that and just building their artistic or their creative confidence is what I like to call it. Really building up their creative confidence.



Laura: And really having those discussion about, just like you said. If we were all the same, oh my gosh, it's be a really boring place and we wouldn't have all this variety around the world. We wouldn't have constant ideas flowing because everybody would be stagnant and we've just to continue to have that conversation with kids, so I really prefer working on that this year with them because it's something ... I was just reading the book the other day and then I saw a post on Instagram about it and it was a young lady, and I think actually she was a little bit older, maybe in her fifties, and she was saying that she hadn't created any artwork since she was like in fifth grade. Because in fifth grade someone said something to her that gave her, what we call, an "art scar."

Laura: She was afraid. There was this fear, like somebody said her horse looked silly and it didn't look like a horse and, so, then there's this image in your head, like, that I can't because somebody said something awful. We're all unique and different and we just gotta get kids to see that it's okay to have the cap that's pink with stripes and that's fun.

Kim: Being comfortable with their own creativity is so huge, not just in art but whether it's your style of writing or your presentation style, I mean, everybody's ... You gotta be you and play on your strengths. What you're good at, the next person might be weak at. So play on the thing's your strong at. And that's another disruptive thing that's always on the forefront of my mind is: parent-teacher conferences. I wish it was just a time to play on strengths, I wish the kids would come and you would just tell them all the things they are awesome at. Instead of, you have a 79 in reading and you talk too much.

Kim: Whatever it is, you can try harder. Like instead of saying you're so kind to your classmates or you're so funny you break the ice for us, then whatever it is, or on your creativity you come up with the most unique things or you're really good in gym.

Laura: "Love Notes."

Kim: Yeah, so, I just wish there was a time where no negativity. It was just building kids up and letting them hear it, because not everyone comes from an environment where they get to hear what they're good at. So, then you said that they have "art scars." They are just full of these



preconceived ideas that what one point ... You hear that story all the time. Someone told me I wasn't good at math or someone told me I was a bad reader, because they are labeled so early by being put in certain groups. Math groups, reading groups, whatever. Thank goodness art [inaudible 00:30:58]

Laura: I mean, I'm sure some of us have "school scars." I mean, it's not just art scars. [crosstalk 00:31:03]

Matt: That actually kind of reminds, and Laura and I were both kind of looking at each other. Our son is a big theater kid and he goes to this theater group that is outside of school. And one of things that they do, that we were so impressed by the philosophy of this group, they do this thing called Love Notes. And, so, just before their very last show, before their run of shows, they do this thing called Love Notes where they accentuate all of the, and they highlight all the really good things that these kids do. Like, "Oh my gosh, [inaudible 00:31:36] you're always my idea person. Or you're always coming up with really cool solutions for this, that, and the other thing. And you're always willing to help and you're always willing to jump in." And, so, the director does this, not just in front of all the kids that are in that group, but also the parents are there as well. And, so, they get to hear each individual kid and hear about their strengths and ...

Laura: It's amazing. And, as far as confidence goes, the kids come out of there beaming. Just beaming. And it doesn't matter if they had a big part or small part or if they were in the tech crew. They read something very personal about every kid to the whole community, the whole theater community, the parents and all the cast and everyone that was participating.

Laura: And every kid comes out with this giant smile and it's just ... For our son, it carries him through weeks of, just, like, he's, like, on a Cloud Nine, you know?

Matt: Holding on to it for dear life.

Kim: That's so awesome.



Laura: It's just so awesome, so, I do think that that's a really important point you make about disrupting the parent-teacher conference in a way that's so positive. You know, something else that I've seen done is, when I was in middle school, this is back when I started teaching, about my second year of teaching in, like, 2001. We had a ... I was teaching seventh and eighth grade art and we had parent-teacher conference day, but instead of it being parent-teacher conference it was student-parent-teacher conference. And we set up the cafeteria and we had these nice little tables and they all had little flowers in the middle and the kids spent the whole week before prepping about being able to tell their parents about the things they had been learning in school. Their areas that they're really strong in and then their growth areas.

Laura: And, it was so much more meaningful for the kids to go through that with their parents and the teacher was there, of course, helping to guide and support. But, the kids were leading the conference and going back to your point about metacognition, what better way for kids to know about their own learning and know about their own thinking than to share that with their parents.

Kim: Exactly. So reflective. That's a piece I think of [inaudible 00:33:46] education [inaudible 00:33:47] you're always moving on to the next thing. And I mean the [inaudible 00:33:50] but, like, just taking the time to reflect, you now. We finished this unit and we finished this project. Now, think about it. What could you have done differently. Maybe not better, but what would you change next time, just having gone through it once. But, when you're talking about your son and every year before testing, and I should do this before [inaudible 00:34:09] but I just do it at that point.

Kim: It's one compliment, so I set up a Google Form with every kid's name on it and they get the link and they go through and they put one adjective and it's kind of, like a vocabulary practice, I guess, they find a good word, a better word, a more descriptive word to describe that person, but I get the same smiles, it's so awesome when I make word cloud for each kid and I give it to them and I snap their picture right as they're looking at it. And they're faces are like ... It gets me through the [crosstalk 00:34:46] I'm like, there's so much more than a test score and



just reading all the things that people think about them that maybe they don't see in themselves in kind of cool too.

Laura: That's awesome. That's a great idea.

Matt: Well, I mean I think that kind of leads into the idea of transforming and transform. So, what's something that you've transformed over your teaching career. What do you feel like has been one of the bigger transformations you have either had or seen.

Kim: Besides jumping into the Twitter world, what goes with jumping into the Twitter world, is getting into the whole "teach like a pirate" mindset. Like, I read that book and I joined the community and you have your content, but how can you hook students in and tease them a little bit, like make them want more. And, so, I have the Hook Sheet PDF whenever I'm doing lesson plans, so there's a lot of ... Picasso hook, and there's a music hook [inaudible 00:35:47] kids get so into it. To me, it feels like cheating because I just grab a hook and I tie it to my content and they're loving it and they don't even know that they're learning my content.

Kim: And, so, that is my favorite way that I've transformed teaching. And in just transformations in general, that kind of goes with the "teach like a pirate" thing. Last year was really the first year that I discovered this, but kind of teasing them about the next unit we're gonna do and then they show up to class that day and my room is a different place. It's like a prom. Prom remodeling. Now you walk in and it's a 50s diner and they're all just like, "GASP!"

Kim: And it changes the whole experience because they start to act like they're in "The Outsiders" and they dress up the part. They're just more immersed in their learning than had I just had them come in and ... Hey, today we're gonna talk about this, we're gonna start "The Outsiders" and here's a YouTube video I found.

Matt: It's kind of [inaudible 00:36:55].

Kim: I mean, it's like anything you get out of it [crosstalk 00:36:59] and your kids get out of it what you, as the educator, put into it.



- Matt: Absolutely. It's funny you say "the hooks" because I know I read that about two years ago, two/three years ago I guess. The one that I always enjoyed doing, especially when I was teaching at the elementary level, what I would always do the dressing up, the costume part.
- Kim: Oh, yeah.
- Matt: And, we were introducing to basically the whole school but, I was doing art from around the world and we were talking about [inaudible 00:37:31] we started out talking about Japan and I had this full length kimono that I wore, and I would greet the kids when they came in. I would greet them in Japanese and they were just like ...
- Kim: What is he doing? What is he saying?
- Matt: And then we, one day, with my fourth graders, we were doing some wire sculptures and I came out with big, ole safety goggles on and I didn't say anything about it and I was like, here we go, let's go! And they were just like, "Wait, why are you wearing those safety goggles? Those are for science. Why are you wearing those?" So ...
- Kim: It's so awesome. Being a high school teacher in the beginning of my career and then going to middle school, if I ever went back to high school I would let go of all the ideas that these kids are too cool or too old for this stuff because they would eat it up just as much but there's like this preconceived idea that they won't buy into it, or whatever. Are you kidding me? Your teacher enters the door with these goggles on, you're gonna be wondering what the heck is going on and we're gonna build relationships and break the ice and all kinds of things just by embracing the crazy.
- Laura: Embrace the crazy.
- Matt: So, what do you think, I mean, out of the hooks that you've tried and the hooks that you've done or experimented with, I guess, what do you feel your best one was?
- Kim: Oh, my gosh, that is like picking a favorite child.
- Matt: We could probably pick one. No.



Laura: No!

Kim: I do tell my son, we only have one boy and two girls, so I always tell me son before he goes to bed, "Goodnight my favorite son!" And he goes, "I'm your only son!" That's exactly why you're my favorite.

Laura: Exactly.

Kim: I love all of them. The music ones are always a big hit, where we change the lyrics to songs. Honestly, any of the art ones are always big hits with like Pictionary kind of stuff, or things like that, they love. The cooking hooks are huge, like, they bring in something and demonstrate the cooking in front of the class. We did that at the end of the year, last year, and they made cooking shows and it was just incorporating demonstrative speaking ...

Laura: I was just thinking about Chopp'd or the samurai chef one. That one, yeah.

Kim: But then, when I get into this gamification thing, there's so many food shows that you can take how they do stuff on the food shows and switch up your classroom.

Laura: That could be a lot of fun.

Kim: Oh, my gosh. But the food is always huge, if you can tie that into your classroom and then the art and music are always big. And the music, because you can change that to go with whatever song is really cool at the time. I remember at the end of last year I said, "What's the coolest song right now." And a lot of kids told me [inaudible 00:40:25] and I'm like, "What's [inaudible 00:40:26]?" For the hook, I was like, "Okay, you have to take the tune of this song and write some lyrics to go with this content." And they were just eatin' it up. There's so many good hooks, though. I have a whole PDF and literally I just flip through, so I don't keep repeating. Next one, next one, next one. Keeps it fresh and keeps it fun.

Matt: That's awesome.

Laura: That's awesome.



- Matt: That's really cool.
- Laura: I want to be in your class.
- Kim: Come on! We already don't have enough seats, so we'll just throw some more cushions [crosstalk 00:41:01]
- Laura: There you go. There you go.
- Matt: Why not?
- Laura: Well, actually, let's go back to that for a minute. I think, that's an interesting thing. The flexible seating has been, like, this new thing the last year, two years and I can remember a time as an assistant principle where, like if you anybody brought in a cushy chair we were like, "You can't have that in there." I mean, it wasn't me, but I was doing what I was told. Everybody had to have the same furniture and it had to be consistent. So, how does your administration feel about you taking away all the desks.
- Kim: I am super fortunate, our principle is crazy awesome in letting me do just about anything. I said, "just" about anything. He shoots me down sometimes, but I usually ask for forgiveness after I have done something, so, I like, got everything out my room and then, "I hope you like it."
- Kim: But, it's been fun. And what always starts my crazy ideas is, I think, and I've gone to school, like I said, forever. Would I like to do this? Like, when I'm at college class, how do I sit? I put my feet up on the chair that's next to me and I'll bring my blanket to class with me. If you're uncomfortable you can't learn. If you're cold, if you're hungry, if your seat is hard, you're thinking about those things instead of being engaged in the content and ... Just as much as I can try to make an option for everybody and you think about why coffee shops are crazy popular for students to go study and go learn. It's the environment. If coffee shops had hard seats and were uncomfortable and cold and nobody would go there either.
- Kim: You want people to want to be there and be comfortable. I haven't had, I kind of dabbled with this a little bit, and every year I switch things up. But, so far it seems to be going fairly well. It's all about, kind of, just



setting the expectations at the beginning on what it's gonna look like. They've really been receptive, so.

Laura: Have you ever had any parent pushback?

Kim: I haven't. Knock on wood.

Matt: Sorry.

Laura: I'm just curious, 'cause, you know, there's been times where I've had very traditional parents say, you know, "I don't understand why your room is different." Or "I need to see the policy on this." Or, that kind of thing. And usually I'm very able to articulate things to them, but I'm just curious 'cause there's still probably some parents that expect to see rows in their classroom when you walk in. Where's the little desks when ...

Matt: I was kid. When I was in school.

Kim: Yeah, yeah, I think you would just say, "Do you want to come sit in one? You can come tomorrow. We can pull a desk in for you and see how you like eight hours of that." We sat in them during our team staff meetings sometimes and I'm like ... First of all, I'm a pretty tiny person, how do people fit in these things? And it's so uncomfortable, you're tied to your desk, you can't move. And then you think, eight hours of that? That's just kind of cruel and unusual to me. So, I'm trying to embrace this and it's just all about finding new pieces every year that are going to work and not be entirely distracting.

Kim: And, so what we've kind of done, is when they come in we all just start circle time. It's like going back to kindergarten, kind of. So then they're all right there and we do the lesson and when they're ready to go work, then you choose where you want to go. That way I still have all my people here, and they're all engaged in what I'm giving them.

Kim: But, then, they can go spread off and where you're comfortable working, so ... But I'm not a lecturer either, like I said, I'm kind of embracing that constructivist style, so here's kind of the end goal. How're we gonna get there? Where are we gonna take it?

Laura: I love it.



- Matt: That's awesome. I mean, we've talked about a lot today. So, is there any kind, as we start to wrap up ... Is there any, kind of, words of wisdom, you want to leave with our listeners.
- Laura: Just, you know, about disruption in the school environment in a positive way, of course. Or, improvement or reflection or anything we've kind of covered.
- Kim: There's a lot of things. So, my tips would be: join Twitter, get on the Case Well Art Chat. You don't have to be an art [inaudible 00:45:33]. I'm obviously not, but, that's a whole 'nother thing with, like, Michael Cohen, that was my first time on chat with the Tech Rabbi. His creativity is amazing and then, you see all the ways that you can incorporate art into your classrooms.
- Kim: Just because you're an art teacher or not an art teacher, does not mean you can't be on the Case Well Art Chat. But, so connecting on Twitter and don't just lurk. Don't just lurk. Care. Nobody learns from lurking and connect, find your people, find your tribe and support them, they will support you. And then, try new things, do what you think is right, just because you are always going to have the critics in the back saying, "This isn't education. She's just putting on show or they're just putting on a show."
- Kim: You see the results, you see what your students are accomplishing and fight for what you believe in.
- Matt: That's awesome.
- Laura: We gotta have some love for the Tech Rabbi.
- Kim: So awesome. He's amazing.
- Matt: Yeah, he was our first podcast interview, so ...
- Kim: For real?
- Matt: Be sure to look for that one.



- Kim: I got spoiled. I got to hear him twice this year, he was at the NITA Conference in Nebraska and then at the Estate [inaudible 00:46:47]. Totally spoiled.
- Matt: We run in to him occasionally at NEA. Have we run into him ...[crosstalk 00:46:54]
- Laura: I think we met him ... I mean, gosh, I think it was ISTI [crosstalk 00:46:58] I think both.
- Matt: Well, we thank you again, "hu-mensely."
- Laura: You're making up words now.
- Matt: Hugely.
- Laura: Hugely and immensely. Or, hu-mensely.
- Matt: And, so, but, we appreciate it a lot that you came on and are talking to us about this after the chat and we just thank you again.
- Kim: Thank you, guys!
- Laura: It's great to always ... We love it. It's great to meet educators from all over the country, all over the world and share in a way that the listeners and the people on Twitter can connect to somebody and know that, like you said earlier, that we're real, live people and we're hoping that they can glean some ideas from today and connect with you on Twitter. So, thanks again for being a part of the Creatively Connected Classroom.
- Kim: Thank you, guys! So good to be here and [inaudible 00:47:55] on the chat!
- Matt: All right, sounds good.
- Laura: Wish you a very creative school year, okay?
- Kim: Thank you! Same to you.
- Laura: All right. Thank you.



Matt: Thanks, Kimberly. Bye.

Laura: Bye.

Kim: Bye, guys.

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