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Webinar Written Response 1

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Art is inherently political, whether or not the viewer is actively and consciously sees the politics in it and whether or not the artist chooses to make it political and to what extent. The artist's message and the viewer's interpretation of a piece of work can be very different. An artist may not even make an art piece political at all, but at some point, someone will have a political opinion about it to some extent. Dewhurst puts it very nicely in her 2010 article that "...as long as the *process* of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world, then they are engaged in a practice of social justice art making" (Dewhurst, 2010, P. 8).

The discussion of social justice in schools seems to be a sensitive topic, especially when speaking about current times with the current issues. It's easier to speak about the historical events, because they're in the past, however if there isn't any change, society runs the risk of repeating itself. The National Art Education Association's recent webinar on social justice in art classrooms, Kelly Hanning, one of the speakers, brought up a point about why some adults in may feel uncomfortable when students discuss difficult topics (Hanning, K., National Art Education Association, Potter, L. A., & Wilmer, A. 2022. 00:07:36). This may be applied to students inside and outside of schools because of how adults may view children and young adults as inexperienced, which they are - but to an extent.

Children and young adults absorb a lot of information as they grow up, however since they're children who're learning about the world, they're not viewed as people who can have valuable critiques of the world they grow up in. Art education is the the perfect place to allow students to react to the world that they live in and art teachers should be able to facilitate and encourage societal critique. However, given the setting of school, teachers are held to a certain standard to ensure that students treated fairly amongst each other.

The number of speakers during the NAEA webinar spoke about how teachers have a certain duty to allow students to speak their minds, ask questions, and critique society without causing harm towards other. The Protect Students First Act (GaPSC July 2022) provides teachers with a set of laws and regulations to understand and adhere to. This act details the unlawful act of discrimination against students and other employees. This also extends to teachers and other school administration being prohibited from influencing students with their own personal opinions.

However again, as mentioned, art class and art education may be the perfect area to let student be introduced to the world and be allowed to critique it in an artistic way. Many art projects include using found objects, public art, or even forms of yarn bombing. Art has the most variety of ways to make a statement and critique the world.

References

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