

**TAB Storytellers Podcast Transcript of the interview with Jen Ferrari and Abi Paytoe Gbayee, recorded on 5/22/2025.**

This is a lightly edited (ChatGPT o1 helped ensure names were spelled correctly and visual formatting was corrected) transcript taken from the auto transcript feature of Zoom, we recognize there are errors and grammatical issues. If anyone with the time or inclination to edit this wants to do so please email us at [storytellers@teachingforartisticbehavior.org](mailto:storytellers@teachingforartisticbehavior.org).

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Welcome to tab storytellers. This is Abi Paytoe Gbayee, and I'm here with my lovely co-host. And we are here to talk about teaching for artistic behavior, which is the art education, pedagogy, belief, foundational structure for a way that you can work art, education in your classroom with the child as the artist, your classroom as a studio, and exploring. What do artists do with students. and so with the more formal. more about the TABcast. Here's my lovely co-host.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Hi everybody. This is Jen Ferrari. And I'd like to thank you for joining us for tab storytellers. This podcast was established to promote dialogue among art teachers who seek best practices in contemporary art, education, and to advocate for tab, pedagogy and practice. This podcast which we lovingly refer to as a tab cast is published once a month and is a place to share our tab stories with one another. These stories can come from tab educators, administrators, community members, researchers, and many. many, many more sources. From how we found tab to implementation in the classroom to advocacy for your program, to dispelling myths about tab practice. We cover everything for more information. You can navigate after this TABcast to [teachingforartisticbehavior.org](http://teachingforartisticbehavior.org). And there you'll find information, inspiration, and incredibly helpful items such as teacher created resources and access to an online community of tab educators called mighty networks. So usually I hand it over to my lovely co-host Abi. But today we get to introduce ourselves. So, Ivy, take it away.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: In honor of this being the end of our 3rd season, which seems like, Wow Jen and I thought that we would just hang together and kind of check in, because we had a very short pilot episode where we introduced ourselves. It feels like many eons ago, but kind of where we are now, and so I'm Abi Paytoe Gbayee for people who have not realized that in all of this it rhymes with potato ole, and if you see it spelled, it doesn't make sense at all. So apologies. If you've ever tried to read it out loud. I currently am the Assistant Art Education Professor at the University of Northern Colorado. The other main teaching faculty, Donna Goodwin, is our department head right now, and so I have some amazing art. Ed adjunct folks that are actually tab humans. I work with Alison Myers and Dale Zalmstra, and loving teaching future art teachers in another realm and space in my life. I'm also the Pacific Region Vice President for the NAEA Association. For until March I'm done in March when I passed the baton on. And so that's been giving me. It gives me a space to think about art education through the lens of professional development and growth for art educators already in the field, and a passion for leadership, and I wear several other hats in different venues. But those are the kind of big art education ones that I do a lot of, and have found myself doing. consulting around incorporating standards into art education, and I feel like sometimes that might feel like, what are we standards and TAB? I think that sometimes, having frameworks and stuff for discussing with administration what's happening in your classroom is one of my passions as well, and so those are some ways that I view myself in my roles other than being Jen's amazing. Huh! I don't know if I'm amazing when Jen is the amazing co-host of tab storytellers.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Well takes 2 to tango happy, so there's not I guess, as much to share. I don't have as many changes as Abi does, but I am doing quite a bit, and I enjoy doing it. So let me start by just sharing again that I'm Jen Ferrari, and it's yes, it's exactly just like it sounds like the car my students

always ask me, do you own a Ferrari? And I sometimes joke and say yes, and it's purple, and it's outside, and then they go, and they look, and it's always fun. And then sometimes I'm like, No, but if I did. I probably wouldn't be teaching. But you know what I really do love my job, and I love that. I get to work with my students every day, and to teach them about thinking and behaving like artists. So I love my job. I am still a grades 3 to 5 elementary art teacher at Lieutenant Job Lane, Elementary school in Bedford, Massachusetts. and outside of that I still serve on the leadership team for teaching, for artistic behavior. Inc. I am their past president right now. The other members of my team. Bridget Cutterly, is the current. President Kelly Beach is the President elect. and then we have Lauren Gould Donahue, who's our secretary. and Don Norris, who is our lovely treasurer. And I really do love working on that team. It's a fabulous group of individuals. We do work really well together, and we enjoy doing the work. So those are like the 2 big things that I have going on. And then the other thing, of course, and Abi shares in this is that we both are parents, and it's been really interesting for me, because when I 1st started as a tab teacher identifying as one. My children were 5 and 3, and so. watching them grow with this new lens has been really exciting for me, and it plays into research because I love making observations and then connecting it to things out in the world. So now my, my kids are 10 and 8, and I've seen them grow, and as they have grown, I've delved into more of that research. So I'm working currently on finishing, which I use with air quotes. You can't see them, but I'm using them a book project with Jill Hogan that we are going to be publishing sometime next year. And as soon as I know that I can start promoting it. I certainly will, but we did land on a title, and then, as soon as I am able to talk to you about that I will, but I'm really excited about it. Our editor is really excited about the project, and it's going to be a continuation of engaging learners through art making So we're really excited about that, because we want to bring new perspective to what already exists out there. It's been a little while since the original book was published. It's in the second edition now, engaging learners. And there's so many cool things that educators out there are doing tab educators. and they really need to have a light shine on them, because there are so many different ways to approach this, and I hate to see people get pigeonholed into one way of thinking. So that was one of the big driving, motivating factors. For why I wanted to do this book, and Jill is a fabulous collaborator so hopefully this next season she'll be able to come on, and we can talk more about that. So those are like the big things that I have going on. Yeah, I'm also really looking forward to the summer. It's been a crazy year. So that's exciting, too.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Yeah, I always I do. Sometimes I forget that I have not that. I forget that I have children. My daughter's always like, if we're not home, do you forget we exist? No, but you're not at the top of my mind all the time, because there's a lot in there. But my daughter is headed into high school next year into an Arts magnet high School here, but she has. She's been at a we moved to Greeley 2 years ago, when I got Job at Northern University of Northern Colorado, and the school that she's been at Fred Tjardes School for Innovation didn't have an art teacher. They still don't have an art teacher. They don't believe in having specialists. But it is the most. If a whole school could be tab. It feels like that. And it's kind of wild. And so it's been an interesting it's been interesting to see that play out. And the people that have put that system together really don't have any concept of what Tab is, because they're not art educators, but they do. They kind of have some really broad themes. They'll work around and they'll do some scaffolding and learning. And then I'm exploring. And then students, self direct projects. And you know, explorations that culminate in an event night where they share out with the community. And so students are doing self-guided research and learning in ways that are kind of amazing. And they have an art classroom and like grades like 4 or 5 and up like, because they're K 8, can actually use the art room independently. without supervision. And so I get to go in forever. The schools. Let me take my college. They're gonna take my college kids in and either kind of like a lab. But I also sort and organize the classroom and get to set it up and tell them what materials are needed and things like that. And it's been kind of fascinating trying to think about like, how can I set up a classroom that doesn't have an art

teacher at all in a way that students really do go in and use it as a studio as artists, and it feels almost, it feels like an extreme version of like. Can we set it so that they can independently navigate all of these things in a safe way has been. It's been an interesting study in, in material management and things. We're still navigating, that it's kind of one of those things that it's been in my head. It was like, Huh! Is this really? Is this really serving kids to not have any instruction in art other than kind of like self guided but access to materials. you know. Where's the balance between scaffolding for them? And then, you know, letting them learn and what they're able to produce. And so it's been. That's something that I kind of like in my head, looking at and back and forth thing at the moment as I get ready to go in and sort out the classroom again.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Oh, my gosh! You have totally piqued my interest, because, like, I wonder if again, from a research standpoint. there's like so much there that I feel like you could, and you have probably like observed and documented about like how not that you're there when they use the space. but when you go back into it, I wonder? Do you do you think. or does the school? Maybe this is my question. Does the school have any sort of feedback system for that like, if they're working, you know, kind of like a suggestion box. I wonder.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: So I mean, like the kids are pretty. They advocate pretty hard for themselves, which isn't mean. One of the byproducts is like students advocate. I am in there sometimes when the students are working so because they have periods of the day, I mean, that are flexible for students working they have what are called autonomy passes. So they'll like train a kid in an area and then they get a badge that says that they can use that space and if they are found to not be managing the space like they should be, they'll get a corner of their badge clipped off, and once they've lost all the corners of the badge, they have to wait a month before they have access to that space independently again, after some retraining, which I think is kind of a fascinating concept. But it is. It's been interesting to watch the kinds of signs the students will put up to each other like in the space and the way they like name shelving units around like don't like. Don't touch this stuff or things to think about around like mixing tempera and acrylic, because people don't realize that those are different kinds of paints. And so the signs that get put up around those paint centers. And so it's been, it's been super interesting to see. But also this, this next group of kids. because it's k 8. The next set of 8th graders will have. Some of them will have been there since kindergarten, and never had an art teacher. And so other than they have exploratories which are in addition to everything else they do, but that are like 6 weeks long. But teachers or community members will come in and teach something, for like a rotation of time, and so sometimes they'll get things like they got female jewelry making this last one of those one of the exploratories a couple times ago, but then sometimes I'll do like a whole school thing like mask making. So the entire school spent, you know, 3 weeks at the beginning of the year, making masks and what that looked like, and you know. And so that's been kind of this fascinating observation, like just seeing what learning can look like if you took Tab to a whole school level. Essentially. you know, but also that whole. There's that part of you me that's like that. I still want to go in and be like this is how we're gonna use paintbrushes, friends. We're gonna wash them, you know, like.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): So that is so. I'm so relating to all the things you're sharing. because I, you know, working in a traditional elementary school setting where I'm probably the only space that my main goal is to teach autonomy. I'm always questioning. and it's interesting that you bring this up where the kids enter and use the space without any instruction or adult there to help guide. I often find myself asking the question if everyone is inherently an artist, right? Because humans intrinsically make. then what is, then the role of the art teacher? And I have always looked at it in that art teachers like myself. I think about myself as a curator of experiences, right? And so when you were just saying about like, I still want

to go in and like teach, like the proper technique or care, or like all of these things. I think that certainly plays a role in there. But then I'm also like, what other experiences. should we be curating for them in order to get them to be more independent? And I wonder? The other thing, I wonder is that in my more traditional sense of how, where I teach? Is it possible to even accomplish that? If my space, 45 min, once a week is the only time that they are experiencing that. And I and I often have this like I grapple with the progress that we make, and I have to remind myself. Jen, you only see them like 3 HA month, basically. And when they're actually in the studio, it's even less than that that they're actually making working in the studio, because I still. with my curriculum, have to cover a very brief teacher time and all this the cleanup and the other stuff. So I think there's a there's a lot that we have to deal with. and I think sometimes we're hard on ourselves, and we certainly question ourselves a lot. But when you really kind of boil it down, I mean. if you're if you're doing what's best for the kids, if you feel in that moment like that. You're working. I think you have to go. Go easy on yourself, you know.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Well, I think like so. Time has been something. That is, I've the more that I've done with helping people navigate curriculum design. and by curriculum design, I mean, as in curriculum, is what happens in your classroom while you're with students, is the thing that occurs. That teaching is, I'm not talking necessarily scope and sequences. I'm saying, like, when you're with students, what's happening? navigating what's important and what in the mini, you know, in the Mini lesson, or the teacher time or in my case, like the times that I bring students from the university in to work with these kids that don't have an art teacher. What in that time is important? Sometimes it's really critical to know how much time do you have? And so I've been doing some math games with people. And some of them are like, Oh, my God! This is the biggest advocacy tool I've been able to figure out, and so I would just you can listen to this. Podcast. You can back this up right now if you need to. But the the method that I've I discovered, as I was explaining to second graders why they needed to pay attention to my class while they were in there, because I wasn't going to chase them onto the playground was we looked at? How long class was? How much time did it take me to give directions and get them working? How much cleanup time did we use, and how much work time did they have? And we separated those out by minutes. and then we counted how many times. I saw them a year. and we counted. And if you have a 5 day rotation like, if you teach Monday to Friday, schedule your Mondays and Friday students are going to see you less. But if you like rotate students. so you have a 4 day week on a 5 day schedule, or something or vice versa. You actually probably need to track which things because I had one school where I was helping one of my student teachers figure this out. And she was like, Yeah, the Friday kids never get enough time. And when we actually did the math, the way that they had ended up rotating, it was actually the Thursday kids because of, you know, the rotation of how they landed in bonus times that they had, which is because there's like the 4 day work week, and then they had, you know, on a rotating basis. These, this group of kids would come in for an extra day, or whatever. By the time that we saw how many times they saw the teacher, and then multiplied it by the working minutes and then teaching minutes. We also realized how valuable cleanup time is, and how if you, if you add up all the minutes that you waste and cleanup time extending it, or students aren't paying attention. So you're like, we're just gonna clean up longer. It became really amazing how intentional people get, how much clarity they have. And so if I had students for 70 min, which I did when I taught elementary. I had 70 min classes. and 10 min of those were cleanup minutes, and you know, 10 min of those were instruction and transition minutes. We had 50 min classes, and I saw students, you know. 36 weeks out of the year. And then maybe we had to pay attention. Like to the 1st class is like introduction and kind of warm up in the last class or 2 is like, clean up and take your stuff home. And you know, material management. So really, it's 33 weeks of time. You know, times 50 min. How many hours is that that they're getting a year, and then how many? You know? How many hours am I giving instruction? A year? So 10 min. I'm you know, 300 and 6,330 min of instruction a year. What am I? What am I doing with those minutes? Intentionally,

you know, is the color wheel gonna be the most important thing. No, it's not not to me. I'm not gonna prioritize some of those things that we think are important. Or that, we're told are important. And I'm not going to prioritize introducing artists that aren't relevant to the students. You know. And so those are some things that I got really intentional about when I started doing the math. But then I also did the math for the students around like, how much recess time were you getting if you're here before school and over school lunch and afternoon recess? And you know, like. They were getting as much recess in one day as they had making time all week. and when they realized that they were like, Oh, I'm gonna pay attention here. But then we talked about like, how much math time do you get? How much reading time do you get? And when I was able to take all those numbers to admin. Suddenly they were less on board for cutting art time. when I, you know, showed them what they were like. Well, it helps with our transitions. If you know you, we lose 10 min, because then we can put 5 min of transition on each side. And I was like, Okay, well, that's what this adds up to is this is how much lost time students have. Yeah. And so that was when I think of like time, especially in elementary that if we are not as art educators paying, doing the math to figure out what time we have. and I think that we do a disservice to our students, because it is really easy to. you know, talk a little bit longer, or insist. We clean up earlier when really it's student work time at, you know. We're taking that away from them.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah, you know. So you started me thinking about.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Like.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Things that I've done to try to shorten the time that I'm doing like direct instruction, because I struggle still with this. But I try very, very hard to keep anything that I have to do to 5 min or less. And so what I've started doing so tips and tricks out there people. What I've started doing is if I have something that I want to demo, whether it be like a new material or like a challenge that I have for them, or a process for doing something. What I do now is I do videos. And I use just an app. It's called in shot. But I'm sure there's lots more than just that one. But you can go in. You can upload like a video that you've made. That's 8, 10 min long. I've gotten them down to 3 or 4 min just by like speeding up something that was taking way too long, or like not like just editing the Bejesus out of it, basically. And the other thing I found is that, and I'm sure many people out here have noticed this. Kids pay attention to the video. They do not pay attention to me if I'm telling them the information, but they will watch me in a video, and that to me blows my mind every single time, but they are always enthralled with it. And they also want to know, like you have YouTube, I'm like, no, it's called Google drive, and you can put things on it likes. Do you have? It's not exactly how this works. But I. There's just something about video now, because we are so highly screen. Which is all about screens all the time that they just their attention is just much better with it. So that's a tip. And then the other thing I've tried to do is I've tried to lean into my own research on teaching in the moment and doing more. I would call it improvisational teaching, where, if you are in studio and you have an opportunity to make a connection to an artist, or to a process, or a material, or something that relates to what the child is doing there in the moment. That's going to mean a lot more to them. Maybe it won't like. Maybe you're like, Oh, they're totally going to love this. And maybe they're like, Oh, that's really cool. But at least you've made the connection, and you've kind of tried to like Spark something, because I think you're never going to get it every single time. But one day you're going to find that one thing that just that kid. It'll just hook them, and then they'll be hooked. And so I've tried to do a lot more of that rather than telling them about it ahead of time, waiting until they're ready to receive the information. And they're like intrinsically motivated to find out more. So those are like the 2 things that I've done. But that's part of being a curator. It's like constant reflection, and like collecting knowledge and things that work for you and your situation. I mean, it's the same thing that museum curators do that for their collections. They

find the things that they want to present to their audience whether it's based on a theme or like an issue. So I just think about it like that. And you can constantly curate. There's no end to curation. So.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: I love, like George, the Kelly's collections. and the whole idea of having kids collect and collect to curate, because curation happens naturally when you collect. And so those are some like, sometimes I'm like, I'm not hoarding. I'm collecting. I'm curating, but I do find like I don't know I was the kid who liked the my mom's button collection. It was like my favorite thing as a kid is like I'd sort it by color, and then I'd sort it by whole, and then I'd sort it by size, and then I would sort it by 2 variables, and then, you know, kind of thing. And then ultimately, I'd put them all away. But it's still one of my favorite things to do is like sort different things out, and sometimes I find myself instead of making art just sorting the materials. And I was like, maybe this is the art form for today is that I've sorted these things out.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: And then.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Sorry go ahead.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Making, and the making doesn't necessarily the making isn't a part of the process that day.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah, I mean, I tell my kids all the time, because sometimes they'll come up to me and they'll say, Mrs. Ferrari, do you like my insert, you know, drawing whatever, and I'll often ask them, do you like it? And you know they're like. Yeah, but I'm like, Well, you know, that's all that really matters. And sometimes it's not even that you made something. Sometimes it's just that you took the time or space to do something creative that was enjoyable like sometimes art class isn't always make something. because you're not always there to make something that you're going to show to someone else. Sometimes it might just be, I'm going to art class today to practice like just being calm or like dealing with an issue that's going on. And that's how I'm going to process it, or like, there are many other things to do in the art room than just make like a product, you know. and the one thing that I always get surprised about is that when the kids 1st of all, when they make their art show pieces. they're always really engaged in it. And then they want to know when they're going to get them back when they give them to me. But then, after the art show. It's, you know. I don't get them back right away the pieces when I do. And I give them back. Sometimes the kids just don't want them anymore, because it served its purpose. You know it was the the process of making it and going through that. And it served its purpose. And now I don't need the product anymore. I had the process was my experience. So I always think that is very interesting, because I think sometimes people get nervous about waste. But really, I think the only thing that can be wasted is like students, time with taking it up with things that don't necessarily matter as much to them. because not all art is made to be kept. I know that you were mentioned. You mentioned a few times. Angela's like that.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Oh, yeah, no, she's like you don't have to keep it all, mom.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: My son is just like 10%. Just keep 10%. I was like random 10%. He's like 10%. Seems about the right amount you should keep, and I was like, Who are you? Heathens?

Jen Ferrari (she/her): And then there's my son. He is a writer he loves to write. He keeps pretty much everything, and I don't think he necessarily needs to, but he is a little bit of a hoarder. I am not. I am the opposite. So sometimes I go into his space, and I'm a little overwhelmed. But you know. I people do process things differently like that, too. So it's always interesting to me to observe kids and like how they collect. You know things, whether it be writing, or art, or buttons, or whatever it is. But yeah, I just kids are fascinating, constantly reminded about that. I always see you know what I was thinking about today. I constantly have to remind myself that I'm an adult as much as I might not want to be. I'm an adult. And when I look at what the kids are doing. I'm looking at it from an adult perspective, right? All of us. I mean when you think about it, the kids might be better off in a space like you were talking about with no adult there, because they're looking at it through their perspective, right? Like their child development perspective wherever stage they're in. But like, when you have an adult who's trying to teach through that lens. Now you have, like, almost like, built in conflict, because it's hard for us to see what they're seeing. And we often forget, like, I always forget. I'm like, Oh, yeah, you're 10, like. you know what I mean. It's something that frequently irritates me because I have to remind myself. But I'm like that's pretty normal to like. Forget that you have to try to empathize and look through someone else's perspective at something. So. But it's really important to me to try to so.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: And I think that it's I think that that is one of the differences I think that Tab brings is the child aesthetic as the child aesthetic and some in the research that I was doing for my dissertation kind of I you know what is tab and what is not Tab where? Some of the questions I asked, and it was amazing how many answers were around. how the art teacher shows up in that space. And one of the things really was like, what is not tab is, you know. expecting students work to have a certain outcome. Whether that is to, you know, compliance, compliant pieces, which is why, you know, cookie cutter pieces are like, How well do you follow directions? And can you comply? Is in my head. That's what those are. But also you know, how much is the child aesthetic allowed to exist? But not. and that not in a way where I just want to abandon kids to be like. you know, like, that's as good as it's gonna get. Cause there is. There is development to be had if students are challenged. But thinking about ways, you challenge students. Am I going to tell them what to do and walk them through the steps? Or am I going to. you know, do more cognitive challenging, of saying, Have you considered some things? Have you? Have you thought about it in this way, and really come through the lens of questions and asking students what ways they've thought about, and what purposes and functions. And you know what is the view and an idea behind what they're doing. I would so much rather know what their ideas are, and they're manifesting through their art than the technical skill of how they got there. Although I completely see the value for people who are like. I want students to have enough technical confidence that when they have the idea they're not frustrated, that they can't get there. I see that as well. But like coming at the same concept from opposite sides.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah, yeah, it is certainly a challenge to try to find balance. I was. You made me think about something that happened today. I have a 4th grade student who has the technical competence in drawing. I'm just thinking, drawing right now. And today he wasn't sure what to do. So he took a piece of paper and some oil pastels, and just kind of started making some dashes with different colors. and one person saw him and named one of the lines. I forget what the line. I think it was like, Jerry. And so then he decided, Oh! And he started going around to all the people in the class asking them to name the lines, so he asked me to name a line. He asked everybody, and so at the end of class. We were talking about it, and he shared, and he was sharing this. You know what happened? And then I looked at it, and I was like, hey. has anyone ever heard of line quality? And they were like, No, and I know I've sort of mentioned it before, but not like very explicitly. But I was like. I wonder what would happen?

Because I explained what line quality was? What would the names of those lines be like if you saw a curlicue. What line name would you give that? Or if you saw a zigzag, what name would you give that? And then it was kind of like a like an add on to what he was doing. And they a lot of them. Actually, you know how like, when you look at a kid, and you can kind of tell. They're thinking about something. There were a few kids that were doing that, and I was like, maybe they'll like explore that in the future. But it was just one of those moments where it see it like from an outside perspective. If you were just like face valuing it, you'd be like. Well, that kid's wasting time or materials, or whatever or not spending their collaborative time, you know. Well, but I knew that in that moment he was having, like an experience that would move him forward in a different way. And it was just I wanted to. I always want to make sure that kids have the space to when they're not sure like lead into that. I tell them all the time, you know. I don't always know what I'm gonna make or do, or how I'm going to respond to something. So to expect you every day at 8, 45, not every day, every Thursday, one day a week at 8, 45 to know what you're going to do, and I do try to kind of like. Warn them that, hey? It's every Thursday, so you can kind of think ahead of time. But there again. they're kids. So they're not going to do that. So you know as much as I would like there to be a lot of forethought, you know, going into each day. I think it's just really special that they have the space to kind of explore those like those weird impulses. But yeah, I'm still working myself on creating environments where they can do that. And then I can connect it to meaningful other learning experiences like, even now, I'm thinking, I know at least 2 or 3 drawers on my Instagram that I've saved, that I could show them. Yeah, for him. So next time I see them I might. I might do that.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: So my, my today my today was spent in a I'm trying to. Since I've moved to Colorado, bring my licensures from Colorado, from Wyoming to Colorado. And I was licensed to be principal in Wyoming. I have my admin license there with my master's in Ed leadership and to move it down to Colorado. There's like an online training, and then an in person training. And now I have to take some practices. It's a delight. But today was spent in a full in day training on evaluation. an observation and feedback. And so thinking about tab through the lens of like when an administrator comes in and they're seeing kids make lines, you know, what is it that is really? What do administrators want to see, and every administrator in there. It all came back to, you know, student growth and outcomes. And how can you name that? And how can you show that? What does that look like? And can students name that? And what does it look like? And how can you grow educators forward? They actually called it instead of feedback feed forward? So think about where you want to go instead of this, like just looking at what has been done. But thinking about how? How can we explain what we do in classrooms when people challenge what tab is? I think, is something that still it has been a challenge. It was a challenge, you know, when Tabs, you know, for years in some of the conversations even in the early books and writings and Yahoo group conversations and things, you know. How can you justify what's occurring? Because it's different from what people have seen before? How does how can you make that experience for people coming into your classroom visible? and so one administrator today was like, well, usually, what I do is I go and observe, and then I go and find some of the kids that were in that class 2 periods later, and ask them what they learned that day, and I was like. Huh! I don't know if I could remember 2 periods later what I had done. but I think that I think that tab is that space where students are engaged enough to be able to explain what they've done? I don't necessarily think that it is the built for those. Some of those administrative evaluative structures that are really rigid. And I think that that as as educators in art in general, but especially in tab advocating for what student engagement looks like is critical to keeping administrative support in a classroom. And so I think that that's something that is a struggle for a lot of people, for administrators and for teachers. Is that how do you? What are the measurables, or what are you looking at as student growth, or how, what does that look like? And I think that that's a challenge that sometimes is overwhelming enough that people will choose not to do, Tab, because they haven't been able to wrap their head around it so.



Jen Ferrari (she/her): Do you think that we're moving in a direction. at least in art education, and for people that are evaluating art educators in a direction that's more supportive of seeing in like engagement as less than like less technical being able to kind of like you were saying like, repeat what you learned and more engagement as in the students, are engaged in the work that they have decided to independently. Like. go into and focus on, because I only ask, because in my experience, when people come into the room. they're mostly fascinated that the kids move about the space without direct instruction from me, like they know how to gather and select materials, they know how to set up their space. They know how to use them, for the most part properly, you know, like they know.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Have agency in their space.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Exactly so. I guess engagement like an agency standpoint versus like engagement. I will. I can work to really like work on my technique, and such. Do you think it's moving more in that correct.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: I think so. It'll be interesting. I know that the National standards are up for revision again. They had just. They've just finished last week a nationwide survey for input on National standards. It'll be interesting to see how that rolls out. But I this last week I went up and was getting some stuff out of my classroom, and I came across a whole bunch of books that were on the bookshelf that I inherited and so I pulled all these books off the shelf and have been going through them just to see, you know. Is there anything in them that is relevant to the courses I'm teaching, and some of them are. A lot of them are from the nineties early 2 thousands and They were. Those were the books that were the ones that were coming out when I started teaching you know, I graduated high school in 99 got my art ed degree in 2,004 and so these were the these were the books that were shaping the art, the field of art education as I was coming of age in art, education. And I would say that we have. The needle has significantly moved towards, you. Know, whole child, student agency and choice. From where you know from the discipline based space, that a lot of pedagogy came from At the same time, I think that. And the more that I'm teaching college kids best practices in the art classroom. As they're becoming future art teachers. It's interesting to see what their thoughts are on tab and choice based art education because they're coming out. I mean, they're coming out of the classroom. you know. I get them as sophomores. So they've had one year out of the K. 12 system before I see them as future art teachers, which is a kind of a wild thought to me. And how many of them like the idea of tab, but are wanting a more modified approach. Because they're not again. They haven't seen it modeled necessarily in their spaces, and although some of them I do have, I do have some students who have grown up with tab classrooms, and it's kind of an interesting to see their desire to embrace that in their own, their own teaching practice. So you know, that's been kind of exciting to see are some of these students who have come through choice classrooms wanting to move into choice. But a lot of the high school teachers are not choice educators. Yeah. So like Colorado is pretty like one of the big spaces for tab of the Us. you know Massachusetts and Colorado, I think, have some of them broadest and it's grown for sure. But you know, like that, like historically, there's a there's so many people would consider themselves tab teachers here in Colorado. But they're a lot of elementary middle school, and not as many high school. And so by the time kids get to high school, they're back in systems of. you know. this is what we're gonna do this exercise. And then you're gonna mastery project. And you know that we're gonna have.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Okay.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: This understanding of this technique because we're going to get you ready for college kind of thing and it. And then, you know, they go into, you know their foundations of studio classes, and they're getting elements and principles and things. And it's fascinating to me to see that disconnect coming in. You know, we think we're getting kids ready to be artists, and then we send them to art school and they get, you know, a lot of times they get.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): You know.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Again the color wheel, and I was just like, what on earth? Why.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Did so fun! Fun! Fact. So when I went to college, 1st of all, but when where I went to secondary school I did not. There was not a great art program, so I didn't actually enter into the art major until I was a sophomore. and when I was there I had the foundations. And I did all basically those like introductory high school classes where or projects where it was like. I remember making this like abstract painting that had like tints and shades of like cool colors, and then warm colors. And at the time I didn't really think much of it, because I had not come. I had always loved art and doing it myself. but I never had like a really strong program that I got to experience in school. But looking at it now, I just can't help but question what else I could have experienced in a foundations program to get me ready to think more like an artist. But I wonder also, that would be a really interesting study. And I'm thinking about your kids, Abi, because you get to kind of you get to know 1st of all, like their past experience with their art education, right like their exposure. And then you can kind of TAB into like what they are interested in from a pedagogy standpoint. I wonder what the relation is between their openness to likes, student, directed Learner directed. Tab program versus more the teacher directed, based on like their past experience. Because I wonder what the outcome of that would look like.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: No, it's been. It's been super. It's been super interesting. I am. It is a humbling experience to teach teachers for sure to like know that? if they you know, if they choose not to do more education, that the things that I've given them, I hope, help them make it through remembering, you know, what feels like so little. We didn't have a lot of methodology courses and stuff when I was doing my undergrad. I think I had maybe 3 art Ed specific classes, maybe 2. It felt like hardly any before I did my student teaching and so trying to like? What is it that will help them? But also, how can I give them agency in their own learning? You know. How do I? What you know? What does what does agency in art education look like? Because they're not. I'm not teaching art classes.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Hmm.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Which is an you know, like that I'm certified to teach K. 12 art. But as soon as kids graduate high school I'm no longer certified to teach them and so once they're in college, they're not. I'm getting them in lecture classes. So what is you know? What do I believe, around, you know best practice and pedagogy inside of lecture classes, and that's been something that I've been trying to navigate. And I think a lot about like Jorge Lucero, who we've had on, and what he's done around teaching practice as art and trying to wrap my head around what that looks like. That's 1 of the that's 1 of the spaces that I live in right now is just trying to wrap my head around. What does my everyday look like that will align with? How do I get students to believe that student agency is important? So you know, like what levers can I push so that students understand that their students are going to need agency. And that's important value.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): I mean, I would imagine it's a lot harder for those students who have never really had the opportunity to, you know, lean into that. But yeah, I don't. I don't know for sure. That would be a really interesting thing to find out.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Yeah, no to our listeners, just as a reminder. If you think that you have ideas that should be on top storytellers, or you're like, hey, I have advice for you. Welcome to let us know. We are getting ready to line up our 4th season, and so we are excited to we've had some people who are interested, and we've had lots of people who we've asked and like. Yes, we'll get that on the calendar. And you know that happens. But as always, we are. It is not just who we know or who we bump into, but we are open to also having listeners on our show.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah. that's the that's the special part about this is that we talk to all types of professionals who are associated with tab. And it's not just like people who have projects in the works, or they have like a certain position. I'm really interested in talking, especially with, as, as I've been told I am a person on the ground. you know. So if if you're listening and you have some stories to share with us, please reach out. It would be really great to have some tab educators that are out there and working in the field on the show, too, and we have had some, but I would love to hear from even more so.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. So we've come a long way. In the 3 years that we've been on here I know lots of a lot of guests. For folks who have been with us every step of the way. You're amazing for folks who listen to us and continue to come back also. Amazing. I'm not gonna lie. There are very few episodes that I listen to again. After I've done editing for them. I'm not actually sure if I've ever listened to any of ours twice.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): I used to at the very beginning, because I was so paranoid about each each episode and the things that I was, you know, sharing. But and I think that's something I want to make sure people know is that your story is important and it's worth sharing. And even if you were nervous. It's really important to hear perspectives of people. So if you were like me and you were, or are very nervous about something like that, then, you know, stepping outside your comfort zone. Not a terrible thing. It gets easier the more you do it. So yeah.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Yeah, it is. There's something for sure. And yeah, no, it's just been a great journey, for you know, as a as a history note. This was supposed to be a blog but we never got anybody to write articles for us. So Jen and I spent a year trying to make it happen and realize that visiting online once a month was way more fun than trying to get people to write a blog. So we decided to make it a podcast and I feel like that was one of the best decisions we've made. because it's given us the opportunity to still hang out across the country in different time zones. But then talk to amazing people who are in the world of Tab, because it is quite the amazing space to be in and for all of the folks you know there isn't, there isn't a right way to do this to navigate through this path of being tab and so, if you ever feel like imposter syndrome, just know that that's most of us do at some point or another and that while we explain what the the child does as the artist, and our space is as a studio, and how you know that. Look, what that looks like, what do artists do? Both? I think of it, both as in terms of Kathy Douglas's. I think original intentions around what her students in the classroom as artists were doing. And I, you know. looking at what they were doing and things, and also the way that I originally interpreted is like looking at whether other artists are doing and helping students to see them. There is not a set. What does the teacher do? And so that gives us the space to be ourselves inside of our own classrooms. And be, we get to be learners with our students and collaborators and facilitators. And we don't have to know all the answers.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah, you know, it's just a thought I had Kelly Beach. We happen to be friends on Facebook. So it's officially official that we're friends, but he shared. You were talking about imposter syndrome, and he shared something the other day, and I read it, and I was like, Oh, my God, that I. So I have to share this. It's a quote by someone named Charles Scross, and the quote is, you have imposter syndrome, he says, but paradoxically, that's often a sign of competence. Only people who understand their work well enough to be intimidated by it can be terrified by their own ignorance. And so for me. It's a reminder that the gravity of like what we do and the complexity that it requires to do that work. If you have imposter syndrome, I think it means that you realize that it is a challenge, but it's worth the challenge. And so everyone, I think, experiences it in some way. I do still constantly all the time. but it helps me to grow and be better. So just keeping that in mind. And, by the way, if you want to connect with other people who absolutely probably feel imposter syndrome to doing this work, then you can absolutely connect with them. If you go to [teachingforartisticbehavior.org](http://teachingforartisticbehavior.org). and if you look up at the very top, right, I believe it is. There is a little teal button that says, Join our community, and that will take you right to mighty networks, which is an online platform sort of like Facebook. But it doesn't have all the politics and the cute pictures of like babies and animals and stuff. It's just a community of educators, art educators who want to learn and grow together and figure out this crazy thing we all know, and love is tab. So if that sounds like something that will help you in your journey, I highly recommend it. It's free. I think you just sign up with your email, and that's pretty much it. And then there's different sub communities. You can be a part of. There's places where you can connect with people in your area so you can search geographically. I always said that one of them best ways you could learn is by going to see another tab educator in action so highly recommend mighty networks. Get yourself on there, if not already, and definitely connect with me, because I would love to connect with you so.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Hey? Like, thanks. Thanks for anybody who's made it all the way through this crazy journey of us. Being ourselves. This is how we. This is how we are when we are left unattended and unsupervised as we. We wander in strange ways, but we are super grateful to be here and finishing up our 3rd season. So thank you for staying on the journey with us.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yeah, thanks everyone so much. And, by the way, if we have met in person at any point in time, I've loved connecting with you. So if you are listening, and we get to meet up sometime in the future, definitely approach me. Say Hello! Tell me who you are. I love to meet new people, and I mean especially listeners of the podcast if you could stick with us this long, I would love to meet you.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: I, you know, it's same. If listen to the podcast, definitely reach out and say Hello, because it always surprises me that anybody listens.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Right. Oh, I love this.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Oh, yeah.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Well, thank you all so much for joining us, and if you're heading, if you've already headed into the summer congratulations on making it, and for those of you who are like me still in it for another few weeks we're almost there.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: Yes, yes, my kids. Last day was today. And the beautiful, beautiful thing about higher. Ed was my last week was a couple weeks ago, so.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Lucky Duck. Oh.

Abi Paytoe Gbayee: On that note have a wonderful night. Folks.

Jen Ferrari (she/her): Yes, goodbye, everybody.