



Matt: Hi, everybody. This is Matt and Laura. Welcome to the Creatively Connected Classroom. I have to really slow myself down on that one. We have an awesome guest with us today by the name of Jeremy Bond, had a-

Laura: Jeremy hosted for us back in May. What's really cool about Jeremy is that he's a parent advocate. He's a little bit different than our normal PLN, because he comes at the education from the parent angle, which is really exciting to us; especially in the creative arts. Jeremy, can you tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, what you're involved in, and how you connected through all these education places on Twitter?

Jeremy: Thank you for inviting me. I'm excited to be here. My day job in Connecticut is the State Education Resource Center or SERC. I've been there almost 10 years. I was hired as a communications professional. That's my background. My education background isn't personal, it's in the family. My father was a special education director for a district for 30 years, a couple of special education teachers in the family. When this job opened up I was excited, because it kind of brought things full circle. I had been in AmeriCorps in the middle of [inaudible 00:01:52] the 90s just out college. Someone had recommended using SERC so I was familiar with agency. Much later when this job opened, I thought wow, that's pretty cool. I used it when I was working with kids in AmeriCorps. Now I have the opportunity to be there and that kind of made me technically enter the education field even though I was still doing what my expertise was, which is communications.

Jeremy: A few years into it, a colleague and I decided to start a blog just to talk about growth and learning. We talked not so much about teaching skill, because that wasn't my expertise, but just about various aspects about learning and growth. I wrote about my daughter's first experience with overnight camp and what it meant to be able to grow outside of the school environment, and not just within school. That sort of thing.

Jeremy: Eventually I thought it seems like everyone promotes their blogs on Twitter, so I better get on Twitter. We had two snow days in a row, it was a snowstorm, and we couldn't work because the state was closed. Technically, I wasn't supposed to work, but yet I felt like being productive in some way so I thought I'll get on



Twitter. I fell in love with it pretty quickly. I thought it was really cool that, wow you could connect with authors, they'll actually reply, and I just never knew that there was this platform where you could have such easy access to people.

Jeremy: I enjoyed just that for a while, but then the thing I really connected to on Twitter was the Twitter Chats. I started to enter that space first with a GT Chat, Gifted and Talented Chat because my daughter had been put into a Gifted and Talented program and we didn't really understand the process of that. Then, went on from there. Discovered lots of chats including your own chat and started being even invited to moderate or guest moderate, and now I'm on the permanent moderating team for the NT2T chat on Saturday mornings. New Teachers to Twitter.

Jeremy: What happened was I continued having my day job, but was enjoying this kind of growth on the side. What it gave me an opportunity to do was find new opportunities. Eventually, anyone without was on the PT chat, which was the Parent/Teacher chat, was invited to attend a Parent Camp in Washington, DC., at the Department of Education. This was in 2015. I went. I thought I can't believe it's this easy, you know? Because originally you had to put your name in and then if you got ... They had only a certain amount of space, then if you happen to get in you're in. Then they announced that no, everyone can get in. We have enough space for everybody.

Jeremy: So I went, I moderated a session. I went there, and I went to this room and the whole room was full and I'm like I can't believe I'm doing this. I mean, the people I work with do this all the time. They're education consultants who do professional development or do technical assistance. It wasn't part of my job, but yet I've been exposed to it so much and as part of getting the job in the first place, you had to present so you kinda needed the skill anyway. Yet, there isn't really ... I don't have much opportunity to actually use it, so I was excited to be able to do that.

Jeremy: Then, a year later I got a phone call and said "Do you want to join the board of the National Parent Camp", because now there was an organization just like Ed Camp that would promote these Parent Camps around the country. Did that. I've been going to the annual Digital Citizenship Summit, which is I think I kind of built that interest based on my being connected online. That's kind of where I am. I'm still in communications, but I'm in communications and education, and I



feel like I had an opportunity to enter the education space and that's been really exciting.

Matt: That's awesome.

Laura: That's amazing. You have such a unique lens, which offers, I think, a lot of people something different to see different perspectives.

Matt: Things to consider.

Laura: So tell us a little bit more about Parent Camp, because just interestingly enough, it's something that's been coming up a lot in a lot of the professional developments I do around the area. Teachers will talk about the need for parent engagement at a more ... The word that comes to mind is fierce for some reason, but just a more, you know not in a helicopter way, but in a very direct way, and understanding what's going on in the classroom instead of just judging what's going on in the classroom. And maybe that's a lot of information there, but I'd really like to hear more about Parent Camp.

Jeremy: Well the Parent Camp I'm talking about, and just to clarify, people can do any kind of form of this and call it whatever they want, so this doesn't mean they have to do this specifically. The Parent Camp I'm talking about happens to follow the Ed Camp model where it's an event where people come in and decide right then and there what they want to talk about rather than having a preset agenda. It's also just like the Ed Camp philosophy, everybody in the room is the expert, has something to contribute. There's no titles, there's no hierarchy. So, that's what allowed me to all of a sudden be a facilitator in this conversation. And I actually went to an Ed Camp here in Connecticut a couple of days and that was an Ed Camp. Again, same situation. I just put my name in, facilitated a couple of sessions with art teachers, principals, and all sorts of people in the room.

Jeremy: So, Parent Camp follows that same structure, but it developed out of an interest in building stronger school family community partnerships. That's the difference in that whereas Ed Camps are really about teachers taking control, all educators taking authority of their own professional development. Parent Camp uses the structure, but has a different purpose which is to bring different people together to facilitate those kind of partnerships between schools and communities. They're all still learning from each other just like in an Ed Camp or any other environment, but the mission is kind of different in that it's all geared towards



something to do with improving that parent voice and bringing these different groups of people together. I'm sorry, so it includes, even though it's called Parent Camp, just like Ed Camp's just need to include quote unquote professional educators. Everyone is welcome. So the first one I went to in D.C. maybe only a third of parents, and another third of educators, and another third all sorts of people. Like disability advocates, and people who were doing anything on behalf of kids.

Matt: So I guess my question is, who was the person, or the group of people who were in charge of maybe setting that off? Was it like a PTA? Who were the people that were kinda in charge of that?

Jeremy: So if you go to parentcamp.org, it gives a brief history of that. There was one to start it, Knapp Elementary.

Matt: So I guess that kinda leads me into the topic of when you hosted our chat, engaging the families through the arts. You know, we know that family engagement is important, but how do we make the case important to educators in general, and more specifically art teachers? Our art educators.

Jeremy: Well, let me start with saying what families do, and what families learn. So you already have a structure where you have learning in schools, and you have kids learning at home. So I think back about that blog that I mentioned, and one of the things I wrote about was an exhibit. Let me think about it. It was an exhibit for, let me think, Where The Wild Thing Are.

Laura: I love that one.

Matt: The what?

Jeremy: I'm sorry, the author, I'm blanking out now.

Matt: Oh, Maurice Sendak.

Jeremy: Yeah, Maurice Sendak, coincidentally lived in Connecticut. It was an exhibit about him, his history. So I wrote about that for the blog, and it was about going there with my own kids, and ... So, we as a family enjoy going to exhibits, just having opportunities to learn, and what interested me in the art aspect is its kinda a love anyway. A personal love. The art, both, you know, performing arts, and physical arts. So I think why aren't we working together I guess? I can speak



at it from that aspect, that we already kinda have this interest, and why not kind of be sharing with schools, and kinda vice versa. And then there's kinda this separate this about family engagement in general, and one of the things I find as a parent, is while I'm doing all this fun stuff on the side, and frankly just being on all these chats, it seems like whenever I join something there's always that appreciation for parent voice.

Jeremy: That when it comes actually to our own kids schools, there's kinda a difference between philosophy and practice. So, hey, I know what this is. I know I want a partnership between teachers and families, but then I find that we're falling into the kinda traditional structure of when it comes to our own lives and wonder, boy, it's easier said than done. I guess. In other words, we go to the parent teacher conferences, but especially when our older daughter entered middle school, that it doesn't come as naturally as it does in the younger grades to just know the teacher. And so you could actually go the year with barely knowing your kids different teachers when you get to that level. So I'm still figuring this out. I'm involved with Parent Camp, I'm reading up on this stuff, I'm trying to find ... I don't have the book here. "Beyond The Bake Sale", if you've ever read it. The philosophy of Parent Camp kinda built from that, and it just shows what ideally what schools would look like if they have true family committed engagement.

Jeremy: When it comes to the everyday, and going to work, bringing the kids to school, you're not ... Sure I attend PTO meetings now and then, but it's not, you know, actually changing that structure. It takes a lot of work.

Laura: I think it's probably, what you're saying is very relevant to Matt and I. You know, we have three kids, our oldest is starting middle school. We went to our first open house for middle school. It's a very different experience then the open house at the elementary school. And on the other side of it, we spend our waking hours at school for other kids, and so what we find, is we have a hard time connecting with our own children's schools, because we're taking care of all of the other kids that we take care of. And that's been a struggle for us personally and professionally as well, trying to balance that time.

Laura: And what I have found as a mom, who works, you know, 7:30 to 6:00 sometimes or even longer in a day, is that the PTA meetings are often at ten in the morning or something crazy like that. And I'm like, are we really valuing the working parent? And then even the open house we had for our daughter's this week was



at 4:30 to 5:30. I had to leave work an hour early to get there. I just think there's a lot of things as a school culture we need to remember that our hours are different than the regular working hours, and we need to remember how to effectively engage parents is really thinking through when we're hosting things. How we're hosting them, are we really offering an environment that everybody can engage in? That's a question I have a lot of times actually. And so I think everything you're saying is very relevant to us. Yeah.

Matt: Yeah.

Laura: And then I was gonna ask you, with the upper grades, being a secondary teacher it used to break my heart, especially at 11th and 12th grade, when I was at 11th and 12th grade attend open house. Like very, very few. And then the teachers would be upset that spending their evening there, and there weren't enough parents to make it worth their while. So I'm curious how you would-

Matt: Engage those older levels by, you know, getting those families to come in, and what like you might be able to do, because we're all, we all have those things that are gonna pull us away from it. So how do you pull them in?

Laura: Yeah, and is it that they don't see value in it when the kid gets to that age? I don't know.

Jeremy: Well, no. Regarding that last question I think that they do see value. I think one of the first misconceptions is that parent doesn't show up, therefore parent doesn't care, therefore doesn't see the value in these kind of relationships. I think just the structure isn't there. I think the way schools are set up, and I don't think this is necessarily intentional, it's just that it's not intended for families to be a part of. There's the front office, to some degree every little thing you do counts. So, when you walk in, do you really feel welcomed? Do you feel like they're happy to see you? And I have to say. I've seen kinda both. I've seen ... I've been lucky and for I have seen terrible customer service that I've heard about definitely. In certain instances, feeling like wow, they're kinda just ... They don't really care on not, I'm there for a purpose, just what is your purpose. And then other times when you just feel ... A smile makes a huge difference, you feel really welcome. So it starts with the front office, but the just the whole idea that you're kinda there as a visitor. You're not a part of the school. You actually wear a sticker, that indicates you're kinda some sorta outsider.



Jeremy: Then again, I don't blame schools for needing, you know, having certain standards for doing that for safety reasons and everything, but it's kinda not set up for that. So, sure, you can visit your child's classroom, but it's more expected in the elementary level. I mean, how many middle school and high school teachers really would just expect a parent to show up and observe? It wouldn't happen. So with your question about, oh they don't show up to open houses, well I think that's something that's kinda feels separate from their child's everyday experience. What I would value is kinda more of a partnership with what's happening day to day. The great thing about Twitter is I'm learning about what teachers are doing all over the country, and sometimes a lot more than I know about my own kids teachers cause they're not connected. So one way to do that is to be connected, to be online, but I feel like that's probably not the only way. So I don't wanna say that even though I loved this, and you probably love this because you do the chat, not everyone is going to take to that. And so I don't expect that's going to be every bodies thing, but if it's not that thing you need something.

Laura: Right.

Jeremy: That kinda does the same thing, which is a way to share what's going on. I personally, I love the open houses. I wouldn't never miss it. There was one year when we had to miss curriculum night, because my wife got into a car accident, and I shared this at the camp I just mentioned that I went to a couple days ago. I shared this in the last years Ed Camp. That at the time I thought, "Well, she's okay, are we still going?" But no.

Laura: You must really love the open houses.

Jeremy: Yeah, yeah. The answer is no, this happened. It was like okay, we sat in a Dunkin' Donuts, whatever, and waited for something to happen before we could come home again.

Speaker 5: Hey everyone, it's Susan Riley from Ed Closet. If you're enjoying this kind of conversation, definitely come on over to the K-12 Art Chat on Twitter. Every Thursday night, 8:30 central time. You'll hear conversations like this. You'll be able to talk with other educators, and it's a great way for us all to connect. So, [Twitter.com K-12 Art Chat](https://twitter.com/K12ArtChat), Thursdays, 8:30 Central, see you there.

Jeremy: Like it was such a disappointment to miss anything, but that's me. That doesn't mean I care more. Meanwhile, there's other parents that are very active in PTO



and do all this volunteering, which I don't do. So I feel disconnected from that. So one answer is just there is so many different ways to be involved and I wouldn't say, "Well parents don't care because they're not doing this, clearing something else has to be done.

Matt: No, I wouldn't. Yeah.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Matt: I mean, I sometimes I wonder.

Laura: I'd agree with that, but that goes back to my point think about when you're scheduling your open houses. Thinking about is that really conducive to inviting the families in, those kinda things. But I do think that the teacher perception sometimes is that frustration level of do they really care? So it's great to hear you say that we just, it's not that they don't.

Matt: It's not that they don't, it's whatever their situation is that they're not able to.

Laura: Yeah.

Matt: I mean, I do know, you know, coming from the elementary level, at the campus that I was at, a lot of the teachers who weren't on social medias, or you know, posting things to Twitter. They were using Smore. They were using things to treat it like a news letter that would have a link to, oh this is what's coming up. I mean, I know our daughters second grade teacher you know, would say this, you know, this month we're focusing on blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and this is what we're gonna be, you know, doing. So, that was kind of keeping us engaged being able to go. When we got home we could have a conversation with our kids, and be like your teacher said you were working on blah, blah, blah.

Laura: Yeah, I think there's a lot of different avenues, of course, you're right Jeremy. We do prefer the Instagram, or Twitter, or even Facebook. Our girls are actually, because Matt's going to a new school. The whole family is going to a new school this year, and I'm really excited because there's just a group for the kids in first grade, and it's only allowed for those parents of first graders, and on Facebook. And then there's another group, and then the teachers are on there, and the parents, and it's just ... You have to like, confirm that you have a child attending that school who's in the first grade. But it's been ... We haven't even officially started. We start tomorrow. I already feel more connected to this



campus than I have in the past, and it's really exciting to me that I have that connection. And when we were at the open house, the meet the teacher the other night, a woman walked up to me and said, "Oh you have a third grader this year, I saw you, oh this is ..." and you know I was like-

Matt: Making the connection.

Laura: ... making that connection and that made me feel like you said, and that was a parent, that wasn't a teacher. It made me feel more connected to that school, just that I parent was able to reach out to me and say, "Welcome", and smile, and we're so glad to have you be a part of our community. That is tremendous, tremendous. So, one of the questions you had was, what are some ways families in art in their children's schools? It's really the arts. We believe all arts are important. Our kids actually in theater, not visual arts.

Matt: But they use that.

Laura: What are some things you have seen or experienced, or heard about on Twitter, that you think would be really valuable for families to engage at schools in the arts?

Jeremy: It's funny because, this was just cited at the Ed Camp, a couple of days ago. Parents go to the performances right? So our daughter was in Unified Theater, which actually is something that has gone national, but actually started in our home town. Are you familiar with it?

Laura: Mm-mm. I'm writing it down.

Jeremy: Organization in which it's unified because it includes kids with all sorts of abilities and disabilities, and it provides and opportunity to include all kids. So always have kids with disabilities participating, but also provides leadership opportunities for the kids themselves. So there's always, at the end of their performances, which are completely student directed, student written, they do their own skits. Everything is themselves. There's always students who speak often tearfully at the end, about what a difference it made for them. And these are not kids that went in there with disabilities. Those were kids that just wanted to be a part of something, and they were shy, or something where they just didn't fit in, and this actually gave them, not only an opportunity to participate, but to be a leader. I don't know whether that was another purpose of



developing this program, or whether it was an unexpected benefit in addition to being so inclusive. That's been really inspiring to see.

Jeremy: So she's was involved in that, and of course the annual school musicals, in addition to a summer camp, theater program that she's done. And of course, she's in the choir. So, parents go to those things right? If there is anything they do, the go to those things. So, that's the easy part. So, I feel like it's easier in art than it is perhaps in other subjects, where parents might just feel intimidating where their kids aren't performing. There's nothing to snap pictures and show off about it. It's just, you know. I don't know that we need to work on it for the arts as much, although, that's all performing arts, and we're talking about the art's curriculum. I think the same challenges apply. I know that I've been encouraged by the fact that our daughter's actually learned about the famous artist in kindergarten.

Jeremy: It's interesting because we just had this conversation after the Ed Camp where people were saying, "Why is this rubric for art, starting in kindergarten? What happened to just making stuff?"

Laura: No!

Jeremy: But, that's when i brought up, wow.

Laura: We have standards.

Jeremy: Did those came out maybe 2014 or so, cause that was the first year that I was on Twitter, and I remember.

Laura: [crosstalk 00:27:33] did. In Texas, we have [inaudible 00:27:36] and we have had art standards forever. I mean, I've taught in Texas for almost 20 years, and we've had standards in art.

Jeremy: Well I think there were some sort of National ones.

Laura: Yes. Yeah.

Jeremy: And I was really into that, not like I read them all. I kept telling myself well I'd read through the common core ... I got printouts at work, and, you know. I mean, without having a specific purpose.

Laura: Right.



- Jeremy: But that said, just perusing them. I'm thinking, wow, there's dance standards and-
- Laura: Yes.
- Matt: Oh yeah.
- Jeremy: ... this is really cool. So no. So my argument was, not that, you know, not that it's not concern. For example, if it's done in such a way it takes the joy out of things.
- Laura: Correct.
- Jeremy: I think we're all concerned about that.
- Laura: Yeah.
- Jeremy: But then I thought it was great that they were actually being exposed to this art as learning. And the same with physical education, right? I mean, where-
- Laura: Yeah.
- Jeremy: ... rather than what I felt growing up was an experience of just balls being thrown at you, and trying to get out of the way. Now I feel, I would personally hate. That was the one thing I really, really, hated at school was gym. Because when you're not athletic, and it's intimidating. Now I feel like even that, you know, that there's an understanding if too physical education, you're learning. It's learning, so you're learning about the body, and about I don't know, I can't speak too much to that. That's very encouraging to see that, and I'm seeing that more [inaudible 00:29:14]
- Jeremy: I think maybe it could be, so I mentioned that we enjoy going to galleries. It could be that there's more sharing. I mean, we were just talking about ... You were just talking about the [inaudible 00:29:29] you based on information you've shared. I'd like to share, you know, some of when we go to things. Our older daughter has an Instagram, so sometimes she'll share it. It doesn't mean necessarily that everybody has to be on social media, but it's a means to share learning. I think it was the NT2T chat yesterday someone shared that they do kinda this selfie challenge throughout the summer, it was an educator. Take this sort of image, and that sort of image, so there's something to kinda have a conversation about the beginning of the next school year.



Jeremy: So I think there can be more of that. I think there's two ways of looking at social media use, when it comes to, say museums, and maybe you've covered that issue because I think it's kinda interesting how some kinda embraced it. Some places have been more grudging, but I think it depends as who you are as a person. What I think Twitter has done for me, and social media in general, is kind of given me a way to chronicle things that I haven't been able. So like, I remember going to museums in the past, and then it went away. You know, maybe we took pictures back in the day, before it was camera picture, not phone camera picture. It didn't stick, you know, it wasn't like school. For example, where you kind of, you know, it builds on what you learned before. You then learn the next thing. I find that wow, this is great because I can be deliberate about my learning, and so I think it could be that, and have a basis of conversation, I guess. Something to chronicle for later. So that I can actually go back to.

Jeremy: What I'm finding, I don't know if you ever do this, but I'll just snap a bunch of pictures of the little captions next to exhibits.

Laura: Oh, I do that too.

Jeremy: Because like, there is no way I can take this all in right now.

Laura: Right. Yeah.

Jeremy: So it's a way to look at it later, and kinda read it a hundred times before you actually get it. 'Cause I find that I can't just go and absorb it all. So I think that's something we could do. Discovering learning is everywhere, and that applies to art. Perhaps schools doing more sharing online, my daughters middle school, she's entering high school, but her middle school had the art [inaudible 00:32:23] so you could see some of their work. No, that's just a start, I think that ultimately, it needs to be more effective if it actually starts conversations. What we do mostly with social media is blast it out, and so it's a bunch of showing, but what we haven't gotten to yet, which is what I think Twitter education chats do really effectively, but we need to do it across social media in general, is making everything a conversation. So here's, I don't know, something to do with art. And here's this conversation that starts as a result of that. Then someone brings in something else. Because one of that fascinating things to me about art is, I just love the crossover that everything has.



- Jeremy: So one of the things I'm really into is film, you know, how is that ... How does that connect?
- Laura: We've had this connection before, he's a huge classic film fan, like I am.
- Matt: Oh yeah.
- Jeremy: Okay, we've had this. That's right, that's right, yeah, and we went to Sunset Blvd by the way, with a whole bunch of others.
- Laura: Yeah.
- Jeremy: So yeah, so i think that's a way to bring ... 'Cause it really isn't about how do you bring more families into the school. I'm not asking teachers to allow parents to be sitting in the classroom, because most of them work anyway. I mean, it's not gonna happen. But if they're part of the same conversation that you're having in the classroom, that can be so enriching, because then it's not just us asking at the dinner table, when we do have dinner together what did you do in school today. And then trying those other 30 questions that you're supposed to ask and expect they actually answer the question. But actually you already know because you've already, wow, you know ... What you were talking about in class that reminded me of this, and it's just how we can bring families together. It's not about show up anymore then it's about kids, what you call, butt's in seats. How often are kids actually sitting there? It's not about that. It's about how much learning and growth is happening, and I think that the same applies for families.
- Laura: Yeah. I'm taking notes. I'm having thoughts as the art coordinator about encouraging teacher. Our teachers, I think, are really, really good about their Instagram accounts, as far as showing the kids art. But something we recently talked about with our displays, was not only showing the art, but showing...
- Matt: All of the targets, and the questioning.
- Laura: The questioning, the inquiry, the line of inquiry, and attaching the artist-
- Matt: How it comes. How the thought process, you know being able to think about it, talk about it, and then create it.
- Laura: Right.
- Matt: Something to go along with that.



Laura: Really showing more of the process, and less of the end product. And I think what you just said exactly leads to that. If we could post more of the process on Instagram, and show this was our target for today, because I mean, when you're making art, it's a long process. It's not just-

Matt: Boom. Done.

Laura: Boom, and we made this and we're done, and we're moving on to the next thing we're gonna make. It really is a process of investigation, just like it is in science, and then you're connecting all these pieces, and you're crossing over. And I think if we could share that more with parents on the social media, or on your Smore, however you want to push it out to parents. Even in your displays in the building, I think that, that would engage the conversation at a higher level than, "Oh I just saw your art and it was pretty."

Jeremy: Yeah, that's really interesting because I think between that, and the fact that what's shared with parents in mostly grades, and results. We were just having this conversation at the Ed Camp. The fact that say, a power school, you know, they have a power school. Parents should know what's going on, you know, but that's all about assignments, and grades, and how you're doing. It's interesting that you say that 'cause that reminds me that applies to other things too. It's not just grades where it's kinda the end result, but even the theater when you think about it. We all go see the show, but we haven't seen the process.

Laura: Right.

Jeremy: That's really interesting, because if we really do believe in growth in the process being the most important, why do we always show the ends? Because, the result is that the kids think that's the most important thing. Everybody thinks that's the most important thing. And so if there isn't a result somehow that's a failure or meaning less. So I like that. I would love, I would love to see more of that. And that applies in art, that applies in science, everything.

Matt: I think that kinda ties into the thing that Laura and I started when we start this chat. It was on a family road trip and I was getting ready to ... Like I said, we had just started the chat, and we were looking at ways to extend it and get people excited as the new school year was starting. And we started this thing in August[inaudible 00:38:08] 31, and so it was taking that reflection piece I think goes kinda for almost anything really, you know, and can be used for any subject area. Doesn't even have to just be about teacher, but for the students to reflect



on, you know, what worked for them. What didn't work. You know, as well as the teachers. And so that can kinda tie in.

Laura: Yeah, I would love to see. So a lot of our teachers do what's called in art, a whip, a work in progress, or a work in process. So you do a midpoint or multiple checks where you're checking to see how this work is coming along. Now that we have iPads in that room, we're asking kids to take photos of those pieces in process, so that you can see the growth of that work of art, right? And then the teacher, in the Google classroom, can give them feedback. Okay this is coming along really well, but you're shading on the left side needs some more contrast, or is the light, you know. Teach kids and teachers both that idea of that reflection and feedback process, and then to illustrate that to parents could be a really, really powerful thing. We're using visual journals in our curriculum in art, and I've seen it where to me, it's not different than a science field notebook, or a field journal. Or [inaudible 00:39:35] they have a process journal. That to me, is where the deep learning and those deep connections occur, but I don't think we do a good job of sharing that with parents. I don't even know if parents know those things exist. So I think that we might have hit on something huge here.

Jeremy: Well, it makes me think about art is a good example of ... There's perceptions you're either good in art, or not so good in art. And so you see the end product. So it reminds me of right in the room I'm sitting in. There was one year, for my daughters birthday, we went to one of those places where you can paint. You know, I don't know I you have a place like that.

Laura: Yeah.

Jeremy: And you know, there's an instructor there, and they show what you're going to end up with, and every one does their own version of it. And it comes out different depending on who you are. So my daughters pretty, what traditionally would be considered pretty good visual artist, but then you had other kids, including her younger sister, you know. Well what looks a lot more like Picasso, and it wasn't intentional.

Laura: Yeah.

Jeremy: So there's this perception that you know this art is some kids things, and for others it's not. But if your focus on that process you're talking about, those ... We don't make those kind of judgements as much, because it's about the learning. It doesn't really matter in the end. Not all of us are growing up to



become artist, and what we consider traditional art. I believe that everyone is an artist in some way, but you know, how we usually define artist. But it's the learning process, so I like what you're saying because, you know, lets look at every stage of that process, not how it looks in the end, because except to the degree that it might be revealing in that so much ability, but about different brains, in terms of interpreting the same data. But I like that. We need to get away from that, you know, art is for some people, and not for others.

Laura: For sure. I was just thinking. This morning, our youngest was...

Matt: Oh yeah.

Laura: Okay, you have to understand, our house is different we're all art, 24/7. But our six year old was doing a picture of ...

Matt: Of Frida Kahlo, well a little notepad that had a picture of Frida Kahlo on it, and she was trying really hard to get it to be ... to look the way it was, and there was process where she was stopping going look this is where I am so far. Look this is where I am so far. And then I'm doing some work on the computer, you know, getting ready for our conversation, I just hear her have this external, inner monologue. You know, it was all her talking herself through her process. She's like, "Now I'm gonna use this. Nope that didn't turn out so good. SO now I'm gonna use this, and that's not working either. So now I'm gonna try this is gonna happen." And, so it was just really interesting to-

Laura: And then she brought it in to me and said, "What should I do next?" And then she asked daddy, like not in what should I do next. She wanted to do the eyes, but she was using crayons. And crayon on top of crayon is not ideal.

Matt: And then she's like, "I need color to go on top of this." She was using black crayon, and she was learning the fact that, that the crayon wasn't the colors she wanted to use didn't work too well on top of that black crayon. So she was just kinda getting to point to where she was frustrated.

Laura: Speaking of, we have a guest in the studio. She heard us talking about her so she came in.

Matt: Like what? Someone's talking

Laura: Out you go, goodbye. Goodbye.



- Matt: So, you know, it's that process and learning as your going and that experimentation is just...
- Laura: Well, I think at one point she was really happy with it, and then another point she wasn't. And then she had to work through that, like, that piece of it. But having also, stopping at different points and looking at where it was, was really fundamental to the final work of art. And I think that, unfortunately, that's exactly what parents don't normally get to see, and yeah.
- Jeremy: It's funny because you preceded that by saying you're not like most households. Art is what you do, but it made me think about if families are exposed to this kind of thing more, then they can be part of that conversation, you know.
- Laura: Yeah.
- Matt: No, absolutely.
- Jeremy: Your daughter has that extra advantage, but why can't other families have that too if, you know-
- Laura: Agreed.
- Jeremy: ... their being shared that, all about that process, and what to talk about. You know, these are the things to talk about. Here's the things we've been talking about, you might want to talk about the same things. Because the thing about art is unlike, say math, even though we recognize that reading math, all of it is everyday using. We really use math every day, even if we don't think of it that way. Art is something, you know, that kids voluntarily do all the time for fun. So why not take advantage of that and have the conversations you already know about, because you're in this field, other parents can too.
- Laura: Well, and I think that, that's part of our role is to teach others that, you know, and to share that. That experience that process. You know, we have to rely on our reading teachers to help us a lot. You know, reading is not something we're naturally inclined to teach, so we're always asking for support for reading teachers, math as well. But I think it is really about us just continuing to have that conversation with other parents about the process, and having that questioning going back and forth. You know, I really wish in a way, we talked about this afterwards, I'm like, "Wow, I wish I'd gotten Tatum on video, and gotten her



little monologue, her dialogue she had with herself." Because it was really cool to hear it so.

Jeremy: Yeah, and if teachers capture a little bit of that, you know, 'cause you say that might happen 50 times more times that you can actually capture, since you're dealing with it all day you have an opportunity to capture it now and then. And you can work out the privacy issues, you know, in some cases these might be private accounts so only families can access it, but those are your biggest audience anyways, so, you know. What an opportunity to find out what their kid was actually saying. Which you would never find out otherwise, 'cause they're not gonna tell you.

Laura: No, they're not.

Matt: I mean, I think that kinda has to do through the concept of play, like Quin Rollins is a big proponent of, you know, playing through process. Kinda learning, you know, working things out in your head. Replaying some kind of scene, that maybe something, you know, good or bad happened, and their replaying it all out in their head. Whether it's with figures, with drawing, whatever.

Laura: I think that goes back to your statement about the Ed Camp kindergarten art having a rubric. There is still definitely play within the art room in kindergarten, but there are also standards that we have to make sure we're meeting for those kids. And I think it's finding that balance and teaching kids, again that play is part of the process, and experimentation, and inquiry, and investigating. All of that, the exploration is really key to that. I have kinda last question, just because it already came up. Grades are a lot the end product. That's the anticipation. We live in a society where you want to be the valedictorian. You're judged on your grades, you're judged if you're a A, B, or C student, or if you're failing. How do we ... What suggestions would you have for teachers talking with parents about maybe looking at the process, and looking at an authentic grade, and where the learning occurs, versus just shooting for the "A"?

Jeremy: Well, that's a whole weekend spent on that.

Laura: I know, I know.

Jeremy: And we have, there's been lots of chats that address that. I think it's important that it's not done in isolation. So you can't have one teacher whose kind of open minded about this. This has got to be a philosophy that is school wide, is district



wide. Ultimately, Nationwide. So in other words, right now we have a system where there are honor rolls, and those honor rolls are strictly awarded on grades. And so as long as we have that kind of thing, you might have people understanding the broader purpose of learning, but they're always gonna go back to that. Then as long you have ... I mean it's just a whole system. As long as you have colleges that focus on high school transcripts, it's never ending. You're gonna have people focused on that. So, that's the biggest challenges. You're basically asking people to express a philosophy that goes against everything the evidence shows, that we still care about numbers, and letters. That said, it could be that art is one way where there's more than an end. So I know as a parent, and many parents, unlike yourself, that are actually in the art, so I think ...

Jeremy: Say starting with something like art and saying, you know, we're here learning about the process because we know in the end ... I think most parents aren't particularly concerned whether their kid is good is art or understand it. It's something that is a value, it might be something that's more ingrained in some people than others. I know you've probably helped fight that argument too. There's all sorts of ways to demonstrate creativity. So art can be an in, and say, look, you know, I think we all agree that, you know, you don't get an "A" for making something that looks really good. You know, what we care about here is the learning and I think that's ... So that's an area okay you kind have an in, like parents say, "Yeah, grades really don't fit here." And then you can start, well, it kinda applies elsewhere too. I mean, you're talking about science is a process where you're, you know, sometimes, you have a hypothesis. And some times you've proven it, and some times you don't, but we're really not gonna grade your kid on whether, you know, they're a success or not, right? 'Cause don't you care about more of the process.

Jeremy: So I think you have more of those conversations, you start realizing that it applies to almost anything, and I think you start with the things that are more obvious that it applies to. Art could be one of them. Music is another, and physical education. And then kind of demonstrate how it applies elsewhere, and I think that's where the conversation begins, even within the system that we have, which is so focused on numbers, and letters.

Laura: Yeah.

Matt: A lot to digest there.



Laura: Yeah. Well, like you said, it's a topic we could spend days on. It's you know, it's always a hard thing for me, especially with kids with learning disabilities that are working their tails off, and their process. You see so much growth, and even on the state standardized test you see a ton of growth, but they didn't meet the mark. And like, wow, this child just grew, and yet we're not giving them any credit for all that growth. So yes. We could go on, and on about that, but I think ... Let circle back to the name of the pod cast, and see if we can kinda sum it up. So in your mind, well the creatively connected classroom, what would you envision as a creatively created classroom as a parent, as a kind of a perfect scenario. What would a creatively connected classroom look like to you.

Jeremy: When I hear the word connected, I automatically think of relationships. So you say as a parent, I automatically think of that. Well, if you're claiming to be a connected classroom, you're connecting with the world. So, that could be ... It's hard not to think of online mechanisms of doing that, because that's the most obvious way to make connections, so some of that is open. So you have people from all over the world, but you also have, you know, the parent, your direct client so to speak are parents. I'm aware that the phrase is creatively, so you're looking at that aspect too. I think I see creativity as something that is also a collaboration. So I think a misperception is ... That's another favorite topic, whenever it comes up online. I think is the whole notion of creativity, and that somehow that means skill in, say art, you know.

Laura: Right.

Jeremy: That other people can visibly see oh, this person is creative. If it's creatively connected, I would think that it has ... it requires some sort of collaborative effort, so.

Laura: Yes.

Jeremy: So I think, the creativity in history, I think is demonstrated by people who collaborate, who recognized, who are very committed. I think of someone like Thomas Edison that talked about sweat, but ultimately, most of the experiences isn't just people in a room being creative. That's kinda the romantic thing. Think of Van Gogh, and cutting of his ear, whatever. You know, suffering for their art. But I think, you're talking about the classroom. When you're talking about everyday learning, you're talking about all of us. We kinda need each other to build on that creativity. So, I don't know if you ever feel this way, but do you ever



feel like, and maybe you don't. You already feel that way because you're together already. And so you have the second half of what you need. But I always feel like there's gotta be like this second half person out there who has that ... like I have the idea's but don't know how to do it. And then they have idea and don't know how to do it, and then if we only got together, we would figure this out.

Laura: Yes, yes.

Jeremy: And I think that's what students could ... I mean where else why are you having school? Why do we have school? Why do we bring a bunch of people in a group together, if not ... I mean, what would be the purpose if everyone were just kinda learning on their own, the whole point is to learn together. So I think creativity requires that taking advantage of what other have to offer, and then offering what you have to offer yourself and bringing it together, and coming up with solutions that could've never come up on your own.

Matt: Awesome.

Laura: That's right on.

Matt: Yeah. Yup.

Laura: That's kinda we're big believers in the collaboration piece, if not we wouldn't be sitting here right now.

Matt: Yeah, right. Okay so, Jeremy I think before we kinda wrap anything up, is there any kind of parting thoughts that you'd like to share with our audience, that we maybe haven't covered already?

Jeremy: So we talk about families as partners, and it's a philosophy that I think everyone understands. Well, not everyone. I think the that the educators [inaudible 00:56:54] talk about intuitively, and yet, we're not practicing it. So I think that, that kind of conversation that we're having, and the Parent Camp that, if to bring it all together, from the beginning. The Parent Camp structure. I think we need opportunities like this to figure this out together. So if there are those schools out there who wanna increase family engagement, but aren't getting people to show up ... Surely there are families who would show up for a conversation as why other families don't show up, so I think this is something that requires kinda a new, an entirely new approach that I think the traditional school structure



doesn't allow for. And I think that's, that's what's missing. Like all we have to do is, hey I love the idea of positive phone calls home. I hear about that a lot, and it's positive. Two days ago, one of the peoples, people in my session was talking about, you know they are supposed to send "X" numbers of post cards home per week, with positive.

Jeremy: I don't mind, I mean, those are good ideas, but I think those are kinda like this is how you do it kind of thing. And as a parent, I don't know that I need that kind of physical thing in my hands to somehow mean something that I wouldn't of had otherwise. I think it's the relationships that count, and I think that's something that we need to work together on. I think, I mean, you've invited me here as a parent voice, but I don't know how to try to get more parents on there. As part of these chats, as part of these conversations, so you've had 200 parents to choose from to be on your podcast. I haven't figured that out either, 'cause that's often asked of me. You know, how do you get more parents talking like you're talking. It's like, I don't know. I just got into it. You know, like you can't make anyone do something. I think you just, you know, once you get bitten by the bug it just gets you, and you ...

Laura: Yeah.

Jeremy: So the parting thought is, let's figure this out together. I don't think we've figured out there are books on family engagement, that are experts. I don't think we've really changed the structure to build it, and you know, these are our simple answers so let's come together and figure this out. And that would require a kind of a whole change and approach how we see school versus family school versus community, including [inaudible 00:59:47] schools serving the community, as community centers. As destinations for the community rather than something that's kinda this abstraction that I don't have any kids in the school, so this is just something cost money in my neighborhood. So. Maybe that helps.

Laura: No, yeah, coming together-

Matt: Coming together, I mean, yeah.

Laura: ... and continuing the discussion.

Matt: That's key.



Laura: Yeah.

Matt: For sure.

Laura: It's, you know, as a former administrator, high school, middle school administrator, I was that administrator that would put the post cards in the box, and say hey ... you know. I never had a requirement you have to send this many home or anything, but it was encouraged. But now as a parent, you know, I think you're spot on. For me it's the relationship. It's knowing that I can call a teacher about a concern I have, or even just call them to say, "Hey, I love this lesson you're doing", and know that I'll get a response, and that's there's some kinda conversation that'll occur out of there. That's so much more important to me than anything else. Just that responsiveness of that relationship is key. So, I'm excited to continue to explore this. It's something that's gonna continue to be on my mind.

Matt: Oh yeah.

Laura: Long after this conversation. I have a lot of ideas for connecting our school district with some parent engagement ideas, just from our conversation. So, thank you, so much for visiting with us this morning.

Jeremy: Oh you're welcome. Thanks for having me.

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