

Dear Alyson,

I am not a very creative person. I admit it. But my (late) New Year's resolution has been to become more creative. I took a basic art class in high school so I know a little bit. I just don't have lots of confidence in it. With me, I always like to be the best. Perpetual overachiever. But you already knew that. So I always shy away from doing things that I might not be great at. Fear of failure. I've always had it and always will. I always hate art assignments. Maybe loathe is a better word. But for this assignment I decided to put all of that out of my mind and really try.

I decided to go abstract for this one and do the "when I think of an English language arts teacher, I think of..." one because I immediately thought of books. I think of lots and lots and stacks and stacks of books. When we began sketching during class, an image of scales wouldn't leave my mind. The word balance was in my head and wouldn't leave me alone. I started thinking about how those stacks and stacks of books and everything teachers need to teach sometimes outweigh other things they should do like inspire and guide. So, I wanted to represent an English language arts teacher as someone who had a balance of things in her classroom. I decided to draw stacks of books on one side and then had no clue what to draw for the other side. I also think of writing in English language arts so I drew pencils. Looking at the drawing, it doesn't seem like they should balance. And I felt like most of the time, they don't. But a good English language arts teacher will balance the things she's required to do and the things that she *should* do. And that's how I arrived at my current "work of art."

My goals for the piece were to open my mind and not tell myself every stroke of my pencil that I suck at anything artistic. I was definitely challenged. The drawing took me awhile to complete, but I did complete it. I am slowly learning to accept that my work doesn't have to be the best. The journey of learning is what is important, not the finished product.

My ideal viewer is probably a teacher of ELA or a pre-service ELA teacher that understands or needs reminding that getting across information and facts is not the most important thing but that inspiring students and all those other things is equally important. Even though it is tough to see how it could work, it has to.

In my next drawing, I will definitely work on the drawing itself instead of worrying about colors, etc. I'd like to try drawing people next time. That frightens me. Hopefully I will learn something before my next drawing that I would like to convey in a drawing. Maybe something important that I want to remember about teaching.

I learned that I am better as a visual artist than I think I am. I feel like I am a deep thinker and it is hard for me to make sure my message is getting across clearly through visual representation. I feel like I need to gain more trust in my audience.

If I gave the drawing to a friend I think they'd suggest making the scales more realistic, working on the letters of the word balance, making the pencils more similar, and making the books a little more realistic. I think all of these things would be very beneficial to my drawing and wouldn't hinder the message in any way. They'd probably even suggest removing the word *balance* also.

Summer Upton / Drawing #1 Process Covers Sheet / January 9, 2003

I actually thought of that myself but it was already too late. It would be hours for me to recreate the drawing without it. I just decided it was a learning experience for me. I just didn't trust my audience to know that the scales were in fact scales and the things were supposed to be balanced. I really need to work on trusting the intuitions of my audience. Better luck next time.

Summer

BALANCE

GRAMMAR
SHORT STORIES
COMMUNICATION
JOURNALISM
DRAMA
NONFICTION
FICTION
POETRY

ENCOURAGE
DISCIPLINE
INSPIRE
LEAD
MENTOR
ORGANIZE

Dear Alyson,

Drawing has always been a challenge for me. I have a complex (that I'm trying really hard to fight) about anything that I am not instantly great at, including art. In fact, one of my New Year's Resolutions has been to be more creative and to believe in my own creativity. For my first drawing, I took the easy way out; I drew an abstract representation of books and pencils. So, for this drawing, I decided it was time to attempt human figures.

When I think of students learning, I think of them learning from each other. So, I wanted to convey the feeling of group work in my drawing. So, I decided to draw students sitting around a table and a teacher as a facilitator instead of a lecturer. I began with a chair and gradually moved into the drawing that way. I worked for a good hour, lounging on my bed in my apartment, on my initial sketching of chairs, people, and other things in my drawing. Surprisingly, I really enjoyed it. I think I might even begin to sketch and draw a little more, particularly in my Commonplace Book.

My goals for this drawing were to basically step away from the comfort zone of abstract inanimate object drawing and try to draw more human forms. I am taking baby steps; my people don't have hair or faces. Their clothes aren't even really defined. I just tried to draw vague shapes. Believe me, that was hard enough! I just wanted to stretch myself and my abilities. Now, I believe that I could get much better the more I practice.

For my next drawing, I want to try to work on faces and the human forms a little more. I think I did pretty well on depth and perspective, although I'm sure it needs some more work.

My ideal viewer is probably someone who will see it anyway: another preservice teacher, an education instructor, or in-service teachers. When most people think of students learning, they picture a teacher at the front of the classroom lecturing or leading discussion. I know now that students working and talking together with a teacher in a facilitator role is how students learn. Many people outside of the education field would not know that.

I have learned a great deal about myself as a visual artist just through this class. I am learning what it's like to take chances—not only as an artist, but in life in general. It's alright to make mistakes. Sometimes you get it right the first time, but most times you don't. It's alright to make a mark because it can be erased and I can try over again. The more I work, the better I am. For me, it takes concentration to draw. I am usually very good at multi-tasking, but drawing takes a lot more of my attention.

If I gave this drawing to a knowledgeable friend in graphic arts, the four things she would probably tell me are:

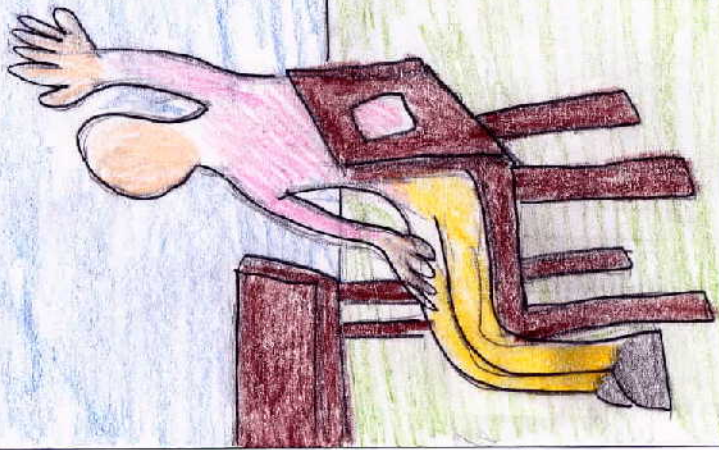
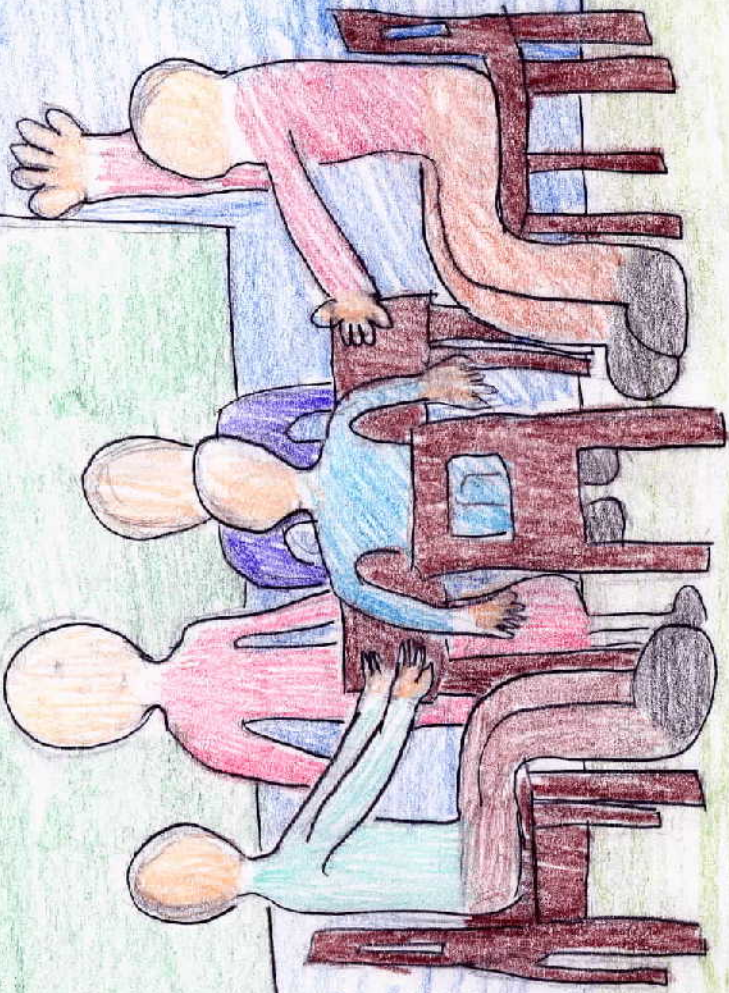
- 1) Make the drawing not look so bare...draw more "stuff" in it.
- 2) Try to make everything about a particular figure match (i.e. don't give them skinny legs and then fat feet or a fat arm and hand).
- 3) Work on drawing facial features...practice.
- 4) Work on drawing hair and distinct clothing on students...give them personalities.

I hope you enjoy my drawing. It's not much, but at least I'm getting better!

Sincerely,
Summer

Agenda:

Take Roll
Group Work
Grammar
Literature



Dear Alyson,

I took a completely different route with this drawing than I did with the other two drawings. I thought all through Spring Break about what I wanted to draw. I wanted to shape it like I would shape my own classroom setting. That was where I began with the drawing. I finally sat down and began to draw the wall and door. Then I began to draw the tables, chairs, and students. I decided that I for sure wanted them working in groups at different tables. In my own classroom, I would rather have students sit at tables than in desks. I decided to concentrate on what the students were doing and the feel of the room instead of the particulars of each student. That's why I decided to draw stick figures this time. I decided that I am definitely not an artist and could spend hours and it not look the way I want it to. And there are more important things than how good an artist I am.

My main goal was to concentrate on the particular assignment the students were doing at the time. I know that I will use some form of Complex Instruction in my classroom. I believe students have a lot to gain from it. Therefore, I decided to concentrate my efforts on structuring the assignment than drawing lifelike people. That was a huge risk for me. Structuring assignments and visualizing things are not my strong points. I just wanted to stretch myself and see where this drawing took me.

My ideal viewer would be someone that has pedagogical knowledge that is similar to mine. An inservice or preservice teacher that knows a little something about group work is probably the person that would be best suited for it. Once I finished the drawing, I figured out that I had drawn it from a teacher's facilitator perspective. I didn't draw a teacher in the drawing. I think that is a major difference from my other two drawings. I am starting to realistically think about how I want a classroom that I am in charge of to be structured. It is an interesting shift to me.

In my final drawing, I would love to work on facial expressions and making my people look more individualized and lifelike. However, I know that it would take hours and hours to get it how I would want it. I think I would rather focus on what the students are doing in the classroom and what kind of learning they are doing. I think that is more important. I would like to put more things on the walls like rules and norms and such. And I'd like their activities to be more complex in their group work. The way I have it drawn now is at the beginning of a rotation where they are figuring out what the assignment is all about. They are talking and working together. I know that's how students learn. I wanted to convey that in my drawing.

During this drawing, I learned a lot about what is important to me as a person and teacher and visual artist. For years I have been a very detail-oriented person. A perfectionist to the core. But in the last six to nine months, my personality has greatly shifted. I think that shift comes to light with this drawing. Instead of worrying about getting the body posture perfect on each person, I decided to work on the overall mood of the room instead. I have learned to "cut my losses", so to speak, and focus on what really matters in life.

If I gave this drawing to a friend who is knowledgeable about graphic arts and/or English language arts practice, I imagine he or she would tell me:

- 1) Make your lines cleaner; erase fully if you don't want a line there anymore.

- 2) Make your lines straighter; use a ruler if you have to.
- 3) Use some sort of facial expression for the people in the drawing.
- 4) Put more "stuff" in the room; classrooms are cluttered with "stuff." Show that stuff on the walls and on the floors and piled in corners.

I feel like I have made a giant leap in the conceptual part of my drawings even though I may have taken a step back in the graphic arts part of my drawing. I look forward to my conference with you about my drawings and shaping where I am going for my last one.

Thanks!

Summer

Everyone Helps

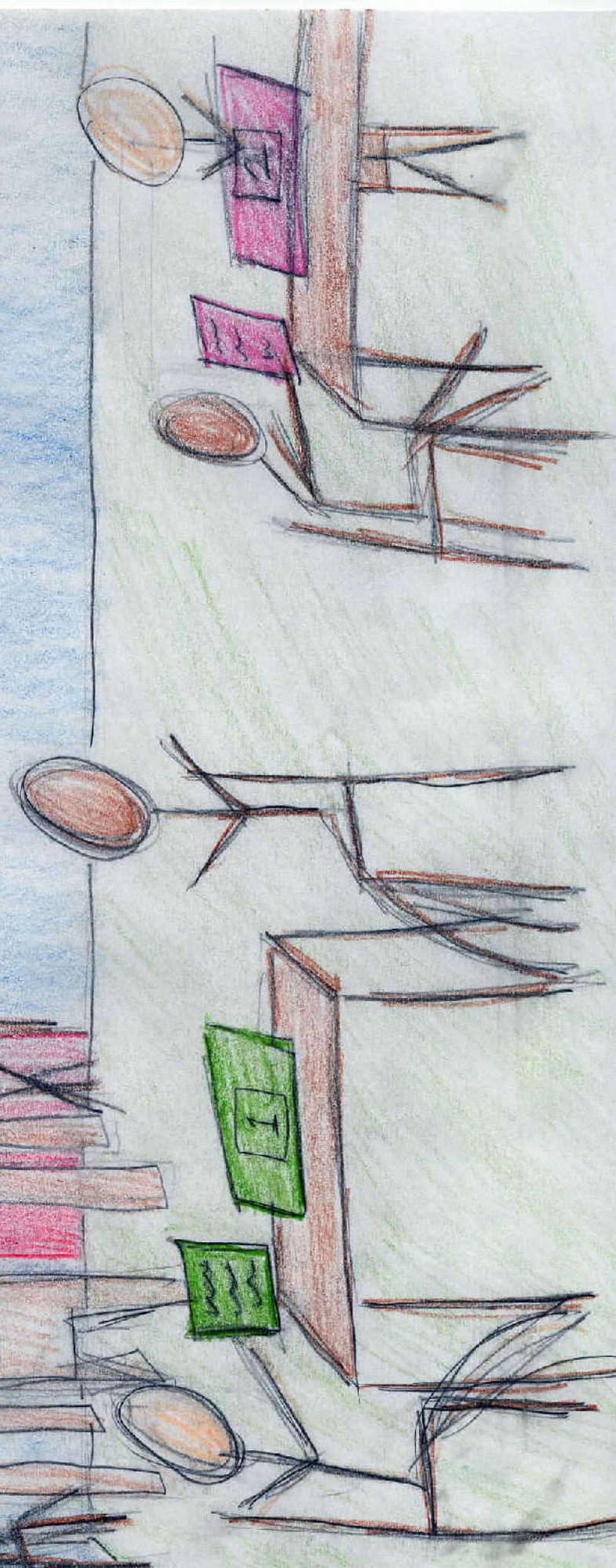
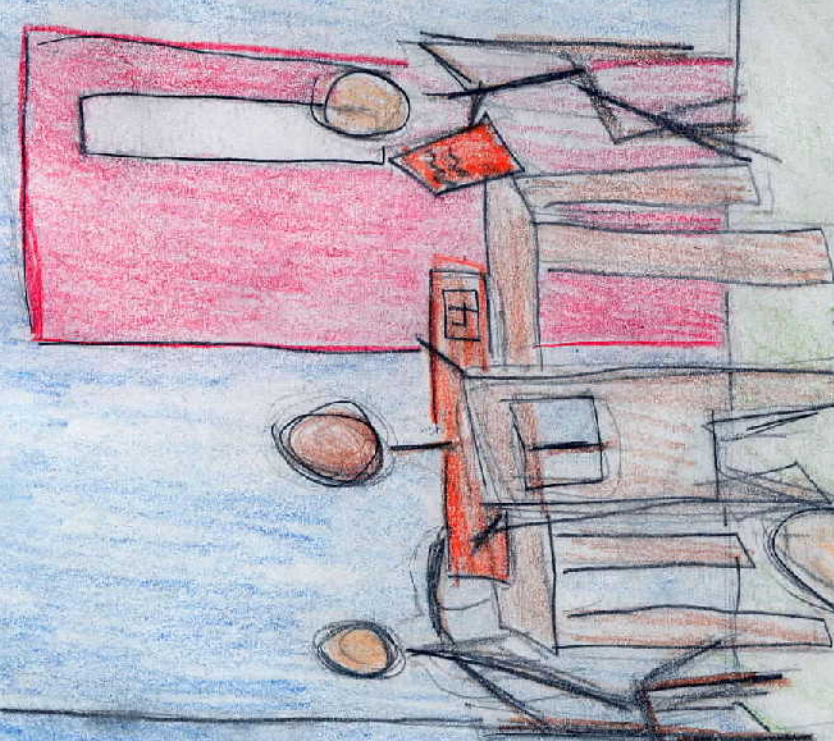
Ask for Help

9 7 6

No one is God At All

All go At

Group	Facilitator	Materials Manager	Harmonizer
1	Jack	Josh	Ratie
2	Sue	Jeremy	Bill
3	Joe	Ann	Paul
4	Mary	Kyle	Justin



Dear Alyson,

I began thinking about this drawing a lot after our conference. I knew I wanted to test myself with this drawing. It is hard for me to visualize what I want my future classroom to look like. So, I began drawing on my experiences at OMS, along with things that I have learned this school year about teaching. All my thoughts were jumbled until I actually sat down to start sketching out this drawing. I took a lot more time with just the drawing stage. I spent nearly two hours drawing, erasing, and redrawing. I wanted the layout and atmosphere of the room to come across as well as show students learning.

I knew I wanted students working in groups. I drew upon my experiences at OMS and used some of our activities and things I heard there for my conversation bubbles. My CI unit would represent the conceptual teaching for my classroom. I also wanted to represent exploratory and explicit teaching as well. I realized from our conference that I find each of them necessary when teaching the expressive English language arts. A corner of the classroom I drew is a reading and writing corner. That represents my exploratory teaching that I plan to use in my classroom. Also, I wanted to include a young adult lit (YAL) bookshelf because YAL has become so important for me after taking that class from Dr. Ash. I want students to have a safe and comfortable corner of the room where they can lose themselves in other worlds of reading and writing. I also put a podium and table at the front of the classroom as well as a projector. This represents the explicit teaching I will do. As much as everyone associates explicit teaching with a bad way to teach, I believe at least a minimal amount is necessary. There's no way that a teacher can get everything done that needs to get done without even a little explicit teaching.

I also tried to visualize bookshelves, bulletin boards, computers, and even filing cabinets. At the beginning of the semester, it was so hard for me to visualize a "real" classroom with me as the teacher with all of the "stuff" in it. The layout of my room is a lot like Ms. B's because I like the atmosphere she's created. I want to attempt to recreate the same fearless atmosphere she has in her room. Visualization like that was my weak point. Transferring my ideas to paper has always been a struggle. I challenged myself when I sat down to draw my future classroom this time, and I am overall very pleased with myself because I think I did what I set out to do. I had never used conversation bubbles either and knew I wanted to try that.

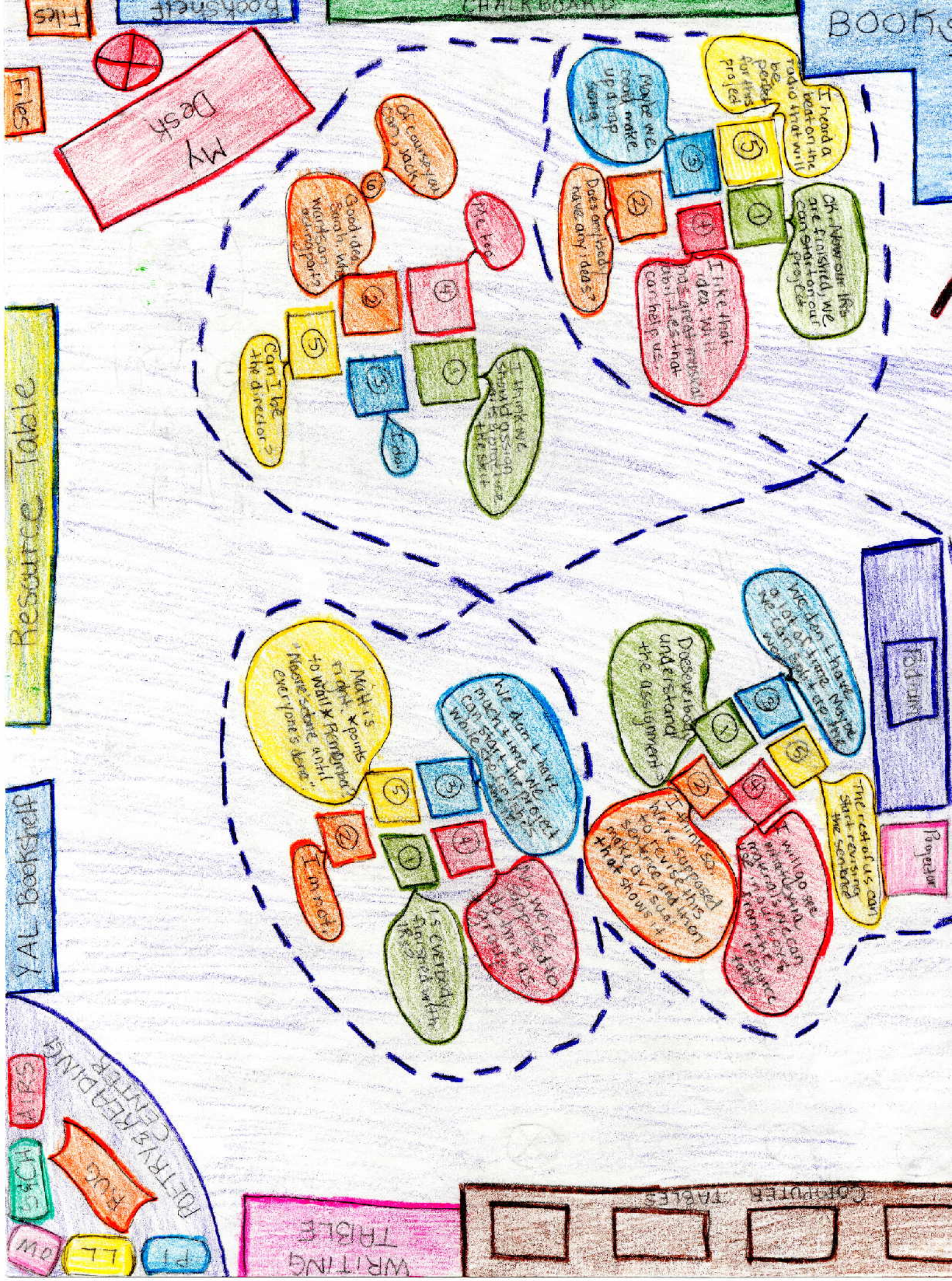
My ideal viewer would be any teacher of the English language arts. I think even any teacher could look at my drawing and see learning going on. I would probably have to point out the details and their significance though. Some might think the focal point is the conversation going on with the students, but the things around the edge of the page also have significance. All parts of the drawing are important in some way, even the colors. I want a bright, fun, and vibrant classroom. I tried to convey that with the colors.

If I had three more weeks to work on this drawing, I am not sure if I would change much. I would definitely work on cleaner and more perfect lines and writing. I would probably think of other things I wanted to add at sometime or another and would try to incorporate them into the drawing. Other than that, I am pleased with my drawing at this point.

My own goals for the drawing as well as criteria for a good visual representation were met with my drawing. I think a good visual is going to be easy to follow. However, there are things someone might miss if they just glance at the center and don't pay attention to the edges. Students learning is explicitly in the drawing, represented by the conversation bubbles. However, the teacher teaching part is somewhat ambiguous, represented by the path that I would take. The conversation bubbles represent what I would hear as I travel along the path, listening to students, taking notes, and preparing for my wrap-up.

As a visual artist, I learned that I don't give myself enough credit. I am not confident in my artistic skills at all. I know I have them in me but am always scared to try because that might set me up for failure. I have learned that if I am just patient with myself, I can get down on paper what I see in my mind.

Thanks,
Summer



Resource Table

YAL Bookshelf

POTTY & READING CENTER
RUG
AIRS
CHALK BOARD
POTTY

WRITING TABLE

COMPUTER TABLES