



- Matt Grundler: Hey everybody, this is Matt and Laura. Welcome to the Creatively Connected Classroom. We've got a really fun host of this this evening by the name of Sam Peck. Sam, I just want to first off welcome you and appreciate you doing this with us tonight.
- Laura Grundler: It's exciting to have Sam because Sam is one of a group of friends of ours that we've been ...
- Matt Grundler: It's a squad.
- Laura Grundler: Yes. I don't even know how to describe your little tribe there, Sam, but you have a whole project of friends and you guys kind of travel together at conferences. You've got these giant journals and things are happening. Tell us a little bit about you and also the tribe of journalers and how that all connects.
- Sam: I'll do a historical throw down here. I'm going to rewind the tape back about a decade for those of you who have VCRs. See the magnetic tape swirling backwards in your minds. Anyway, 2008 I'm teaching in North Carolina at a middle school, it was a performing arts school, global studies school, don't ask me how all that happens in one space. It also had the highest performers in the county all in that one space so that all those super smart kids were there as well.
- Sam: Crazy, beautiful mix, loving it. I head out to this place called The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching. North Carolina is very lucky to have this little gem. Teachers get their substitute paid for, their meals paid for, their gas to and from paid for, they get reimbursed for mileage. You get there and you go to training for a week and you're fed breakfast, lunch, dinner and then snacks in between by gourmet chefs while you're getting ...
- Laura Grundler: What?
- Matt Grundler: Whoa.
- Laura Grundler: That's insane.



- Sam: Yeah, it was absolutely incredible. You get to apply after you've been teaching for three years so once my license, I was an ILT teacher initially, lateral entry licensure just to clarify that. I do my three years after I get my licensure, it's 2008 and I head out there and who was teaching the class but David Modler and Eric Scott. I was like, this thing sounds like sketchbooks, visual journals. This sounds cool. I love sketchbooks, cool.
- Sam: I go and you do this first day thing and it's like a Friday and I'm just like all in. It's an open studio, there's all these supplies everywhere, it's all open. It's like glue sticks, colored pencils, paint, oil paint, book binding materials and stuff is all there. I'm just like, oh I'm in heaven, I'm never leaving.
- Sam: I'm just pumped as an art teacher to finally have studio time and everything is open. Everybody leaves and goes to bed and it's me and Dave in there at the end of the night and Dave's like, "We're going to go have a couple beers and play some dice games and work on the journals some more. You're welcome to join us." I'm like, cool I'll catch up with you in a little bit. I think I'm just going to keep working for a little while.
- Sam: I'm working on the journal, working on the journal, working on the journal and I kind of lose track of time and Dave walks back in and I think hey Dave's back, cool. Maybe he brought me a beer. I thought that would be awesome. I haven't ate or drank a thing, I haven't moved an inch and Dave's like, Dave tells the story as he walks in and he's like, "Oh, interesting. Sam's still wearing the same clothes. I wonder if he just didn't change or whatever, what happened here?" And he's like, "Oh, he's been here all night."
- Sam: I thought, oh shit I've got to go change, I've been in the studio all night. I didn't even blink. I thought maybe an hour had passed, it had been nine. Dave left at 9 p.m. it's the next morning, he's dropping his bag off, he's in fresh clothes, I can smell his aftershave. I'm like, uh whoops, I kind of missed that. It's [overrated 00:04:43]. I go to open studio and Dave says for him it was like, "Oh, this guy is on it. We're going to be friends." From that point forward, Dave, Eric and I are just kind of like hanging out.



Sam: I left there and I was so inspired. I remember I go back to my classroom and I'm like, get rid of this, all this other stuff. We're not doing projects anymore. Everybody bring up your sketchbooks, that's all we're going to do. We're working on these sketchbooks, that's all we're doing. We started talking about visual journals. I was talking about it so much that my PTA, PTO, whatever you call it, they threw money at me and I brought Dave and Eric in for ... Within a month I had them back to my school to do a workshop with my elementary kids and then for my middle school kids. I was teaching, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth at the time.

Laura Grundler: Wow.

Sam: Don't ask me how that works or functions, but it did in a major city like Guilford County, North Carolina. I was doing the work. I had Dave and Eric come in and they stayed over an extra night and my ex-wife at the time and them have a great relationship and so we just kind of partied that weekend away. They hadn't planned on staying that weekend. It happened. We had a great time. Lots of time at the bowling alley, there's great stories about that if you can get Dave to sit down and talk about it.

Sam: That kind of built this thing, so Dave and I are kind of collaborating and then we're doing exhibitions together. My MFA wouldn't have happened unless I did that time at NCAT and had them come into my classroom. I started talking about theory with Dave. I was like, you know I really like making and I'm really into making but what do you think about theory? Dave had just started his MFA program so he was going through his first year of theory class. Him and I are just kind of like back and forth. He starts talking about Fight Club as a theoretical construct of French theory and new French theory, like in the 20th century and he talks through all this stuff in terms of Fight Club.

Sam: I'm going through my MFA interview at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and I'm dropping these bombs that Dave had just like stuck in my head and I'm like, this is what I'm thinking about right now. I'm not really grounded in this. I want to talk more about it. Foucault seems awesome, I want to get deep in this. Everybody in the room is cracking up. The painter is cracking up, the photographer is cracking up. I didn't know it at the time but I'm there with everybody who's full professor. I'm



there with the painting full professor, the sculpture full professor, the photography full professor, the art history ... And the art history guy is like, "What is this Fight Club thing?" They think that's [inaudible 00:07:26]

Sam: He's rubbing his wrinkled old head and all this skin is spilling over his eyes. I'm like, am I in trouble? This guy seems pissed. He's like, "What's Fight Club? What is this? Tell me about Fight Club." They have never heard him talk this much at any interview and he's just like, "Foucault, Fight Club. Give me some grounding in this. Help me understand where you're at." I had no idea that I was in, I thought I had totally bombed the interview and there's no way I got in.

Sam: No, I excelled at it. They loved my work. I had showed them the sketchbook, which is like this one. I had 30, 40 pages done in it and they're like, "You did this in a week?" I was like, yeah.

Laura Grundler: [crosstalk 00:08:07]

Matt Grundler: [crosstalk 00:08:07]

Sam: [Crosstalk 00:08:08] but then we partied the rest of the time. It was just like that bloomed everything. Exhibitions, then we started traveling to conferences together. We kind of realized we were all within driving distance of one another. Dave got a job at App State in North Carolina. I graduated from my MFA program and I was teaching there so then we're just kind of collaborating together. What are you teaching? What are you doing? Let's talk about this. Pedagogies get intermixed, journals get intermixed. We start realizing that we're collaborating a lot on each other's journals, we're trading them back and forth.

Sam: We see each other, we're late night drinking and waking up in the morning going, dude what did you do to my journal? It just blossomed into this idea of like what if we did this for a big ... We just had another journal that we sent back to each other back and forth, so we started with like a big 11 x 17 and we're sending this guy back and forth in the mail. It was like, okay here's 20 bucks to send this journal to Dave at App State, this makes no sense. We started delivering it, we're like how do we reduce the cost.



Sam: But then we moved to the 4 x 6 and we're like, oh we can send this as media mail, this is like two dollars, the price of a cup of coffee, and we can mail it to each other. Oh, perfect. Dave moves up to Shepherdstown, West Virginia where he's teaching now, we're like let's expand this project. That was around December of 2012. We met and we talked about this. We started to create a Tumblr for it. We presented the project at Open Engagement, a conference that talks about social practice and trans media, transdisciplinary practices. For the first couple of years that happened at Portland State University, it's now kind of moving around. It's happened at a couple of places.

Sam: We went and we just threw the project down there and did the thing. Didn't get a lot of response there but just kept it rolling. At the time we were buying sketchbooks, giving them out and seeing what kind of generated from that. We got a little bit of response. In 2015 at the NAEA conference we really threw down to art educators and art educators were like, "Yeah, let's do this!" And so it kind of just like blew up. It was awesome. From there the ball has just gotten rolling. We started doing it at state conferences, regional conferences, Virginia art education, North Carolina art education, Maryland art education, West Virginia art education, Oregon art education. We're just like, let's go, let's throw this thing down.

Sam: We started doing it as the pre-conference workshop at NAEA and the ball has just been kind of flown from there. It's kind of created this thing. People ... We bring the books with us from people we haven't seen. I know Dave ... Matt, he just sent you two books, you're going to get two little [crosstalk 00:11:00]

Matt Grundler: Woo hoo!

Sam: By the way, so you should be looking forward to that.

Matt Grundler: Okay.

Sam: Dave realized himself that he had both of them at one time so he sent them both back.

Matt Grundler: I was starting to miss my books so, you know.



Laura Grundler: That's so funny. But you guys have a name. I follow everybody on Instagram and I see all these great things going on, but what's the name for the project and how do people find you?

Sam: We're on Play Here, that's kind of our social media moniker because we think it's a whole lot easier to say than our full name. The original name was the Rhizome Research Resource Rangers. Yeah!

Laura Grundler: Whoa!

Matt Grundler: Go Power Rangers!

Laura Grundler: Yeah.

Sam: It was a Power Ranger play, but it was a way of taking Deleuze Guattarian thought based around the idea of a rhizome. We really liked the idea of the rhizome as a construct theoretically to think about the way that ideas can spread. You can run down a rabbit hole, follow it back up, kind of the way that roots burrow through the earth and then share ideas with each other, chemicals to keep each other alive, much the same way that journals can blossom and bloom and act in this way.

Sam: We were thinking about building artistic communities in ways of sharing ideas with one another. We went to the CAA conference with this idea in mind of this project and we liked the idea of rhizome, we were trying to build off that. We were reading about all this stuff and we were super excited. We just graduated from MFAs and we have all these ideas. We went to the CAA conference and we were so let down because all these art historians were like, "Ha ha ha ha ha, dudes! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" We were like, that's not funny.

Sam: They're making these dumb jokes and they're only talking to each other. They have no interest in sharing ideas. We're raising hands and asking questions and trying to connect with them after the conference and go get a coffee or a beer and talk to these guys and burn their brain. They could care less. We're not in the club. They don't want us to be in the club, they don't want to talk to us about it. They just want to talk to the other people who write and talk about Deleuze and include him in their writing. We're like, this ain't cool.



Sam: We like the Power Rangers, of course. We're just like, we're going to be the rhizome Power Rangers and that didn't really flow. We were like, let's be the four R's, the Rhizome, Resource because we're going to build resources, Research because we're doing research, Rangers because we're out there investigating new things on the fringe of art education and art. We want these disciplines to not be disparate, art education, art. We want them to be intermixed, intermingled and playing amongst each other. How do we make this happen? How do we make the art educator really think about their practice and their pedagogy. How do we build that all into one thing?

Sam: This kind of idea blossomed, so we shortened the four Rs to just be tet[R]ad, a thing of four, like a cell splits into two, then it splits again and becomes four and you have a tetra, the four phases of the moon. It had all these extra layers to it. But we were quick to be like this is such a mouthful, what do we do? We had tet[R]ad, Draw and Play Here to kind of make the name or our moniker be about what we wanted to do, Draw and Play Here. We liked the idea of Gadamer, another phenomenological writer. He talks about play a lot so we're trying to bring that into the space because we don't want the work of art to be toil, we want it to be a playful thing.

Sam: We like the idea of an artistic accomplice and you're sharing with somebody else and that you're playing with them, you're opening this active surprise. What are you going to do if this other person cannot know what you're going to do until it comes back to them. You can strategize about what's going to happen in the book but until you get the book back you really don't know what you're going to do because it hasn't opened itself to it and you only react to the book when it finally comes back to you.

Sam: All that strategizing and Duchampian chess playing that you're going to do with the artwork, it totally goes to null and you have to reset everything that's going to happen because that moment of surprise is really an act of play or an action of play and you've got to always already be in surprise, as they say, [crosstalk 00:15:34]

Matt Grundler: I absolutely love how each one of the connections that you were just talking about had some kind of science related organisms and phases of



the moon, because we're always talking about how scientists and artists are so similar and people always go, "Oh yeah, no they're not the same." But they so are and they have those connections, it's awesome.

Laura Grundler: It's totally ... Well, and the collaboration piece too. I think it was funny that you were talking about the art historians not wanting to collaborate because that's ... For us, collaboration is huge. One of the things we really believe in is the connections with others and we all grow through those connections. I know one of your questions during our chat was in what ways do you invite collaboration into artwork. Why is that so important to you?

Sam: Oh, whew! For Dave and I it was this place to launch our own practice. You think about your artistic practice as like I'm inside a boat and how is the boat moving forward. I can take my own paddle and I can push it in and I can push it forward. If you're in a canoe, you keep pushing that canoe with only one side you're going to go in a circle, you're going to keep plowing your own circle. You think about what's the thing that has to happen for you to switch the paddle to the other side and paddle a little bit more to kind of straighten your path out and move forward a little bit instead of keep following that one circle, using the same phrases of artistic mark making or what kind of propels you out of that space.

Sam: For Dave and I it was like the act with each other. I would go see Dave, Dave would come see me. When we were at App State and UNCG and working in these two places. When Dave would come and see my practice he would kind of like wash me out. That's why people go to school. They go to school not just because they want to learn something new but where are they doing the learning from? It's from within and what allows them to get outside themselves and latch onto something new and pull them out of that space is really about hearing somebody else's words and allowing to be open enough to grasp onto that thing.

Sam: This is what collaboration, I think, does for these people who are so internalized and we hope that the practice, the generous practice of collaboration allows for. That's what the idea for the project is really trying to push into that cycle of your own practice is something to latch onto and propel you forward, kind of pole vault you over that next rung. Sometimes we return back to the same place, but if you keep getting



pole vaulted eventually you're going to move beyond and you won't just return to the same pole vault, you won't just jump over the same rung, you're going to take yourself to a new space, you're going to allow two left paddles in that canoe to move your path a little bit further forward down the river or change your path or even to pull yourself up on a different rock so that you don't follow the same pathway up, to use a rock face as another way of approaching this. It's very much driven by a desire to grow.

Laura Grundler: Yeah.

Matt Grundler: Yeah. That kind of answered your first question that you were talking about during the chat, which was how do you infuse it into your own personal practice. As a teacher you said, "Okay ..." Well when you first got this book for journaling you were like, "All right, everybody ..." When you got back to your classroom you were like, "Okay, everybody put everything else away. We're going to do this." How does somebody go about pulling that into their students' practice, like into their classroom and making that become part of their routine or part of their daily practice as a teacher in their classroom?

Sam: I think a really easy way to do that is ... I think I mentioned this as well in the chat but I could be wrong. I love the idea of ... I can't believe it just dropped out of my head. The Exquisite Corpse, there it is. I love the idea of the Exquisite Corpse. I love that idea of like I make a little drawing and then I fold it over and then somebody else makes a little drawing and they fold it over. I think once that happens, I can't tell you how many times my college students, the most apathetic people on the planet, I hear laughter from them I'm like, I win! Today I win, suckers! [Don't be 00:20:18] apathetic in my classroom, suckers!

Sam: I get oohs and aahs, I get them to laugh and I am like, I am knocking it out of the park. This is what I loved about teaching middle school is that oohs and aahs is like, it's exclamations, it's like excitement. "Let's do it again! Let's do it again, man! Mr. Peck, can I have more paper? Can I have more paper Mr. Peck?" Eric and I and Michael Dodson hops in on this sometimes too, we're always making fun of each other or playing on each other and it's, "Hey Mr. Scott, Hey Mr. Scott ..." for Eric or "Mr.



Modler, Mr. Modler ..." for Dave or "Mr. Dodson, can I work on your journal too?"

Sam: We're always playing in this space of pretending we're the student and being that person and playing against each other a little bit just to put us back in the mode of don't forget you're a teacher and I'm your student in some ways. You're always learning from each other but also there's a level of fun that's involved in the performativity of being a teacher but also in the performance of class and how you take that up and kind of play in that space is also about how you think through some of your own problems. In that play think there's some of that.

Sam: I would say for the teachers themselves to one, do the Exquisite Corpse, that's an easy way of doing it. And I, instead of buying paper for my classroom, at the beginning of the year I always bought sketchbooks. I bought a sketchbook for every student and you can buy them real cheap if you really want to. You can buy a ton of paper and then just buy staples, make your own books. I know Eric Scott did that a lot, there's a lot of people who are big believers in that. Michael Dodson found this paper company so we can buy each student a sketchbook with like \$1.25. Once you buy the sketchbooks they don't get anything else until they fill it and they don't fill it to their standard, they fill it to your standard.

Sam: What does that look like? It's full-on, every square inch of that book is so worked in it's thick and heavy and collaged and drawn into. It's just like a rich object that you're like, yeah I can show this to an art historian and they'll be like, "What is that?" When you get that kind of reaction you know you're doing something right. The book doesn't just come back to you the same thickness that you gave it to them, all of a sudden it takes on a new life. I like to say that you're feeding the book. The book has a life of its own and I often say this to the students, are you feeding your book enough?

Sam: It's hungry for you to add into it with collage, with drawing, with what's going on in your life. Put your receipts in it, put your candy wrappers in it, put everything in it. Why are you holding back? They're like, "I can put my trash in the book?" I'm like, hey if that's what you want to put in your book. It's still a precious object. It should be something that you enjoy to



have with you all the time. I challenge my students to have it with them all the time as I challenge myself.

Sam: With my books, and I know Dave has this at the front of his book and I know that Eric Scott has it at the front of his book, there aren't many other people who pull this one, but I say I write this write in the beginning of the book: I solemnly promise from this day forward I shall never again be caught without a journal during my waking hours and also I shall use it faithfully every day." If I'm asleep, no I don't have a journal on me but if I'm awake, I have one. I always keep one in my back pocket at all times. This is how I collage into this.

Sam: I know you're listening to me right now on the podcast but I just pulled a little small Strathmore sketchbook out of my back pocket. It's got 100 sheets, it's 3.5 x 5 inch, it's got one set of rings on the top. I've also got my big 11 x 14 journals in there and so right on that front inside page, that's where I write this. I write it different every single time. It's big, bold and in color so that every time somebody opens my book up they might see my business card for that year on the left but on the right hand side, that first page has always got that in big, bold colors.

Sam: If my book breaks or I've got to fix the seam then I glue or staple or I ... This time I just taped and stickered the inside edge and then I redraw right over the top of it. That's a big thing. You keep the journal with you, you feed the journal, you think about the journal as a practice. It's not just something that you get into the beginning of your practice but all student experimentation and projects happen within the journal, it changes the way the journal works. You might do an acrylic painting on a separate piece of paper but then what happens to that painting? Put it in the journal.

Sam: The other thing that that can then become is you have all the journals inside your classroom, it becomes an authentic assessment tool. I did not come up with that idea, these are not just my ...

Laura Grundler: [Crosstalk 00:25:21]

Sam: I'm definitely building off what you call my tribe, we definitely collaborate on all these ideas. Michael Bell is another one. That man, great ideas. The last year of K-12 teaching I was teaching with that guy, my classroom



was right next to him. We had the boys hall right there, boom, it was just a bunch of male teachers. That had its own set of problems.

Laura Grundler: I'm sure it did.

Sam: No female teachers. There was also a male bathroom at the end of the hall. Whew, that got stinky. Let me tell you, yikes! But it was also awesome. We worked next to Michael Bell just to hear him as a teacher but also be tutored by him, I mean I received his tutelage as a teacher. He definitely has more years of experience under his belt. He's also done some amazing things with his practice, with his high school teaching. I don't think he's in the classroom anymore, I think he's a supervisor of other teachers, which I think is great for the profession.

Sam: There's definitely like a growth level that's going to happen when now his students are the teachers, which I think he's been doing for a long time but it hasn't really been thought of as an official practice for him. Now I think it's becoming a whole another thing with him as a supervisor. I think his county is going to grow and expand because of it and Michael is just getting his feet wet inside of that. I'm very excited to see where things go for him.

Sam: But thinking about the visual journal practice, my level of teaching and how that was allowed to expand in that last year as I was given space to grow and kind of think through that, I've never been just like, "Hey Sam, do your thing." No one has ever just taken the reins off like that. That was the really amazing part of working with him for that one year. I wish I had spent more time smoking cigars and drinking whiskey with that guy though.

Laura Grundler: There's still time, Sam. There's still time.

Sam: There's still time.

Susan: Hey there. This is Susan from Education Closet. Journaling is one of my favorite ways to tap into my creative zone. I'm really excited by this whole episode with Sam. If you're looking for more ideas like these, check out our upcoming free online Arts Integration and STEAM summit. It's happening February 22 through 24th and you'll get access to over 50



sessions. Learn all about it at educationcloset.com/steam-summit. Now, let's get back into the conversation.

Laura Grundler: I cannot remember which one of y'all it was, but we were sitting in I think a Starbucks journaling with you and ...

Matt Grundler: It was Dave and Michael.

Laura Grundler: Dave maybe and Michael. I don't know who it was, but there was a conversation about somebody's nephew or niece taking their journal and drawing all through it and whoever the mom was was like freaking out that it was going to mess up this precious object that belonged to someone. I don't remember which one of you guys it was.

Laura Grundler: I thought that was such a unique conversation because in our house obviously there are children and we have little makers running around and they will oftentimes journal in our sketchbooks and we kind of go back and forth at home between the five of us. It's kind of a common practice, but I thought that was a really interesting conversation because I do think that sometimes there's this fear of messing something up. I'm curious what your thoughts are about that.

Sam: I think it's all feeding the journal. I think it was my niece, it might have been my sister and nephew and then Dave that allowed my sister and nephew to work in his book. My sister was like, "Oh my god!" Scribble, scribble scribble. Flip! Scribble, scribble, scribble. Flip! Scribble, scribble, scribble. Flip! They were just trying to draw on every page because Dave was talking about working on every page. I think Dave just took it up and ran with it. He was like, "Cool, man. These are awesome scribbles. I would never have thought to do that work."

Sam: I think I worked alongside ... In one of our workshops, because when we say our workshop is open to everybody we really mean it. I have a page in this journal, a two-page spread that I did one day with a 10-year-old and it's one of my favorite two-page spreads. This was this kid's ...

Laura Grundler: That's beautiful.

Sam: Yeah. He was like, "I want a tyrannosaurus in my bedroom." I was like, there you go.



Matt Grundler:

Right?

Sam:

He was talking about his ideal bedroom because he lived in a small space and like what's under the stairs and there was all this cool stuff happening. But the idea that a child's authentic work is not good enough for an adult's practice I think connects back, and I talk to my student teachers about this a lot. My elementary ed students, I was talking about it today in fact, about the idea of neatness and how we enforce this idea of adult work is better than a child's work and when do you allow for child's work to be good child's work.

Sam:

Betty Edwards created those kind of steps, I forget who the other researcher is, it's slipping my mind. But she did them in tandem with someone else who was previous to her work, but Betty Edwards talks about the steps of it's like the scribble stage and then what stage happens when in terms of development and what is authentic and allowing for that to happen. I think somewhere along the line, somebody forgot the fact that, although it's presented this way often, but art isn't necessarily magical, you aren't born like, "I'm an elf! I have got elf ears! I have elf powers and I can cast spells!"

Sam:

Often in these ideas about even like magic users. I am a magic person but how do I develop my magic powers? In the same way, like Merlin has to learn spells in order to cast his magic. He can't just shoot fire out of his fingers on birth.

Laura Grundler:

You have to develop the craft.

Sam:

Right. How do we allow for students to do that and how do we allow for children to do that and how do we allow to reward them of their work that isn't quite there yet? How do we ... This writer, Karen Barad writes about it, she's a new materialist thinker and she writes about physics and this crossover into phenomenology and other ideas. She also writes about feminism, but she writes about becoming and I think we've got to allow students to become. How do we make the space for them to become?

Sam:

I think this is something that's ingrained into art and art education that there's a space to become, but often times other adults want to see the end result but they don't want to see the becoming. We've got to kind of



build in that culture of becoming. We put artwork into our hallways and are we allowing for becoming. Often this is talked about in TAB in terms of like authenticity and allowing for students to make their authentic work. I think Choice-Based also does this and Limited Choice allows for it somewhat. I think you've got to make the space for it as well. There's my two cents.

Laura Grundler: No, that was pretty great. Clearly we talk about our kids a lot during the podcast but we were ... Owen is 12 and he was talking about the robotics club this morning on the way to school, it's been a long day. He did not like robotics club because people were dogging him on his drawings. Other kids would say, "I can't draw." He'd say, "Everybody can draw." His drawings are these really beautiful sketchy, scribbly, messy, gooey, really cool drawings. I think they're magical, they're just really neat drawings. But I am his mom so ...

Laura Grundler: But he's never been self-conscious about those drawings because we have really tried to give them that space to be who they are, but school is such a different experience. He's at this place where he's realizing that the way that we are at home is not necessarily what's embraced at school sometimes. We may not always be after the A+ so we're after, and we tell him this, we're after the growth. We want to see the development. We want to see, do you understand what it is you're learning. I don't care if you get the A+, I want to know that you learned it and that you're growing from it.

Matt Grundler: Even if through his drawing you might not see what he's pulling together, but when he's explaining it to you through his process, like how he's envisioning it, then after a moment or two you're all of a sudden like, oh I see it now, I see where you were getting that from.

Laura Grundler: Yeah.

Matt Grundler: That becomes the magical part of it.

Laura Grundler: It really does, but I just have to agree with that, just the idea of becoming is so interesting because I have never heard it said that way but it's something that we talk ...

Matt Grundler: It makes sense.



Laura Grundler: It makes sense a lot to me.

Matt Grundler: Yeah.

Laura Grundler: Just because we talk about this ... There's so much pressure at school to be at a certain level already and instead of letting them experience what it's like to just be 12 or just be 8.

Sam: Right. There's something about, okay learn the concept where ... And Dave and I talk about this a lot and it's our gripe, the schooling of America is our big topic. We kind of hit on this a lot about how is schooling conditioning students rather than being about an opening up of who they are and how they can enrich and understand themselves. I think it goes back to the ... Sadly it goes back to some of the problems with school, especially with the school-to-prison pipeline, the idea that walk on the right side of the hallway, eat your lunch this way. What are we really constructing with students? How are we building more sheep rather than building people who are hungry for the world and want to look out and get out there and experience and understand it and grapple with it.

Sam: What kind of person are we building or constructing with what schools do with this homogenizing of everybody. It's sad, but I think there's people out there like you guys and myself and a lot of other art educators that I'm really happy to call friends and really happy and excited to go meet and see, especially at NAEA and some of our other conferences. I am always amazed by what's happening at some of our state and regional conferences, it always expands my mind and my perspective about what the possibilities are.

Sam: I know Eric just went to the Virginia conference and he was doing some video work there and it really expanded his practice. I was like, Eric how did you do that? I want to do that. Eric went to go learn as well as go teach and I think that's important that as people who are going to do professional development, they were also allowed to develop our profession but that were keeping those balanced so there's a give and a take and we're excited about that at all times. That's what's driven me here to the University of Minnesota to do my PhD is hey, I want to learn



more. Yeah, I know I'm 40 and I'm the old guy in class, but I don't care because when do we want learning to end? I don't.

Laura Grundler: Never.

Sam: I don't. Right.

Laura Grundler: Yeah. That's so exciting.

Sam: Yeah.

Matt Grundler: I know I learned so much from you guys in Seattle when you had your pre-conference workshop. Laura had already had the buzz of journaling and I was like, oh yeah, okay, yeah sure. But it was giving that abundance of time that was just kind of decompressing for me as I didn't have the things pulling me from all the different directions and it was just having time to be able to sit and make and process everything. I personally can't thank you enough for that workshop and I hope to go to another one when you guys have another one.

Sam: We're doing another one in Boston, so please come out.

Matt Grundler: Yes!

Laura Grundler: That's when I'm sad I'm a supervisor because he gets to go do that and I'm ... Not that it won't be a great supervisor session but it's just not the same.

Sam: Maybe in years to come the supervisors will bring us in for their super session.

Matt Grundler: Oh, that would be fun.

Laura Grundler: That would be lovely. I'll see who I can talk to about that. Yeah.

Sam: Certain [guys that are 00:39:15] supervisor session.

Laura Grundler: I think just following you guys, just one more shout out, it really had me rethinking curriculum as a supervisor and working as a curriculum coordinator with our teachers in our school district and we've implemented visual journaling at every level, and especially really deeply



embedded it at the middle school art level because of the idea of exploration, complete exploration and understanding that this is your everything book and this is where you can go, like you said, to explore media or just to think through an idea.

Laura Grundler: Interestingly enough, today the AP college board sent out the new courses, the new studio art courses. They have a new name and they're going to have a new set of structures and all of this and a lot of it was this idea of investigating ideas. There's this whole ... And I thought, well we're on it because we're already journaling. We're already getting kids to investigate ideas.

Matt Grundler: Already investigating. Yeah.

Laura Grundler: And to pull from different sources and do these ideas of in-depth inquiry based on different artists and all of that together. The journal is the perfect place for the ... And it is a great assessment tool. You can see everything in one place, it really is an everything book for the teachers and for the students.

Sam: The other awesome thing, and I'm going to give Dave a couple of plugs here, Dave does a great job with modeling for his students so that alongside them learning about doing lines of inquiry and different artists and what evolves from that. Dave does it in his own practice, in his own books, so that everything he's asking them to do he does as well. There are lots of great examples out there about people who work in visual journals, including you guys and how you're working in them.

Sam: I think Dave does also a really great job of putting his calendar into the back of his book, not just his ... Eric does this as well, so that the calendar becomes a way for students to keep track of themselves. When is everything due? Let's go to our calendar, it sets up the date. Look, there it is. You have a one-inch square for each day and some people are like, "That's not enough space to write everything I've got to do in a day." Just the big activities, not your routine stuff. That's what goes into the journal.

Sam: If you're planning to work out a certain day or three days a week, if you work out every single day then it doesn't need go in the journal, but if you're planning a big vacation, how you're mapping your time, you can



highlight green is for when I'm going to my studio, and so you color the whole square green because that's a signal that you're going to go there. You write in certain colors so you know that activity is linked to a certain concept so it becomes another way of planning and thinking through what you're doing.

Sam: People talk about bullet journaling, I'm like oh I've been doing that in my journal for years. I'm like, that's just a journal practice, why are you making it something else? Why do you have a separate book just for that?

Laura Grundler: Same as sketch noting. Isn't that funny how sketch noting is like this hot thing and as a dyslexic kid, I've been sketch noting since I was five. I drew my ideas in pictures before I used words because I couldn't put the words together and that's still how I take notes, with just as many visuals as I do with words. It's just so funny that it's this hot thing. I saw a post today about why should people draw when they're taking notes. I'm like, duh.

Sam: I love the fact that people are doing scientific studies about this and I'm like, what? But that was some of the draw for me with sketchbooks is well, I mean I had learning disabilities as a kid, I was an ADHD kid. For me, my sketchbook was my best friend, I carried it everywhere I went, I worked in it all the time. When I was going ... I graduated high school and I took a year at community college before I went to a four-year and that sketchbook rode on the bus alongside me. I didn't learn how to drive until I was 19 years old so I was taking that bus everywhere in Providence. I was a bus rider and a walker and a skateboarder and a bicyclist. I didn't want to drive until it was absolutely necessary.

Sam: Part of me processing was that sketchbook, it was my artwork. For me it was a great way, now I'm just ... The H part is pretty much gone, pretty much. They say that it's supposed to be out of you at adulthood but there are lots of people who say I'm still hyperactive, but it's okay. I'm one of those people ... We got to NAEA and I'm the guy who's grabbing the Bible out of the drawer and throwing it out the window and jumping up and down and going go testaments! Woo hoo! [inaudible 00:44:12]

Laura Grundler: That sounds a little impulsive there, Sam.



Matt Grundler: Just a little.

Laura Grundler: Oh my gosh. We're all kindred spirits, believe me.

Matt Grundler: Oh man.

Laura Grundler: Yeah. Well I think we have come to the end of our time together unfortunately, but as always we look forward to hanging with you soon.

Sam: I look forward to it. Let's make some time for coffee at NAEA.

Matt Grundler: Oh, absolutely.

Laura Grundler: Definitely. Do you have any parting words or last things, words of wisdom you'd like to share with the listeners?

Sam: 2020 will be in Minnehaha, Minneapolis, so we look forward to seeing you all here. There will be a Draw and Play Here party at both Boston and here in Minneapolis and so we hope your listeners will come and join us at NAEA. We haven't decided on a venue yet but keep your ears wide open. We hope to drink coffee with you in Boston and we can throw down in Southeast [crosstalk 00:45:17]

Laura Grundler: From Dunkin' Donuts.

Matt Grundler: Dunkin'.

Laura Grundler: Dunkin'.

Sam: It's just Dunkin'.

Matt Grundler: It's Dunkin' now.

Sam: [crosstalk 00:45:25] I got my accent back, I went back to New England for Thanksgiving so I'm looking forward to some time back in New England. People say that sometimes I [sound like 00:45:33] a New Yorker, I think it's my North Carolina/New England mix. I'm looking forward to more coffee with my boys.

Laura Grundler: Yay!



- Matt Grundler: Love that.
- Sam: You can always find us. We're journaling everywhere. If you see these big books open you know who you're coming and talking to. But please feel free to reach out to us. If you want to get involved in the project, if you're interested in having a collaborative journal, please reach out to us. We have a new website out, drawandplayhere.com, we just put that up. It's still kind of getting the kinks knocked out of it but look to there to see new insights and see what's happening with us. We have hired a full-time web designer, his name is Eric Scott. He knows what's up.
- Laura Grundler: Yeah.
- Matt Grundler: Oh yeah.
- Sam: Yeah. Take a look at that and we'd love to hear from you. If you're looking to join a project, please reach out to us. We're on Twitter as [@drawandplayhere](https://twitter.com/drawandplayhere). We're also on Instagram under the same name. We're working on a bunch of new posts that are about to come out for a workshop we just did here in Minneapolis, so look for those. We update pretty much on the regular. Dave is there as [@DRModler](https://twitter.com/DRModler) on both Twitter and Instagram.
- Sam: Eric is [@journalfodderjunkies](https://twitter.com/journalfodderjunkies) on Twitter, I think it's [@ericsscott](https://twitter.com/ericsscott) on Instagram, I could be wrong there. There's also Journal Fodder Junkies Instagram and then I'm [@specks](https://twitter.com/specks) on Instagram. You can find Michael James Dodson [@MJDodson](https://twitter.com/MJDodson), I think that's what it is. He's got some great work up there. I forget the name of his school, he's going to kick me in the butt for not remembering that. But those are all the members of my tribe!
- Laura Grundler: That's awesome.
- Matt Grundler: That is nice. Those were some big shout outs there.
- Sam: Yeah.
- Matt Grundler: All right.
- Sam: Michael Bell, he's a good guy.



Matt Grundler: Yeah, he is.

Laura Grundler: Yep. MBELLART is his

Matt Grundler: MBELLART, yeah.

Laura Grundler: Yeah.

Sam: There you go.

Matt Grundler: There you go. All right.

Laura Grundler: We got you.

Matt Grundler: Well you take care and we appreciate you talking with us for a little while.

Sam: Thank you. This was so generous of you. Extreme gratitude to you guys for giving me this opportunity, thank you so much.

Matt Grundler: Appreciate it.

Laura Grundler: We're excited to have you.

Matt Grundler: All right.

Laura Grundler: All right.

Matt Grundler: Thanks.

Laura Grundler: Bye Sam.

Matt Grundler: Bye Sam.

Susan: 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 Education Closet and K12 Art Chat so we can reach out and say thanks. 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.