

Art in Early Childhood

HOW A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS CAN HELP SUPPORT PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN DESIGNING EDTPA LEARNING SEGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry explores the National Visual Arts Standards (NVAS) and how they align with the Educational Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). The NVAS was developed by the National Coalition for Arts Standards which is in alliance with several US national art and arts education organizations. In the United States, some 40 states and roughly 600 institutions participate in edTPA, and teacher candidates are required to successfully complete this standard-based and subject-specific assessment in order to obtain initial teacher licensure. The journey began with the realization that neither I, a former early childhood art teacher and current art teacher educator, nor my pre-service teachers, were understanding and utilizing the full spectrum of the NVAS. Delving deeply into the standards by reflecting on a 2nd grade lesson sequence, I was able to draw parallels between the NVAS and edTPA, a teacher candidate assessment portfolio that pre-service teachers in educator preparation programs produce, that is expected or required for initial certification in most states in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, The National Visual Art Standards (NVAS) are not new; it was released in 2014 and replaced the National Standards for the Visual Arts. State education standards have existed since the early 1990s and provided teachers and students with a clear set of skills and expectations to guide curricula and lessons (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019). The NVAS followed the creation of the Common Core Standards (CCS) which were implemented to create consistent learning goals across the United States to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, graduate from high school “prepared for college, career, and life” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019).

The NVAS were drafted by educational scholars and teachers across the United States and set learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Importantly, they are not a curriculum. Rather, they state skills and understandings that students should acquire before they progress to the next level. The learning is scaffolded so skills build upon each other according to grade

level. The NVAS underscores the process-oriented quality of arts learning that, according to the National Core Arts Standards (2019), emphasizes artistic literacy:

The knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts. Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform/produce/present, respond and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts. It is embodied in specific philosophical foundations and lifelong goals, that enable an artistically literate person to transfer arts knowledge, skills and capacities to other subjects, settings, and contexts” (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning, 2019, p. 17).

NVAS ADOPTION

In 2016, I transitioned from teaching art at an early childhood elementary school (3-year-olds to 2nd grade) to higher education as a teacher educator. The NVAS, adopted in 2014, foster a deep understanding of ideas central to the visual arts, emphasizes high-order thinking, creative problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration and integration of technology into the curriculum (Stewart, 2014). It also provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practices. Unlike the NVAS, many states’ standards were skill-based and organized by grade strands (Colletti & Yolen, 2017). They also did not emphasize technology, contemporary art practices, collaboration, communication, the interaction between viewer and artwork, higher-level thinking, or the need for students to be creative problem solvers (Colletti & Yolen, 2017).

Initially, while teaching pre-service art teachers and supervising student teachers, I saw my pre-service teachers ‘throwing’ standards into their lessons - sometimes as many as 7-10. So many standards were included because they all were applicable. Yet, applying so many standards was problematic for pre-service teachers who needed to justify and align those standards to other important aspects of their lessons, such as learning objectives, instructional procedures, and assessments. I realized that pre-service teachers were not understanding the scope of the standards. Rather, pre-service teachers/teacher candidates were focused solely on the performance (the end product) and missing other important features of the art experience, which included “big ideas” and essential questions, to help foster a more student-centered approach to teaching and learning.

EDTPA ADOPTION

In 2019, my state and institution adopted Educational Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) and required that all pre-service teachers seeking an initial teaching license submit a passing score on this assessment. In the United States, some 40 states and roughly 600 institutions participate in edTPA. EdTPA, developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), is a subject-specific assessment used by teacher preparation programs featuring three tasks: Planning (Task 1), Instruction (Task 2) and Assessment (Task 3). During student teaching, teacher candidates prepare an assessment portfolio, which involves developing a ‘learning segment’, otherwise known as a ‘unit’,

consisting of 3-5 lessons that include instructional materials and assessment plans. Candidates submit unedited video recordings (up to 20 minutes total) of themselves teaching and do a deep analysis of their learning segment, teaching and student learning (Pearson Education, Inc., 2019). The careful selection and alignment of standards are integral to edTPA. According to the National Education Association (n.d.):

Learning segment alignment is key for success on Task 1 [lesson planning]. An aligned learning segment is one in which all of the components fit together to build student understanding during 3-5 days of connected instruction. When choosing standards, think depth over breadth by narrowing the focus of your learning segment to a few, carefully chosen state or national standards (pg. 1).

MAKING THE NVAS AND EDTPA ACCESSIBLE

I wanted to make these documents more accessible to my teacher candidates through a close reading of the NVAS standards, using the lens of the edTPA criteria (Task 1, developing learning segments; Task 2, teaching-learning segments; and Task 3, reflection on teaching and learning) to address correlations between these policy documents. This analysis would also help in reducing stress about edTPA, by increasing the depth of classroom learning and aligning the standards to several aspects of the learning segments. I therefore decided to analyze a 2nd grade art lesson in relation to the NVAS, to better understand how I could help pre-service teachers use the standards to guide their lesson planning in alignment with both NVAS and edTPA.

I undertook an in-depth review of the NVAS, edTPA, and my lesson to address the following questions:

1. How can teacher candidates choose the most effective standards to promote student growth?
2. How can teacher candidates align standards with other components of their lessons, i.e., objectives, instructional procedures and assessments?
3. How will full utilization of the NVAS help teacher candidates with their edTPA portfolios?

This paper will describe the NVAS and how they are aligned with the edTPA, the design of this investigation and how the NVAS and edTPA were implemented to understand existing lesson plans and a detailed analysis of an early childhood artmaking experiences considering components of the NVAS and edTPA. This inquiry also explores the impact of the standards and edTPA when designing art experiences for children and how teachers and teacher candidates augment lessons to meet the various components of NVAS.

UNPACKING THE NVAS AND ALIGNING WITH EDTPA

My first step in analyzing the congruences between NVAS and edTPA was to better understand all the components of the NVAS. The NVAS has four artistic processes: *Creating, Presenting, Responding and Connecting* and these processes indicate the “full scope of what it means to be an artistically literate

citizen” (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2019, p. 2). The artistic processes emphasize both physical and cognitive actions by creating links between the process and the learner. The National Coalition of Core Art Standards (2019), defines each of the artistic processes as follows:

- Creating - generating, conceiving, and developing new artistic ideas and original art.
- Presenting - sharing and interpreting works of art.
- Responding - understanding how art conveys meaning.
- Connecting - making connections between artistic ideas and personal meanings and experiences.

The alignment of the NVAS standards with lesson plans is not only required by many States but encompasses the potential knowledge of what students can acquire in the visual arts classroom.

In the planned learning segments for edTPA, teacher candidates must support their students “to create, present or respond to the visual arts by making connections to interpreting art, developing works of art/design, and/or relating art to context” (Understanding Rubric Level Progression, 2018, p. 2). EdTPA defines each of these critical areas of arts engagement using the following criteria:

- Create - to produce an artwork in a visual arts genre.... The creation of a visual artwork can serve several instructional goals, including personal creative expression, historical and cultural investigation, responses to contemporary social commentary and creative problem-solving in exploration of the meaning of art and culture in postmodern times.
- Develop works of art/design - using techniques, methods, of experimentation or investigation.
- Interpret art - analyzing art-making approaches, theories, art forms, genres, etc., used to convey meaning.
- Present visual art - analyze, select, prepare and arrange objects, artifacts, or artworks for display.
- Relating art to context - context can include personal, social, cultural or historical perspectives.
- Responding to visual art - experience, analyze, interpret, or reflect on artistic ideas and work either individually or collaboratively (Understanding Rubric Level Progression, 2018, p. 2).

Since the standards address these artistic processes, teacher candidates can rely on the NVAS to promote full engagement in the arts.

Each of the artistic processes is grounded by *Anchor Standards* that suggest the fundamental skills that students should acquire and “serves as the tangible educational expression of artistic literacy” (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2019, p.12).

NVAS provides student-centered learning outcomes, while edTPA emphasizes them. Student-centered outcomes take into consideration students’ learning needs and strengths, interests, aspirations and/or cultural backgrounds (TEAL Center Fact Sheet No. 6, 2010; & Pecheone &Whittaker, 2016), and are based on student learning in authentic and experiential ways (Miller et al., 2015). Student-centered classrooms are intended to support and challenge students’ understandings through the conceptual development of students, through carefully selected curriculum materials and instructional activities (Satso, 2014). EdTPA

places students’ learning at the heart of the learning tasks, planning, instruction and assessment and requires that teacher candidates assess and build upon a student’s prior knowledge. It can be argued therefore, that as edTPA leans towards a student-centered approach to teaching and learning, classrooms should be facilitated by a teacher-candidate who takes into consideration the students’ developmental needs, interests and abilities when selecting instructional materials and activities (Satso, 2014).

The NVAS promotes these outcomes through its *Enduring Understandings* and *Essential Questions*. According to Stewart (2014), *Enduring Understandings* are like ‘big ideas’ that we want students to understand deeply, rather than teaching only to what they should know or be able to do. Big ideas “endure when details and minimal skills fade away” (pg. 6). The *Enduring Understandings* are connected to an *Essential Question* that suggests inquiry, creative and critical thinking, and focuses on key concepts that are implicit in the curriculum (National Core Arts Standards Handbook, 2019). As I looked for equivalences between NVAS and edTPA, I realized that both *Enduring Understanding and Essential Questions* were fundamental to the edTPA *Central Focus*. This is: “a description of the important understandings and core concepts that you want students to develop within the learning segment. The *Central Focus* should go beyond a list of facts and skills, align with content standards and learning objectives, and address the subject-specific components in the learning segment” (edTPA Visual Arts Assessment Handbook, 2019, p. 47). (See Table 1 for NVAS and edTPA alignment).

Table 1 NVAS Alignment with edTPA

National Visual Arts Standards	edTPA
<p>Artistic Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating • Presenting • Responding • Connecting 	<p>Teacher candidates support the development of student’s abilities to create, present, or respond to visual art by incorporating at least one of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpreting art • developing works of art/design • relating art to context
Enduring Understanding and Essential Questions	Central Focus
Student choice	Student choice

Lastly, *Essential Questions, Enduring Understandings, Anchor Standards, and Artistic processes are connected to a grade or proficiency level with a specific Performance Standard* intended to help inform

teachers' instruction (National Core Arts Standards, 2019). When Performances Standards are understood in relation to the Anchor Standards, they strongly correspond with the criteria described for an edTPA learning segment, that emphasizes at its core, the Central Focus, but not if teacher-candidates are focused just on the performance standard alone. With a fuller understanding of the NVAS, therefore, teacher candidates will more easily be able to meet the criteria of the edTPA learning segments, resulting in stronger, more student-centered, lesson designs.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

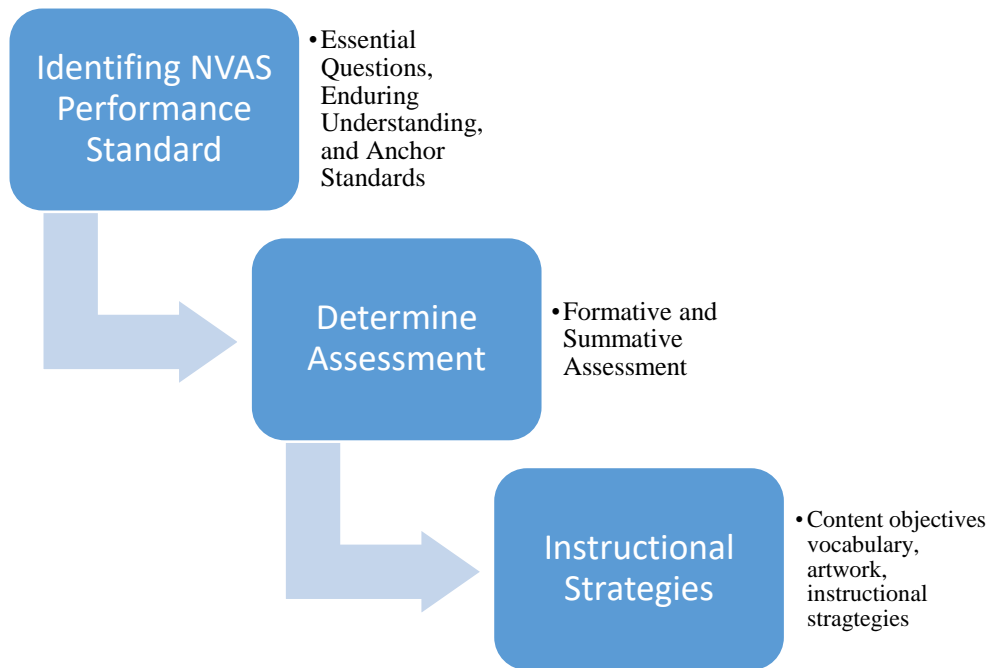
With a better understanding of the purpose and structure of the NVAS and drawing parallels with edTPA, I then examined a 2nd-grade art lesson. I sought to understand how to apply these different components of the NVAS and to ensure that my instruction and instructional tasks fit within the overarching goals and selected standards. I used the *Understanding by Design* (McTighe and Wiggins, 2015) to reflect on my lesson plans through the lens of NVAS and edTPA. According to Ryan Bowen (2017) at Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, the steps of the *Understanding by Design* (UdU) model, assert the selection of learning goals (knowledge and skills we want our students to acquire), followed up with assessment and finally determining content to meet those learning goals. Learning outcomes are identified first and they determine acceptable evidence for their attainment. Finally, appropriate pathways for achieving the outcomes are developed. In addition, the UbU framework for lesson plans and learning segments, "provides an understanding-based approach to developing instructional units of the kind that edTPA calls for; yet is situated in a broader vision of teaching and learning" (Miller, Carroll, Jancic, and Markworth, 2015, p. 43).

The architects of the National Core Arts Standards used the UbU model as a major design driver when conceiving and implementing the NVAS's *Enduring Understandings* and *Essential Questions*. Again, *Enduring Understandings* are ideas and concepts that are central to the discipline and answer the question of "Why is this topic worth studying?". The *Essential Questions* guide students as they uncover the *Enduring Understanding* by sparking further questions and inquiries (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2019). Focusing on the *Enduring Understandings* and *Essential Questions* would help me evaluate the information and assessment tasks within the selected artistic process.

I wanted to have hands-on experience in building a learning segment around its core- *Central Focus*/big idea, *Enduring Understandings*, and *Essential Questions*; that are aligned with assessments and key learning activities and are linked to performance standards. I, therefore, selected a learning segment and one *Performance Standard* for *Creating, Presenting, Responding, and Connecting* that addressed some aspects of the scope of the learning segment to see if all components of the NVAS were sufficiently integrated. From this, I could restructure the content and scope of my learning segment and select the appropriate assessments to ensure that the instructional tasks met the standards (see Table 2) (Bowen, 2017). By immersing myself in this reflective process, I could better teach pre-service teachers to plan

intentional lessons where they considered the learning goals first, and the knowledge and skills they want students to acquire (Bowen, 2017).

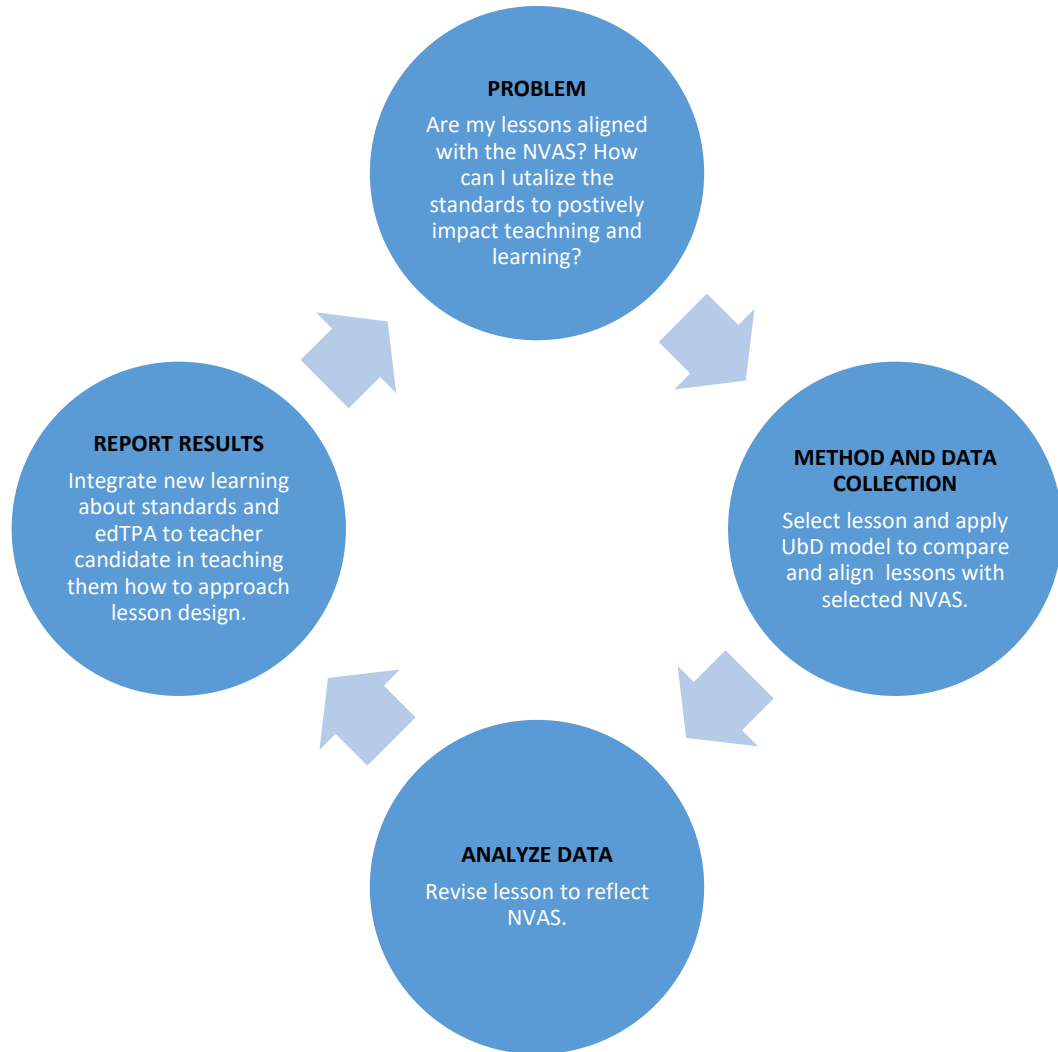
Table 2 Stages of Understanding by Design



ACTION RESEARCH

The process that I used to do an in-depth reflection of my lessons is also known as Action Research. Action Research is conducted by a teacher/researcher and can be employed to gain a greater insight into teaching methodologies and ways in which individuals learn (Mills, 2007). Action research is a cyclical process (see Table 3) that involves identifying a problem, designing a study, collecting data, analyzing data and using results to inform teaching and learning (Stinger, 2008). As an educator of pre-service teachers and a former early childhood art teacher, I wanted to understand how my pre-service students could apply the NVAS in authentic ways to ultimately help them develop their edTPA portfolio. The methodology that I applied was to take lessons that I had taught to my K12 students and do a deep analysis considering the NVAS. This would provide me with a meaningful understanding of the multi-layered components of the NVAS and how to apply them to lessons. After this deep dive, I then hope to provide my pre-services with the scaffolding to incorporate the standards into their lessons.

Table 3 Action Research Cycle



I selected a learning segment that I had taught several times to my second graders that met some edTPA criteria. These included students' engagement in developing and creating a work of art, students responding to works of art and relating art to context. Both edTPA and NVAS define and evaluate quality teaching according to teachers developing students' abilities to create, present, respond, interpret and relate art to context; while also providing opportunities for student choice in either content, methods, or style (edTPA Visual Arts Assessment Handbook).

LEARNING SEGMENT

2nd Grade: Self-Portrait

I selected a collage self-portrait unit for second graders (see Figures 1 and 2). As preschoolers, kindergarteners, and 1st graders they had plenty of opportunities to explore and create collages (see Figure 3) and I wanted to allow them to build on their explorations and develop works of art where they could combine shapes and various papers to build objects, such as a person. The second graders were eager to learn to make representations so they could express their everyday experiences. The overall objective, based on the artistic skills I wanted students to acquire throughout the learning segment, was “students will learn that they can change and combine papers to create a collage self-portrait.”

Throughout this learning segment, students responded to and analyzed various portraits, and collaged their self-portraits that were displayed in an annual art show. To analyze this lesson, I selected standards from the NVAS that seemed to align with my lesson yet would challenge me to identify areas where I needed to grow as an educator. Thereafter, I analyzed my lesson according to one standard for each of the major NVAS categories: *Creating, Responding, Presenting* and *Connecting*.

I then selected one *Performance Standard* from each *Artistic Process* and selected 1-2 *Essential Questions, Enduring Understanding* and *Anchor Standards* that corresponded to the *Performance Standard*. I carefully evaluated my lesson to see if I had adequately addressed all components of each standard and if I had missed any opportunities to engage students in arts learning. I also reconsidered the content of my lesson and assessment tasks. I came to see that the NVAS standards, when understood within the context of the larger *Anchor Standards, Enduring Understandings* and *Essential Questions*, embody the key characteristics of the edTPA *Central Focus* and therefore, by analyzing my lesson according to the NVAS standards and by connecting to the larger *Enduring Understanding* framework I had performed an analysis that met the criteria of both NVAS and edTPA.

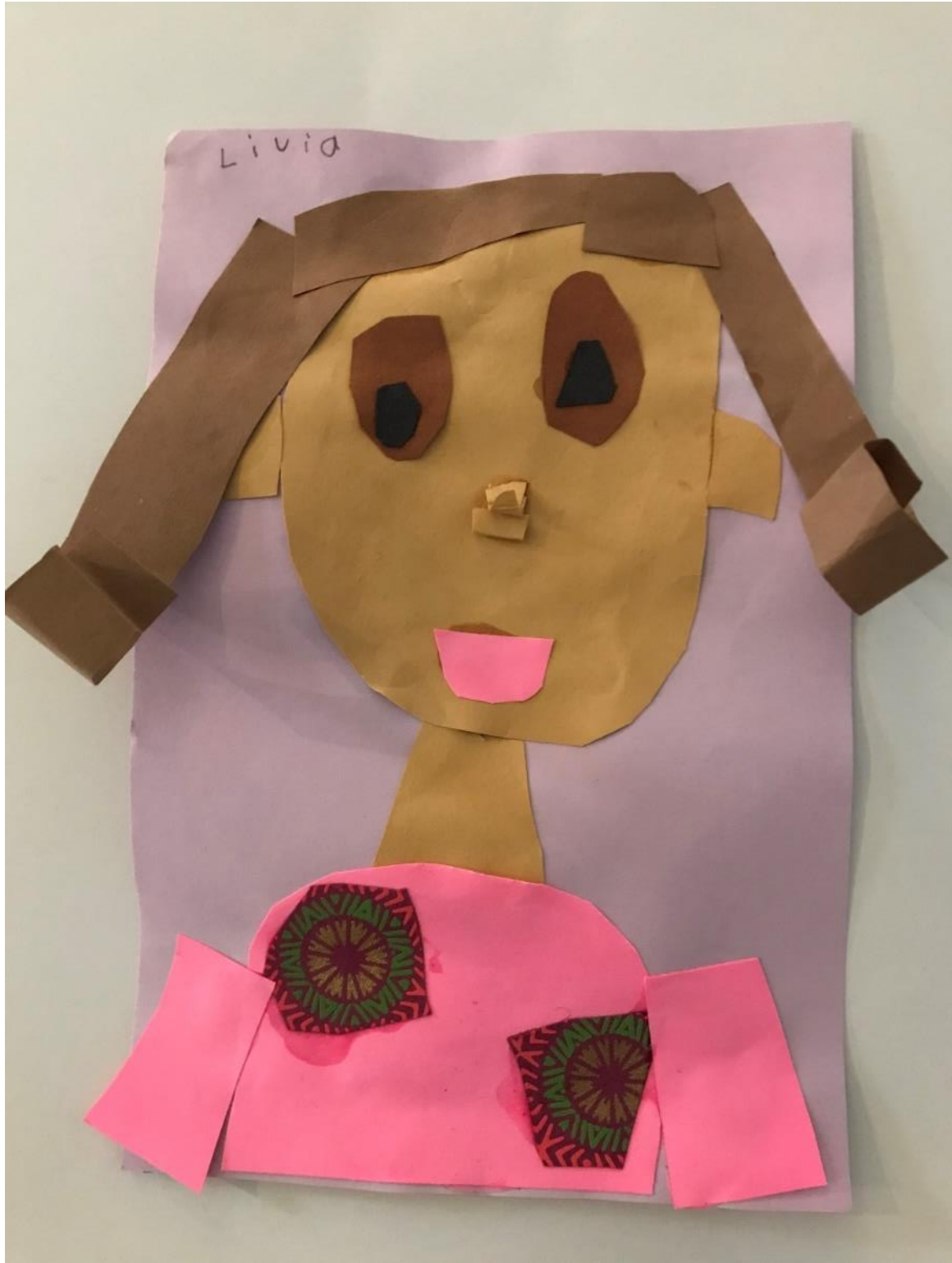


Figure 1. 2nd Grade Self-Portrait 1



Figure 2. 2nd Grade Self Portrait 2

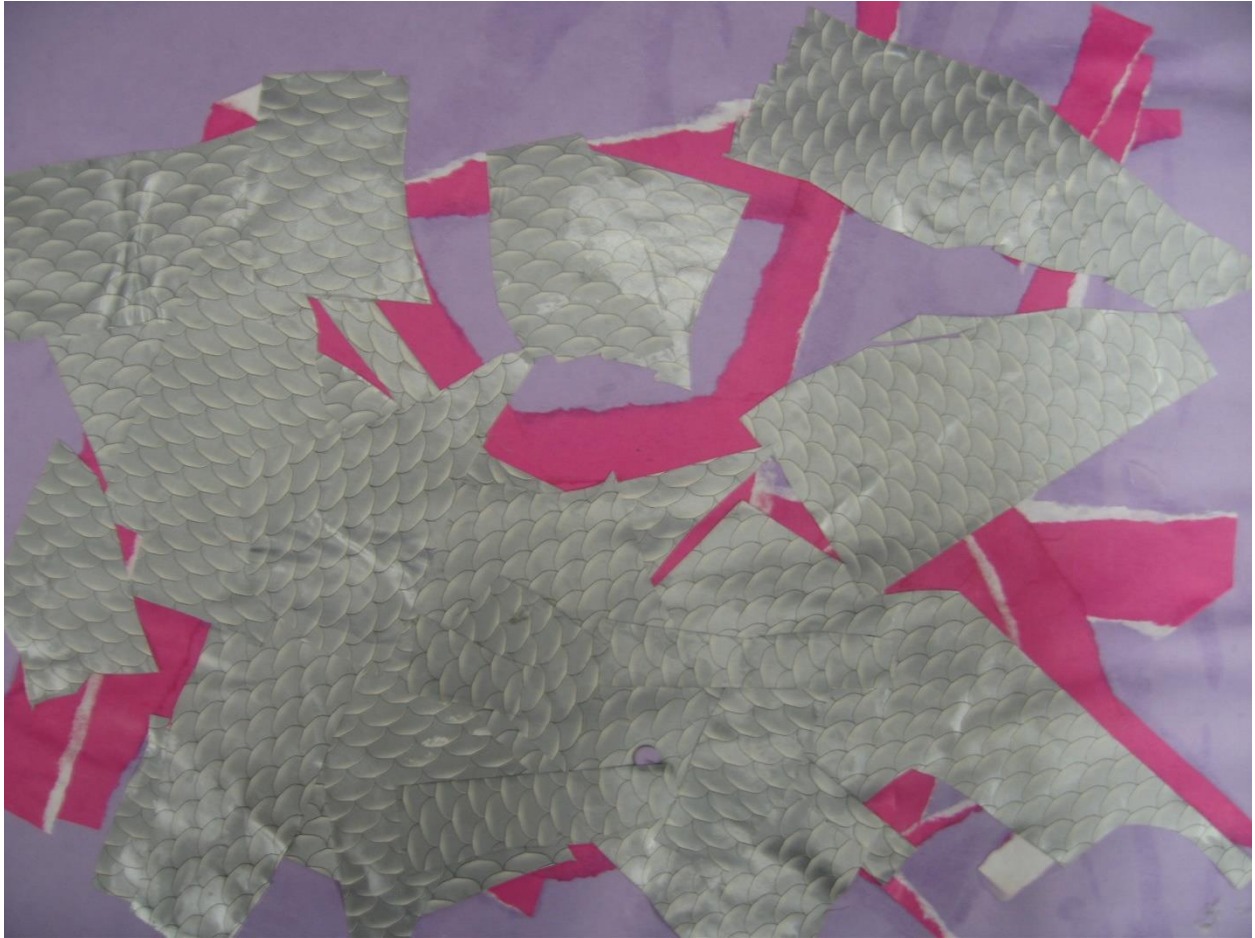


Figure 3. Collage Exploration: Torn Paper Collage

Creating: For the first *Performance Standard*, I chose to focus on teaching students to “experiment with various materials and tools to explore personal interests in a work of art or design.” I felt that this lesson was meeting this performance standard, as students experimented with collage by changing paper, organizing shapes and depicting themselves in a way that was personal and meaningful to them.

Table 4 National Visual Art Standards-Artistic Process: Creating

Visual Arts	<i>Creating</i>
Anchor Standard 1	Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
Enduring Understanding	Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches
Essential Questions	How do artists work? How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective? How do they learn from trial and error?
Performance Standard	VA: Cr2.1.2a: Experiment with various materials and tools to explore personal interests in a work of art or design.

However, when it came to the *Essential Questions* (see Table 4) associated with this standard I realized that although my second grader might have addressed these questions through their creative processes, I had not allowed them to reflect on the questions formally. In 45-minute weekly art lessons, where was the time to reflect on some of these questions, without interfering with precious hands-on experience? Furthermore, reflective discussions with my elementary students generally focused on critiques of the formal or contextual components of their artwork, without the opportunity to reflect on the process. But various formative assessments could simply be inserted at different points of the lesson. For instance, at the end of the lesson, I could have asked students to share with their neighbors something hard for them and explain how they solved the problem. This would have helped them acknowledge that artists utilize their resources to solve problems. Having students address this question and others about the creative and decision-making process, students could also recognize the *Enduring Understanding* and *Anchor Standard*. Allowing students to reflect allows them to gain insights into the art-making experience, the richness of “experimentation, and the possibility of employing multiple approaches art and design problems” (Steward, 2014, p. 8).

Through examining the various components of the NVAS for this *Performance Standards*, I recognized my original overall objective, “students will learn that they can change and combine papers to create a collage self-portrait.”, was limited because it solely focused on skills - ways of transforming materials to create a self-portrait. The overall objective needed to reflect the entire art experience as an opportunity for students to learn how to experiment, solve problems and make decisions, and needed to be transformed into a *Central Focus* to address the important understandings of the lessons. Therefore, the *Central Focus* of this lesson could be “students will understand that artists can explore materials and experiment with forms, shapes and structures through collage.”

Presenting: These second graders’ self-portraits were displayed at the annual art show entitled, *Self-portrait Gallery*. Every student in the school had one self-portrait in the exhibition. In selecting a subject, curating and hanging the art show I, the art teacher, addressed all components of this standard (see Table 5).

Table 5 *National Visual Art Standards-Artistic Process: Presenting*

Visual Arts	<i>Presenting</i>
Anchor Standard 1	Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation
Enduring Understanding	Artists and other presenters consider various techniques, methods, venues, and criteria when analyzing, selecting, and curating objects, artifacts, and artworks for preservation and presentation
Essential Questions	How are artworks cared for and by whom? What criteria, methods, and processes are used to select work for preservation or presentation? Why do people value objects, artifacts, and artworks, and select them for presentation?
Performance Standard	VA: Pr4.1.2a: Categorize artwork based on a theme or concept for an exhibit

However, when I chose the subject matter of the show, how the work was hung and the overall design for the exhibition, the students were gaining none of the learning from this standard. Although it may not impact the teaching of this learning segment, I needed to shift my mindset to require students to be involved in the presentation of their artworks. Students need to understand the considerations that inform the decision-making process when presenting work to the public, even if on a bulletin board. This standard could be addressed throughout the year by having students actively participate in the presentation of their artworks. The presenting standards provide learning opportunities for students to examine multiple methods, venues and criteria for displaying their work over time (Stewart, 2014).

In shifting to a more student-centered curriculum that truly incorporates the NVAS standards, the students would set the theme for a school-wide exhibition and their input on the overall selection of artwork and design of the exhibition would be essential. Students would also learn about the work of curators and how exhibition themes are determined, how artwork is selected and cared for, and finally how exhibitions are designed. This also could be achieved through museum and gallery trips, curator talks and museum educators visiting the classroom.

Responding: When teaching the self-portrait unit, I introduced students to artists across cultures and periods. For instance, we reviewed Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo and Kehinde Wiley. Students analyzed not only the formal elements of these pictures but the context and life circumstances of the artists. For instance, when we viewed Kehinde Wiley’s painting, *Phillip the Fair* (2006), students were first asked what they thought the person in the portrait was feeling. Then, some more contextual information was provided and the students then were asked how knowing these facts changed their opinions of the mood of the person in the portraits. With rich discussions students broadened their perspectives and drew inspiration, helping them conceive their portraits. Even though the students did not formally address the *Essential Questions* associated with this *Performance Standard* (see Table 6), they were involved in the process, as they were using visual arts vocabulary to interpret and “read” these works.

Table 6 National Visual Art Standards-Artistic Process: Responding

Visual Arts	<i>Responding</i>
Anchor Standard 1	Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
Enduring Understanding	People gain insights into the meaning of artwork by engaging in the process of art criticism
Essential Questions	What is the value of engaging in the process of art criticism? How can the viewer "read" a work of art as text? How does knowing and using visual art vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?
Performance Standard	VARE8.1.2a: Interpret art by identifying the mood suggested by a work of art and describing relevant subject matter and characteristics of form

By acknowledging to the students that, like reading a book, viewers of art can break down a work to uncover its intent, edTPA’s *Academic Language, a major component of edTPA*, could also be addressed.

In *Understanding Academic Language in edTPA* (2013), *Academic Language* is defined as “the oral and written language used for academic purposes. *Academic Language* is the ‘language of the discipline’ used to engage students in learning and includes how students develop and express content understandings” (p.1). Lessons therefore, must provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge of content vocabulary and give them the opportunities to talk and/or write about works of art, concepts, movements and the artistic process. Students are using higher-order thinking skills when they are explaining, describing, analyzing, interpreting, comparing and contextualizing works of art and design. In

‘responding’ to works of art, we therefore addressed both the *Anchor Standard* and *Enduring Understanding*, with students learning how to construct meaning and interpret the intent of the artwork.

Connecting: In this lesson, students were encouraged to create works about themselves with the freedom to incorporate aspects of their home, school or community life, or anything personal that they deemed important to include in their portraits. Even though the *Essential Questions* (see Table 7) were not explicitly addressed, students were able to share why they included certain objects and the meaning behind their choices.

Table 7 *National Visual Art Standards-Artistic Process: Connecting*

Visual Arts	<i>Connecting</i>
Anchor Standard 1	Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
Enduring Understanding	Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences
Essential Questions	How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives? How does making art attune people to their surroundings? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through art-making?
Performance Standard	VA: 10.1.2a: Create works of art about home, school, or community life

Looking at other portraits and sharing their works allowed students to step back and consider the relationship of personal experience to works of art, addressing both the *Enduring Understanding* and *Anchor Standard*.

DISCUSSION

One of the most powerful and effective methods of teacher and school improvement is through action research, as it can stimulate professional reflection and encourage educators to take a reflective role in understanding and improving teaching and learning (Eisner, 1995). In this reflective process of my teaching in the early-childhood art classroom, examining how to align edTPA and the NVAS standard, I discovered many missed opportunities to promote a more student-centered curriculum and pedagogy that was relevant, engaging and responsive to students’ needs (Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in

Education, n.d.). To allow young children to take on leadership roles and share in the decision-making process, I needed to shift my approach when developing lessons. Previously, I had usually come up with the lesson idea, topic or theme, such as self-portraits, at the beginning of the planning process. But what if I started with the *Enduring Understandings* and considered how the artmaking process provides opportunities for students to develop their knowledge, experience and perceptions? I looked to the *Understanding by Design* model, which promotes beginning the planning process with learning at its core (Bowen, 2017). Learning activities can be derived from careful consideration of the *Enduring Understandings*. In the early-childhood art classrooms, students also need time to reflect on the *Essential Questions* and how their lived experiences and the world that surrounds them impact their work. For instance, a question for students in the 2nd-grade self-portrait learning segment could have been, “what might the viewer of your portrait learn about you that they might not have known? Students will not only be reflecting on the meaning of the art that they make but how individuals have their interpretations and how personal experience influences art.

By selecting and addressing all components (*Artistic Process, Anchor Standards, Enduring Understanding, and Essential Questions*) of the NVAS, through the selection of a single *Performance Standard*, art educators can facilitate art experiences to address the full spectrum of learning in the visual arts. This full engagement includes working with materials, developing skills and addressing issues that are meaningful to the artists, drawing inspiration from the world around them and other artists, discussing and reflecting upon all aspects of the creative process and considering the audience and presentation of their work. Over time, including other *Performance Standards* and the same *Performance Standards* at a more advanced level, will allow students to revisit the *Artistic Process, Anchor Standards, Enduring Understanding* and *Essential Questions*. PK-12 students will build upon their knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of the full engagement in the visual arts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORTING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN DESIGNING EDTPA LEARNING SEGMENTS

Undertaking this action research reflective process with my 2nd-grade segments allowed me to engage deeply in lessons through the lens of the NVAS. Through the investigation, I created connections and alignment of the standards with all aspects of the lessons, including the learning objectives, instructional tasks and assessments. This process also helped me see how the full utilization and careful selection of the standards could help my teacher candidates understand the various components of edTPA, decreasing their anxiety and stress when developing their edTPA portfolios during student teaching semesters. For example, the *Central Focus* should be at the heart of a learning segment and can be a transferable concept. In employing the Standards and complying with edTPA, I came to understand that lesson plans, learning segments and curricula should provide an array of instructional activities so students can develop ideas, engage in the creative process, interpret and respond to works of art, relate art to context and be involved in the presentation of their work. Instructional and assessment activities should provide opportunities for students to reflect and share their thoughts orally or by writing about

the artistic process, works of art and the context in which they were made, using rich content vocabulary, promoting edTPA's *Academic Language* requirements.

As an instructor of pre-service teachers this reflective processing of my 2nd-grade art lesson through the NVAS provided a better understanding of what the reflective process is like in the edTPA commentary tasks, which require teacher candidates to analyze student learning and what they can do to help their students learn. These policy documents are so often viewed by teachers and teacher candidates as another demand by a governmental bureaucracy that does not truly understand the needs of teachers and students. This investigation showed that both the NVAS and edTPA can be utilized as a tool that supports teaching and student-centered learning, best practices and continuous professional growth.

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