



Dear Committee Members:

As the Associate Professor and Coordinator of Art Education at West Virginia University, I served as Michelle Fegeley's mentor on her thesis project, a mixed methods study which investigated how social and emotional learning standards and activities could inform elementary school art curriculum, engage young learners in hands-on art activities that foster safety and belonging, and enhance the teaching practices of elementary school art educators. My role as Fegeley's mentor was to guide her through producing a cohesive thesis that would provide evidence of the need to add new content into the art curriculum that nurtures the whole child and benefits both students and teachers in the PreK-12 art classroom. As a mentor I strive to allow students to take ownership of their knowledge while creating a positive learning environment that promotes student understanding of the communities and world in which we live.

As Michelle's mentor, I served as an advocate to help channel her idea of adding social and emotional learning standards and SEL-based art activities into her art curriculum as a way to reduce student stress levels. Over the course of 18 months, we met bi-weekly to discuss her research first working on developing thoughtful research questions and analyzing the data she collected to provide evidence for which SEL-based art activities would impact student stress levels the most per grade. I reviewed each chapter and offered advice on how to collect and analyze data and look for emerging themes. As her mentor, I valued the ideas she had on how to best achieve this.

Michelle Fegeley's study provided evidence that demonstrated how the implementation of social and emotional learning standards and SEL-based art activities in the art classroom could help to reduce student stress levels in the elementary school art classroom. Fegeley's study is important because it allowed for her as an instructor to help students regulate their feelings and use artmaking as a way to help better understand, adapt, and relieve stressful emotions. Her research will help to better prepare students in PreK-12 classrooms to succeed in a learning environment that has been significantly transformed by a global pandemic by providing a new curriculum that focuses less on knowing and doing and more on the overall well-being of the child.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tegeia Giobbia', written over a blue digital signature line.

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(she/hers)

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