Analyzing the Learning Outcomes and Teaching Strategies of an Arts-based General Education Curriculum on Peace and Conflict Transformation through the Arts

Summary of Original Proposal

Marjorie Manifold and Mousumi De
(Education – Curriculum & Instruction)

This research study involves analyzing the teaching strategies and learning outcomes of a General Education course in the Arts and Humanities L210 Peace and Creative Conflict Transformation through the Arts. The course aims to introduce the concepts of peace, different processes of conflict transformation, and various forms of artistic expressions from past and present cultures designed specifically for peace-building. Students learn these theoretical concepts to finally create their own arts-based peace-building projects in a real community setting. The goals of this course include broadening students’ analytical and critical thinking skills to gain a deeper understanding of these concepts; enabling them to interpret the cultural, aesthetic, intellectual and historical contexts of arts for peace-building, and applying these theories in practical settings.

A unique feature of this course is that it largely utilizes arts-based approaches in teaching, learning and assessment. This research study thus seeks to investigate the following questions: One, what are some of the affordances and challenges of arts-based teaching and learning approaches, from an instructor and students’ perspectives? Two, how effectively do visual products created in this course provide evidence of student learning on disciplinary content and demonstrate skills such as visual and critical thinking? Three, how effective are arts-based assessment approaches as an alternative to text-based assessments such as exams, quizzes and essays? Four, what types of peace and conflict issues are most relevant to students’ lives here at IU’s campus? It is hoped, findings from this study will contribute to existing SoTL scholarship on how visual methods can enhance teaching and learning in general education classrooms, and more specifically how visual products created as part of the course demonstrate learning of disciplinary content.
Title: Analyzing the learning outcomes and teaching strategies of an arts-based general education curriculum on peace and conflict transformation through the arts

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Funding Level Requested
Phase I

Duration of funding period
1 year
ABSTRACT

This research study involves analyzing the teaching strategies and learning outcomes of a General Education course in the Arts and Humanities L210 Peace and Creative Conflict Transformation through the Arts. The course aims to introduce the concepts of peace, different processes of conflict transformation, and various forms of artistic expressions from past and present cultures designed specifically for peace-building. Students learn these theoretical concepts to finally create their own arts-based peace-building projects in a real community setting. The goals of this course include broadening students’ analytical and critical thinking skills to gain a deeper understanding of these concepts; enabling them to interpret the cultural, aesthetic, intellectual and historical contexts of arts for peace-building, and applying these theories in practical settings.

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II RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose of the investigation and research objective

This research study involves analyzing the learning outcomes and teaching strategies of a General Education course in the Arts and Humanities L210 Peace and Creative Conflict Transformation through the Arts. The course aims to introduce the concepts of peace, different processes of conflict transformation, and various forms of artistic expressions from past and present cultures designed specifically for peace-building. Students learn these theoretical concepts to finally create their own arts-based peace-building projects in a real community setting. The goals of this course aim to broaden students’ analytical and critical thinking skills for a deeper understanding of these concepts; enable them to interpret the cultural, aesthetic, intellectual and historical contexts of arts for peace-building, and enable them to apply these theoretical concepts in practical settings.

A unique feature of this course is that it largely utilizes arts-based approaches in teaching, learning and assessment. Both researchers have been teaching a General Education introductory Art course, M135: Self-Instruction in Art designed especially for non-art majors. Although it is a required course for elementary education majors, we noticed for several years that students from multiple disciplines enroll in this course, ranging from business, to life sciences, journalism, telecommunications, informatics, history, criminal justice, nursing and so on. This reflects a strong interest and demand amongst non-art majors to learn and engage in the arts. Further, while there are several courses that focus on studio arts learning at various levels, there are currently no courses at IU that specifically focus on the inter-disciplinary subject of arts-based peace-building throughout the world. Studies show that the arts serve as a tool for understanding society’s values and ideas as they are expressed in art and popular culture (Chalmers, 1981). Further, within the field of Art Education, educating for peace has been of interest to some educators, however, it has largely remained a focus in K-12 education and not higher education.

These motivations led to the development of this course and thus influence our need to assess its impact, both in terms of learning in disciplinary content, as well as the effectiveness of using arts-based approaches for teaching and assessment (i.e. at pedagogical and instructional level). While our research inquiry is grounded in IU GenEd Monitoring and Assessment guidelines, through this study, we specifically seek to investigate the following questions: One, what are some of the affordances and challenges of arts-based teaching and learning approaches from instructor and students’ perspectives? Two, how effectively do visual products created in this course provide evidence of student learning of disciplinary content and critical thinking skills? Three, how effective are arts-based assessment approaches as an alternative to text-based assessment such as exams, quizzes and essays? Four, what types of peace and conflict issues are most relevant to students’ lives here at IU campus?

2. Previous Research and scholarship

There are several strands of research in the fields of arts education and peace education that both influence the design and goals of this curricular framework, as well as generate the need
to research this curriculum. **One**, in the field of arts education, many studies show value of arts as a medium for nurturing cognitive abilities (Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2004; Gardner, 1993; Jensen, 2001), social skills (Catterall, 2002), “transferring learning” from artistic pursuits to achievement in other disciplines (Catterall, 1998), developing creative problem solving (Foshay, 1998), and educating students about skills and imagination needed to produce high quality art (Smith, 2000).

Scholars increasingly advocate for utilizing arts-integrated or arts-centered learning (Marshall & Donahue, 2014; Winner, Hetland, Veenema, Sheridan, Palmer & Locher, 2006) as an approach to teaching non-art subjects. Arts-centered learning that involves applying the thinking strategies of art to knowledge in other disciplines, allows learners to develop habits of mind that are not only useful for learning across curriculum, but also will be critical to their development as learners and their learning in the future (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013, p.6). Thus, understanding the learning outcomes of this course can firstly determine its effectiveness in contributing to cognitive and social development skills amongst learners, and secondly extending scholarship in this particular domain of arts-integrated learning.

**Second**, critical thinking is a pervasively used construct in higher education (Halpern, 1999), and its promotion is considered one of the highest priorities of college education (Halpern, 1988; Jones, & Ratcliff, 1993), as well as an important 21st century skill (Silva, 2009). The use of arts-based approaches for promoting critical thinking skills such as Visual Thinking Strategies (Housen, 2003; Yenawine, 1997) have however received marginal attention outside the field of Art Education, such as in General Education courses. Thus, this course aims to provide an opportunity to apply arts-based strategies for advancing students’ critical thinking skills, which is a priority in college education.

**Three**, within the burgeoning field of arts-based peace education, research shows a need for not only developing pedagogy that promotes conflict-transformation knowledge and skills amongst learners, but also assessment techniques that assess student learning beyond art skills (De, 2015). Thus, analyzing the learning outcomes of this course in terms of disciplinary content, instead of art skills, will make a significant contribution in this domain. Further, teaching of peace and conflict issues, involve teaching controversial issues such as racism or prejudice. Research shows that these issues are difficult to discuss in class (for e.g. Hand & Levinson, 2011) and the arts provide an effective medium to address these issues (for e.g. Mason, 2012). This course, thus, provides an example of using the arts to address such controversial and culturally sensitive issues (Manifold, 2015) in a psychologically safe learning environment. **Four**, within Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research, scholars from a variety of disciplines such as sociology, astronomy, studio art and art education (e.g. Cornell et al. 2007) have explored how visual methods can enhance teaching and learning in the general education classroom, and most specifically, how visual products created as part of the course demonstrate learning of disciplinary content. It is hoped this research would provide an example of evidence-based study that can extend the body of SoTL literature in this domain.
3. **Significance, Impact of the study, and outcomes that will contribute to undergraduate or graduate teaching, learning and assessment**

There are several aspects that make this research significant and the impact of this study can contribute to teaching, learning and assessment at undergraduate or graduate level. **One**, examining the affordances and challenges of arts-based teaching and learning strategies can contribute towards the development of arts-integrated courses, and general education courses that seek to utilize arts-based teaching and assessment techniques across different disciplines. In this course for example, a learning strategy encouraged amongst students is the use of arts-based mind maps to learn and illustrate complex theoretical concepts such as conflict transformation and peace-building. Analyzing these learning outcomes through this study would shed light on the effectiveness of this technique from an instructor’s perspective and its efficacy as a learning strategy from students’ perspectives. Findings on the effectiveness of arts-based assessment techniques can significantly contribute to the domain of using visual methods for assessment in general education.

**Two**, findings from this study will extend existing SoTL research in the use of visual methods in teaching general education courses and promote synergy between SoTL and Arts-based Teaching communities. Further, by presenting and publishing findings in SoTL events, the SoTL community would be provided with a concrete example of the relevance of theories and methods associated with arts-based teaching, learning, and assessment. **Three**, findings from this study can inform the potential of using arts-based approaches as an alternative to text-based approaches for promoting critical thinking in college education, that can be utilized by other courses in which critical thinking is a central outcome. **Four**, research on this study will significantly extend scholarship within discourses of arts-integrated learning and arts-based peace education.

4. **Research Methodology**

Our study is designed as an action research project. Here the practitioner (instructor) takes on a dual role of the researcher, seeking to improve the quality of teaching by intervention, (in this case teaching through arts-based approaches) and translating academic findings into everyday teaching practice. Our research also relies on critical reflective practice: (1) reflecting-in-action (Schön, 1991), i.e. continuously introspecting the teaching process, monitoring its intended learning impact, and being cognizant of surprises in that process, to further modify/ improvise with effective strategies. (2) When actions /decisions are rapid, that limit the scope of reflection, it is reserved for future action i.e. reflection-for-action (e.g. Eraut 1994 and Usher et al 1997) and (3) reflection-on-action, i.e. analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of pedagogical, instructional, and curricular design frameworks after the course/ classes are over retrospectively.

*Data Collection and Analysis*: Our study will utilize a variety of textual and visual data. These include: (1) Instructor and students’ reflective documents. For example, students’ reflections on their experiences of arts-based teaching methods applied in classroom; arts-based techniques for learning (drawings and mind-maps) and arts-based assessment (final project) (2) In-class textual and visual data documenting students’ reflections of the learning process.
and influential learning moments, concepts and experiences. (3) Pre- and post-course questionnaires aimed to gauge students’ prior knowledge and experience, with what is gained after the course. (3) Textual and visual assignments such as Image Analysis that demonstrate students’ acquisition of visual and critical thinking skills learned through Visual Thinking Strategies, and final artwork/ artifact that demonstrates the practical application of theories learned in class in a real community setting. (5) An arts-based Visual Reflective Journal that reflects students’ acquisition of social and emotional skills needed for conflict resolution.

(6) A pre- and post-course measurement of emotional and social skills using Bar-On’s concept of emotional quotient (EQi 2.0) is also administered to understand what skills are learned through the course. Initial analysis of textual and visual data will involve axial coding focused on themes of our research questions, following which emergent themes will be analyzed. These would be followed by a deeper analysis of each category to understand students’ learning and skills acquisition at an individual, and collective level; issues of concern to peace, conflict transformation and arts in this domain. As well as, how their understanding evolves, how they connect their learning to real life practice and what arts-based teaching and learning approaches are most effective in this process.

5. **Means by which you will measure the success of your project**

The means by which the success of this project will be measured at pedagogical, instructional and research level are as follows: **One**, at pedagogical level: (1) The post-course questionnaires, compared to the pre-course questionnaires should reflect an increase in knowledge about peace and conflict transformation from being abstract to concrete concepts and an increased appreciation for the arts in peace-building. (2) The artifacts and artworks created for their final projects should reflect practical application of theoretical content (strategic arts-based peace-building) learned during the course in relation to a real conflict in a community setting. **Two**, at instructional level: (1) the second assignment on Image Analysis, compared to the first assignment, should reflect application of visual and critical thinking skills (weighing evidence, making arguments, analyzing and inferring) learned through Visual Thinking Strategies and Interrogative Questioning Approach learned in class. (2) The second part of the Visual Reflective Journal should reflect students’ skills in conflict resolution and transformation in relation to their intra- and inter-personal conflicts mentioned in the first part of the Journal. (3) In the analysis of Bar-On’s EQi test measurements, it would be considered successful if post-course tests, compared to pre-course tests evidence statistically significant benefits (p ≤ .05) on at least half of the assessed outcomes in social and emotional domains, evidencing student’s increase in skills to manage their own conflicts. **Three**, at research process level: (1) a conference proceeding accepted in a peer reviewed conference *American Education Research Association*, where the judgment of peers on the research analysis will evidence scholarly success. (2) The research process should make a contribution to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by extending the body of literature on a previous SoTL study on How Visual Methods Enhance Teaching and Learning in the General Education Classroom.

6. **Manner in which results will be disseminated**
We plan to disseminate the findings from this study in several ways that demonstrate the significance of this research to three academic circles. One, within Indiana University Bloomington, we aim to share our research findings in forums and events related to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Two, within the SoTL community outside our university, we plan to submit a proposal to the 2016 International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) conference (Oct 12-15) in Los Angeles, California. In particular, the theme: *Telling the story of teaching and learning: Exploring what works, when, how and why,* resonates well with our study of using arts-based approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Three, within the interdisciplinary field of arts and learning, we plan to submit one proposal to the Arts and Learning Special Interest Group at the 2017 *American Educational Research Association* (AERA) Annual Meeting, (Apr 27-May 1), San Antonio, Texas; and a second proposal at the 2017 *National Art Education Association* conference (Mar 2-4) in New York, New York. Four, based on feedback from CITL and SoTL events in 2016, we hope to submit a manuscript for publication in *Teachers College Record,* a journal which is focused on research and analysis in Education, in particular, in their section on alternate assessment.

7. **Reflective teaching practices**

Three specific reflective practice strategies have been applied since the implementation of this curriculum: One, a reflective log has been maintained that documents the instructional, pedagogical and learning best practices after each class, and approaches that need re-thinking and improvement. For e.g., it was noticed that after students learned about Visual Thinking Strategies, students with prior arts background showed greater abilities in visually and critically thinking about images than others. This led to the teaching of Interrogative Questioning Approach to better help students with no arts background. Two, reflections are also maintained on our expectations and pedagogical assumptions regarding affordances and challenges of arts-based teaching, learning and assessment. For e.g., an Image Analysis assignment using arts-based approaches for promoting critical thinking skills (making assertions, weighing evidence, making arguments, analyzing and inferring) was found to be challenging by students. Reflection on the assignment led to discussions with students, which revealed that although students were familiar with critical thinking and appreciated the assignment, they were resistant because it was “new” to them. Researchers presume that students are conditioned to such a degree that they are resistant to change, despite knowing the benefits. Three, ongoing reflections on the overall design of the curriculum and assessments are also maintained.

8. **References**


Halpern, D. F. (1999). Teaching for critical thinking: Helping college students develop the skills and dispositions of a critical thinker. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 80, pp.69-74
Mason, R. (2012). Teaching about controversial issues through art education. In CySEA Board (Eds.), 11th InSEA European Regional Congress: Arts Education at the Crossroad of Cultures (pp. 223-250). Lemesos, Cyprus, Cyprus Society for Education through Art.


III BUDGET NARRATIVE
In conducting this research study, we anticipate a total cost slightly more than $2000. We do not plan to seek additional funding from any internal or external sources for this project. These costs include the following: One, Graduate assistant support: Funding will be utilized to help support work of a graduate researcher on (1) literature search during Spring 2016, (2) data analysis and preparation of manuscript during Summer 2016 ($1500). Two, funding to meet the costs of EQi-2.0 tests assessment services from Multi-Health Systems (MHS) estimated $300. Three, travel cost to the International Society for Scholarship of Teaching & Learning conference in Los Angeles, CA (anticipated conference registration fee $200; estimated flight cost $350 and housing $180, estimated rate $60/night for 3 nights). The department of Curriculum and Instruction offers travel grants to graduate researchers for conferences (max $400), which can be utilized to cover expenses of the American Education Research Association conference for dissemination of findings from this study.

IV RESEARCH PLAN AND TIMELINE
We plan the following research timeline that includes our data collection work during Fall 2015, although it is outside the scope of this funding request.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>• Maintaining reflective practice documentation that would be utilized as data for analysis in Summer 2016.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• IRB Approval for conducting the study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>• Compilation of all data</td>
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<td>• Literature search</td>
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<td>• Submission of proposal for ISSoTL/ NAEA conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>• Analysis of data (Qualitative data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Analysis of measurement tests (EQi-2.0)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Write up of results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Submission of proposal for AERA conference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Preparation of manuscripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>• Submission of manuscript to Teachers College Record</td>
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</tbody>
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V CURRICULUM VITAE OF INVESTIGATORS (4 PAGES MAX)
Attached in this email.

VI NOMITATING LETTER
To be emailed directly by Chair of Department, Lara Lackey
Marjorie Cohee Manifold
Associate Professor, Art Education and Curriculum Studies
Indiana University

Education
Ph. D. in Curriculum & Instruction, Art Education
Indiana University, Bloomington
1999

Academic Appointments
Associate Professor of Art Education (Curriculum & Instruction)
Indiana University, School of Education, Bloomington
2009 - Present
Assistant Professor of Art Education (Curriculum & Instruction)
Indiana University, School of Education, Bloomington
2003 – 2009
Assistant Professor of Art Education
Virginia Commonwealth University, School of the Arts
1999 – 2003

Publications
S=Service, R=Research, T=Teaching, * = Refereed

1. Journal Publications since 2008

2. Chapters [* indicates refereed publication]
VA: National Art Education Association with United States Society for Education Through Art and International Society for Education through Art.


3. Edited Books


4. Textbooks


Professional Presentations

S=Service, R=Research, T=Teaching, *=Refereed

**International Presentations** since 2010


R* (2008). *The spontaneous, fan-based art making of contemporary adolescents and young adults in local and global contexts*. 32nd InSEA World Congress, Osaka, Japan.

**2. National Presentations**

R* (2015). With Allan Richards and Steve Willis. *Nurturing Cultural Appreciation and Mutual Respect through Art*. Chair of Panel to be presented at the annual conference of the National Art Education Association (NAEA), New Orleans, LA.

R* (2014) *What teens tell us they know or want to know about art making*. Paper presented at the National Art Education Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA.


R* (2013). With Rita Irwin, Kerry Freedman, Fiona Blaikie & Debbie Smithshank. *Drawing*
stronger ties: Advocating for regional, national and international arts education collaborations. Panel presented at the annual meeting of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). Fort Worth, TX.

R* (2013). With Steve Willis, Culturally sensitive art educational practices in local and global communities. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). Fort Worth, TX.


R* (2012). Where, what & with whom are adolescents voluntarily learning about art & the world? Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the United States Society for Education through Art, Indianapolis, IN.


Awards & Recognition (recent)

National Kenneth Marantz Fellow for Multicultural Research in Art Education, United States Society for Education through Art 2015

National Edwin Ziegfeld International Award for Multicultural Research. United States Society for Education through Art. (Nominated) 2012

National Mary J. Rouse Award for Teaching, Research, and Service. Awarded by the National Art Education Association Women’s Caucus 2009

Professional Affiliations

Council for Policy Studies In Art Education, (CSPAE)

Elected for life, 2014

International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) – Affiliate of UNESCO

North American Councilor (2008-2014)
Vice-President (2014-Present)

National Art Education Association (NAEA)

Seminar for Research in Art Education (SRAE)
Women’s Caucus

United States Society for Education Through Art (USSEA)

President (2009-2011)
Executive Secretary (2011-2013)

Editorial Boards

Art Education

British Association for International and Comparative Education

International Journal of Education through Art

Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education

Journal of Social Theory in Art Education

Studies in Art Education

Visual Arts Research
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Education
Ph.D. (anticipated 2016) Curriculum and Instruction, Indiana University, USA
M.Phil. Media Studies, Coventry University, UK (2009)
M.A. Design and Digital Media, Coventry University, UK (2003)
B.A. English, Economics, History and Hindi, University of Delhi, India (1998)

Publications

Book Chapters

Journal Articles
Altman, R., & De, M. (2010). Expanding possibilities for underserved and marginalized youth using Freire’s critical pedagogy of active and reflective arts practice: Three case studies from Bronx (USA), Coventry (UK) and New Delhi (India). UNESCO Observatory e-Journal Vol1 Issue 5. (Joint first authorship)

Conference Proceedings


**Invited Lectures/ Presentations/ Talks (Selected)**

‘Conflict Transformation through Art’ Dept. of Art & Design, Missouri State University, USA Oct 13, 2015

‘Art Therapy through Visual Arts, Media and New Media’, Department of Art Education, Keystone College, PA, USA March 10, 2015

‘Chittara Arts Practice from Southern India and Implications for Intercultural Art Education’, Department of Art Education, Keystone College, PA, USA March 10, 2015

‘Peace Education through Art’. Department of Art Education, School of Fine Arts, University of Minnesota, Duluth, USA April 22, 2014


‘Rethinking UNESCO’s Commitment to Education for Peace and International Understanding through the Arts: From the Bristol Seminar to the Seoul Agenda’. World Summit on Arts Education-Polylogue II, Munich and Wildbad Kreuth, May 13 – 17, 2013
‘International Perspectives in Art Education: The Indian Mandalas’, Department of Art Education, School of Fine Arts, University of Minnesota, Duluth, USA April 23, 2013

‘The ‘Art’ of Dissent and Peacebuilding’, Visual Culture Lecture Series, Tweed Museum of Art, School of Fine Arts, University of Minnesota, Duluth, USA April 23, 2013

‘Expanding Possibilities for Young British Muslim Girls, using Freire’s Critical Pedagogy of Active and Reflective Arts Practice’, Dept. of Art and Design, Missouri State University, USA Sept 6, 2011


Conference Presentations


De, M. (2013). “Even though we have so many similarities, why is there still such a strong divide”. Conflict transformation through art. International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) European Regional Congress, Canterbury, Jun. 24-26.


**Academic Honors and Grants**

2015; 2014; 2012; 2011 - Lowell Family Scholarship Teaching Award, Indiana University
2015; 2014 - Nominated - Associate Instructor Teaching Award, School of Education, Indiana University
2008- Indian Council for Cultural Relations Grant, (ICCR) Government of India
2006- Coventry Peace Month Small Grants, Coventry City Council, UK
Subject: SOTL grant application for Mousumi De
Date: Wednesday, November 11, 2015 at 9:04:00 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Lackey, Lara M
To: SOTL

I am pleased to nominate Mousumi De for a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant to support her project entitled *Analyzing the Learning Outcomes and Teaching Strategies of an Arts-based General Education Curriculum on Peace and Conflict Transformation through the Arts*. Ms. De is a stellar Art Education doctoral candidate. She has been actively pursuing scholarship dealing with the intersections of visual pedagogy and peace education for some years and the course that is the focus of her application and analysis is one of the culminating products of her work. This is a systematically devised project that will be carefully analyzed by Mousumi, with guidance from her advisor Dr. Marjorie Manifold. It is a unique proposal that has the potential to address a significant problem and I urge its support.

Respectfully,
Lara Lackey

Lara Lackey, Ph.D.
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Associate Professor
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