



GAEA *Monthly Mentor Minutes*

January 2025

Happy 2025!

I am Debi West, the GAEA Retired Division Director and I am thrilled to bring you our new Monthly Mentor Minutes – a quick tip, trick or creative idea, shared by one of our amazing “retired” art educators, each month!

We have a brilliant group of retired and seasoned art educators within our organization, and they have so many amazing ideas that they’re happy to share with our GAEA family.

This first MMM (monthly mentor minute) will be a creative idea that I enjoy sharing with student teachers and my graduate students in regard to theme-based teaching. When I began this art ed journey back in 1992 (teaching at the summer YAW – youth art workshops – at Moore College of Art and Design), I thought about the best way to organize my summer camps and considered using a theme to plan out my lessons. This was so successful that I took this practice with me as I started full time in Gwinnett County teaching my k-5 kiddos.

Over the years I have created 6 yearlong, theme-based curricula that teaches kiddos media, elements, principles, art history and criticism via a theme-based timeline! It’s magical!

From “The History of Art Through the Eyes of our Future”, to “AlphaART – the ABC’s of Art”, to “Museum Mania”, to “Art Detective Through Time” to “eARTh...it’s got ART”, just to name a few, I have found that students (and staff) enjoy learning this way and our students can become the docents for our end of the year art shows because the art exhibits are themed. I wrote an article about this that will help showcase how to organize it and put it together. Once you’ve spent a bit of time putting it together, you will be amazed at how well it works as a teaching and learning curriculum.

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2017/08/try-yearlong-theme-based-instruction-works/>

Please don’t hesitate to reach out with creative comments and know that your retired teachers are here to help in any way!

#togetherwe*ART*better

So Sincerely,

Debi West, Ed.S, NBCT

dewestudio@gmail.com