

Drawing as a Tool for Wellbeing at Chesterton Community College, Cambridge

By [Sheila Ceccarelli](#)

Introduction

In the summer term last year, I was invited by [Morgain Murray Williams](#), head of Art at [Chesterton Community College, Cambridge](#), to help plan the art component of a wellbeing day for all the students at the school.



Drawing as a Tool for Wellbeing at Chesterton Community College, Cambridge

Though the school had no budget for external agencies to lead sessions, and being the end of the school year, materials in the store cupboards were scarce, there was a recognition by management, and staff, that delivering strategies for students to increase wellbeing and mental health needed to be prioritised.



Drawing for Mindfulness at Chesterton Community College

Teachers were determined and highly motivated to deliver a useful, meaningful and uplifting day for the students.



Drawing for Mindfulness at Chesterton Community College

Who is Art for?

The key emphasis, when planning the day, was that the sessions should not be delivered like measured, and curriculum based art lessons, but as a WHOLE school experience, with a shift in emphasis from art being for 'talented' artists, towards it being a tool for ALL students to engage with to increase wellbeing.



Wellbeing Day at Chesterton Community College, Cambridge

Drawing for Mindfulness

The first challenge was to break down preconceived ideas about drawing and change perceptions about what it is and who it is for. In this instance, drawing had to be re-branded, re-packaged and re-delivered, as a tool for **seeing and being in the here and now**.



Drawing was to be delivered as a discipline not hungry for fixed, measured outcomes, but one seeking open ended and fluid experiences in the present - powerful, mediative and reflective.



Amazing Teachers

Three outstanding teachers delivered three 'Drawing for Mindfulness' sessions, back to back over the course of a whole day.

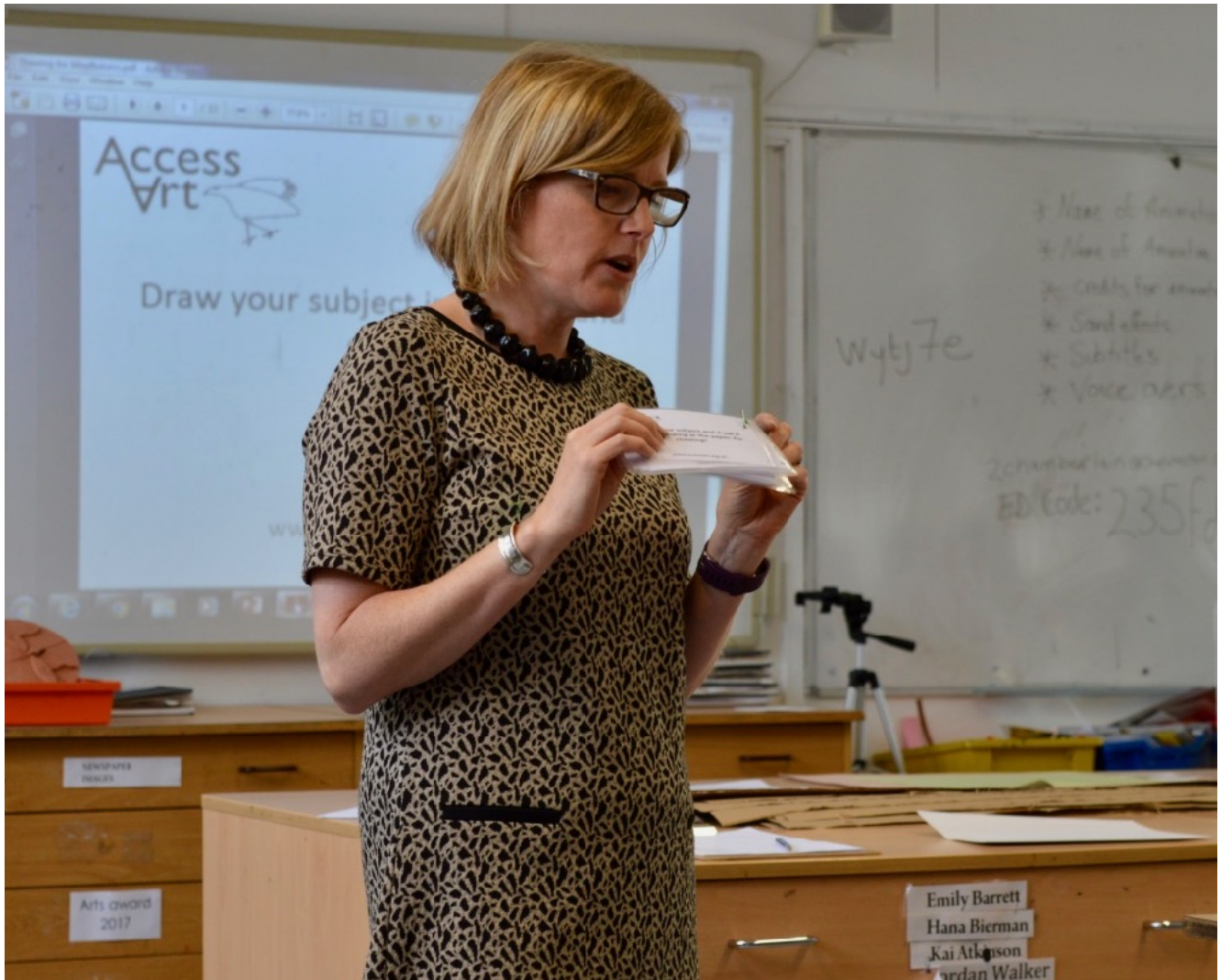
By the end of Wellbeing Day, over three hundred students had been tutored on how to draw 'in the here and now', and were given strategies on how they might use drawing as a vehicle for wellbeing.



Lucy Blake, teacher at Chesterton Community College, Introducing Drawing for Mindfulness with her own prompts

Warm up

Teachers led guided drawing exercises using [AccessArt Drawing for Mindfulness Prompt Cards](#). They set up their classroom tables with natural objects including shells and leaves, and an array of drawing materials for the students to explore.



Morgain Murray Williams introducing drawing prompts

Drawing Prompts

[AccessArt Drawing for Mindfulness Prompt Cards](#) were used to get over the white page and gain confidence in drawing processes.

They were presented as tools for wellbeing and the exploration of drawing and mark making in the context of BEING in the present.



Drawing prompts for Drawing for Mindfulness

Drawing prompts included:

Look and draw your subject in the time it takes to inhale and exhale one breath.

Draw your subject with your non-dominant hand.

Hold your pencil or pen lightly from the top (with all five fingers) and dangle it over the paper drawing your subject.

Draw your chosen subject in a continuous line without taking your pencil or pen off of the paper.

Draw your chosen subject in five lines.

Draw your chosen subject in three lines.

Look at your subject and draw it without looking at the paper. No cheating!

Draw your subject in dots and specks.

Draw your subject in scrapes and slices.

Draw the outline of your subject in one, strong gesture.

Draw your subject without blinking.

Draw your subject's shadow.

Draw your subject from inside out with no outline or contour at all (use only shading).



Rebecca Gardner leads students in guided drawing exercises



'Hold your pencil lightly in the tips of your fingers' - Drawing prompt

Subject

The drawing prompts often refer to a 'subject'. The subject is the object in front of you that you are drawing. The subject can either be natural or man-made. It can be in a room or out in nature. In the context of Chesterton's Wellbeing Day, teachers set up the room with natural objects for the students to study. Prompt cards were used to look and draw in a facilitated way.

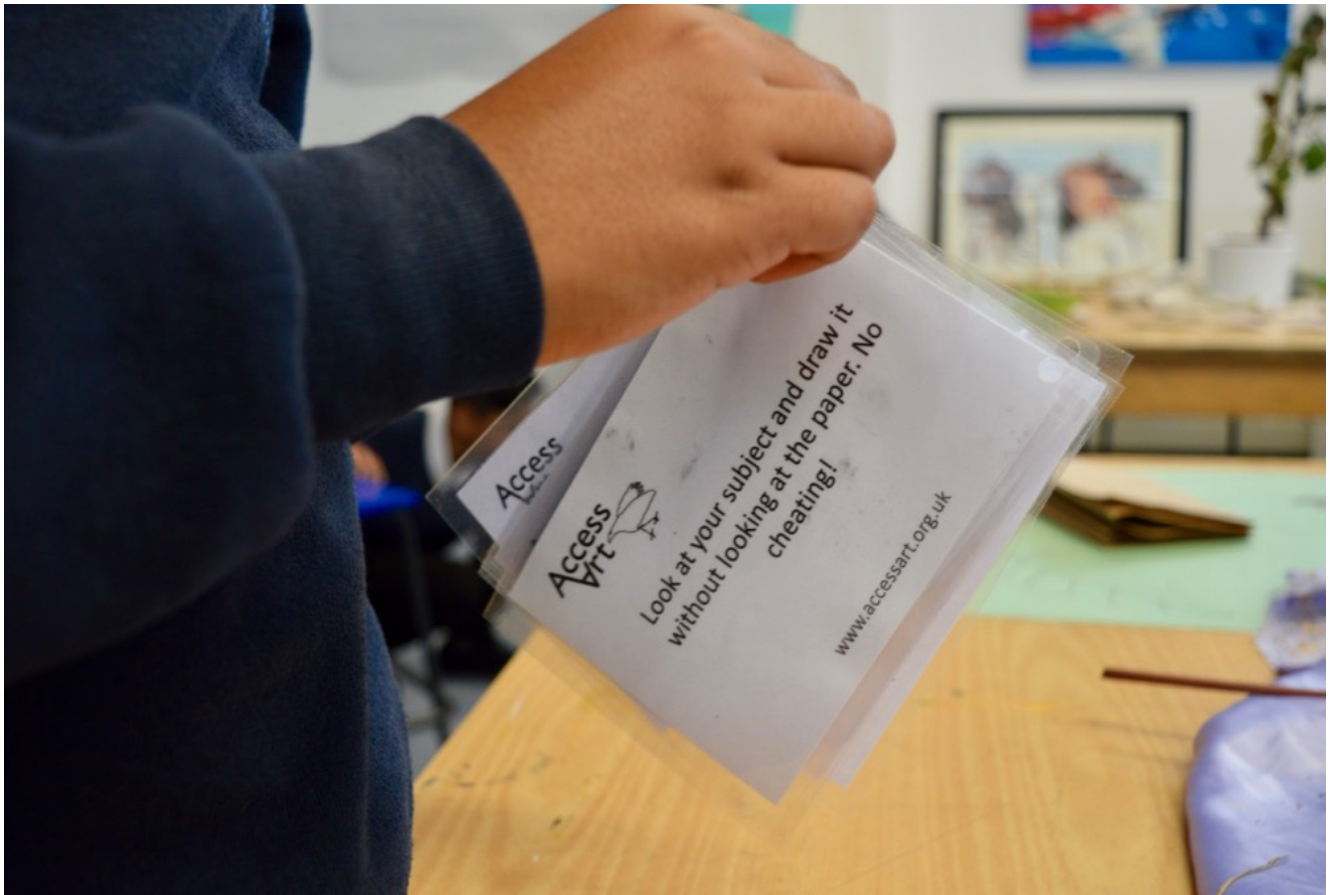
In the context of 'drawing for mindfulness', drawing is looking, studying and BEING with the 'subject'.



Drawing from a prompt - Looking at a 'subject'



Drawing for Mindfulness prompt



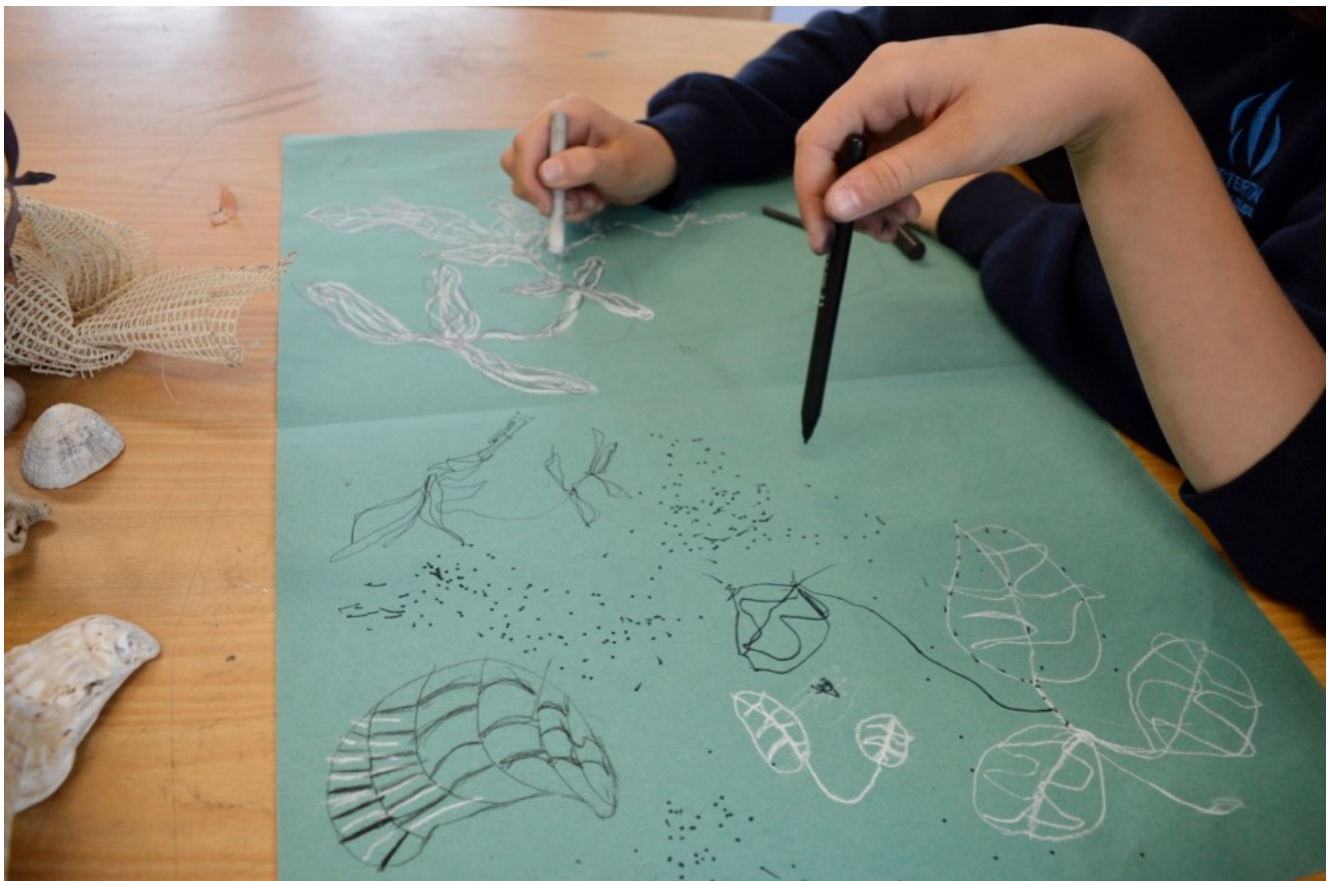
AccessArt Drawing for Mindfulness Prompt Cards

Materials

Teachers had available many drawing mediums and surfaces for students to intuitively explore.



Using materials with prompt cards

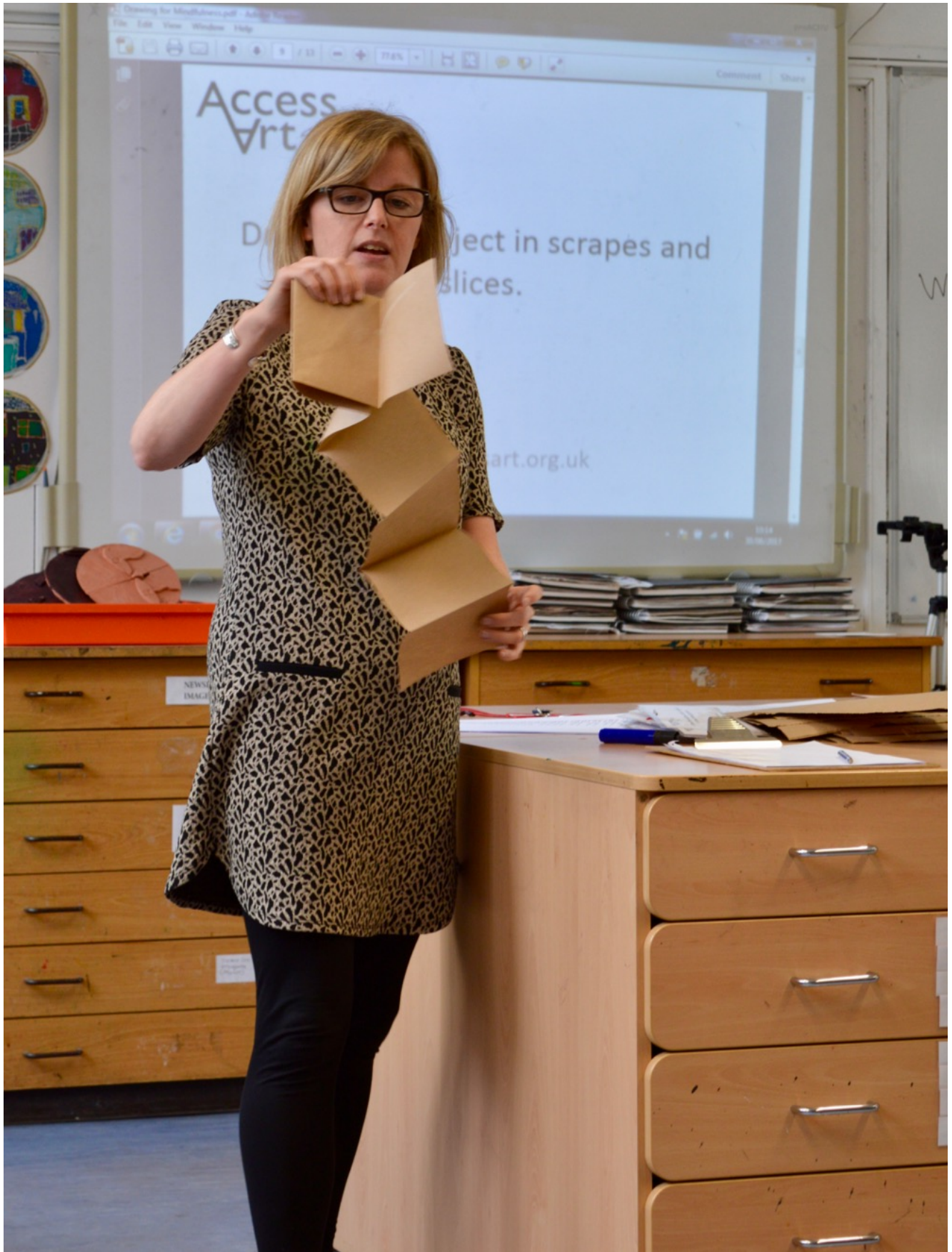




Drawing to prompts with mixed drawing materials

Making a Zigzag Sketchbook

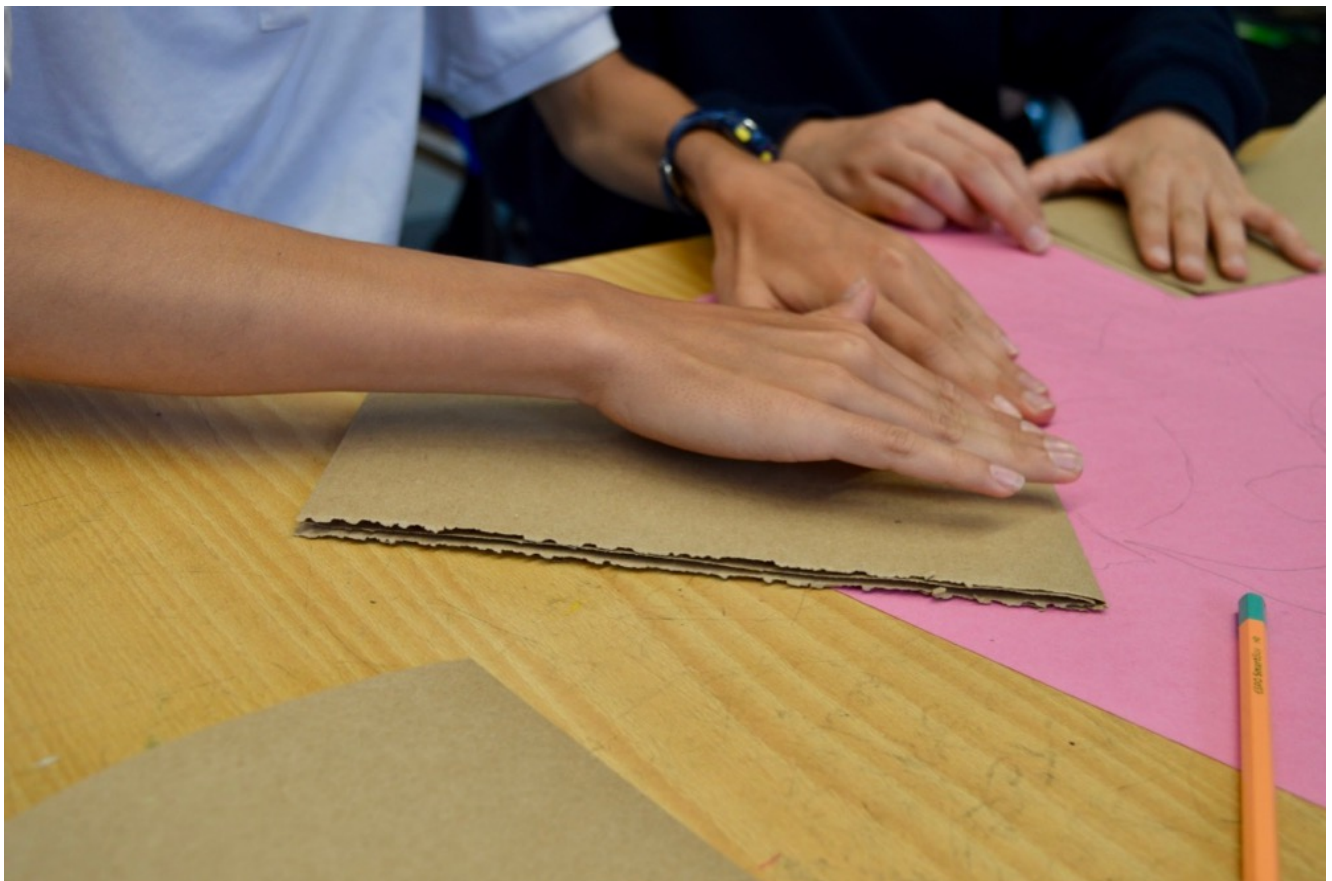
In the final part of each session, students were encouraged to work from prompts independently and create a series of drawings in a "zigzag" sketchbook. Here students were given a chance to take OWNERSHIP of the ideas and processes presented, so that they might be used beyond the classroom walls.



Morgain Murray Williams shows how to make a zigzag sketchbook



Folding brown paper to create a zigzag sketchbook





Working Alone and Final Outcomes



Working alone - exploring drawing and being in the 'here and now'



Zigzag sketchbook and a 'mindful drawing' in charcoal



Finished Zigzag sketchbooks with 'mindful drawings' at Chesterton Community College





What was the Point?

Ultimately the aim of the day was to empower students to feel confident and entitled to their own creativity and understand that creativity can be a catalyst for change, reflection and wellbeing.

Many thanks to the many students at **Chesterton Community College**, who shared their creative process with AccessArt and allowed me to photograph the sessions.

A huge thank you to **Morgain Murray Williams** for inviting AccessArt to help with the school's Wellbeing Day, and many thanks to Morgain, Lucy Blake and Rebecca Gardner for leading such inspiring and enriching sessions.

Please feel free to use [AccessArt's Drawing for Mindfulness](#)

[Prompt Cards](#) which can be downloaded by following the link.

See more [Creative Entitlement and Wellbeing](#) posts by following the link.

This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to reach their creative potential.

**Sketchbooks Made with
Screenprinted Papers**

**A “Wallpaper” Sketchbook –
Enabling Drawing by Getting
Rid of the White page**

**Using Sketchbooks to Take
Ownership of Ideas**

**Making Elastic Band
Sketchbooks with Pupils at
Philip Southcote School**

**Mayan Tabletop Eraser
Printing Project**

“Heart-Work” – A series of ‘Arts on Prescription’ style workshops for young people at Cambourne Village College with Arts and Minds; Led by Sheila Ceccarelli (Artist) and Yael Pilowsky Bankirer (Psychotherapist)

This series of workshops with students at Cambourne Village College was part of the ‘Young People’s Pilot’, coordinated and managed Arts and Minds, a leading arts and mental health charity in Cambridgeshire. The sessions were led by Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt (artist) and Yael Pilowsky Bankirer (Psychotherapist)

Landscape Painting: A Collection of Resources by Hester Berry

Introduction to Landscape by Hester Berry



This introduction to landscape painting is an exercise in looking and discovering, browsing and daydreaming.

Landscape Painting: Tone in the Landscape



In this post Hester Berry explores tone

as a crucial aspect of landscape drawing and painting.

Landscape Painting: Plein Air Painting



Plein Air painting is the practice of painting outside, normally in front of one's subject.

Landscape Painting: Colour in the Landscape



Hester Berry shows how working with colour can be broken down, simplified and approached in a pragmatic way.

landscape Painting: Expressive mark Making

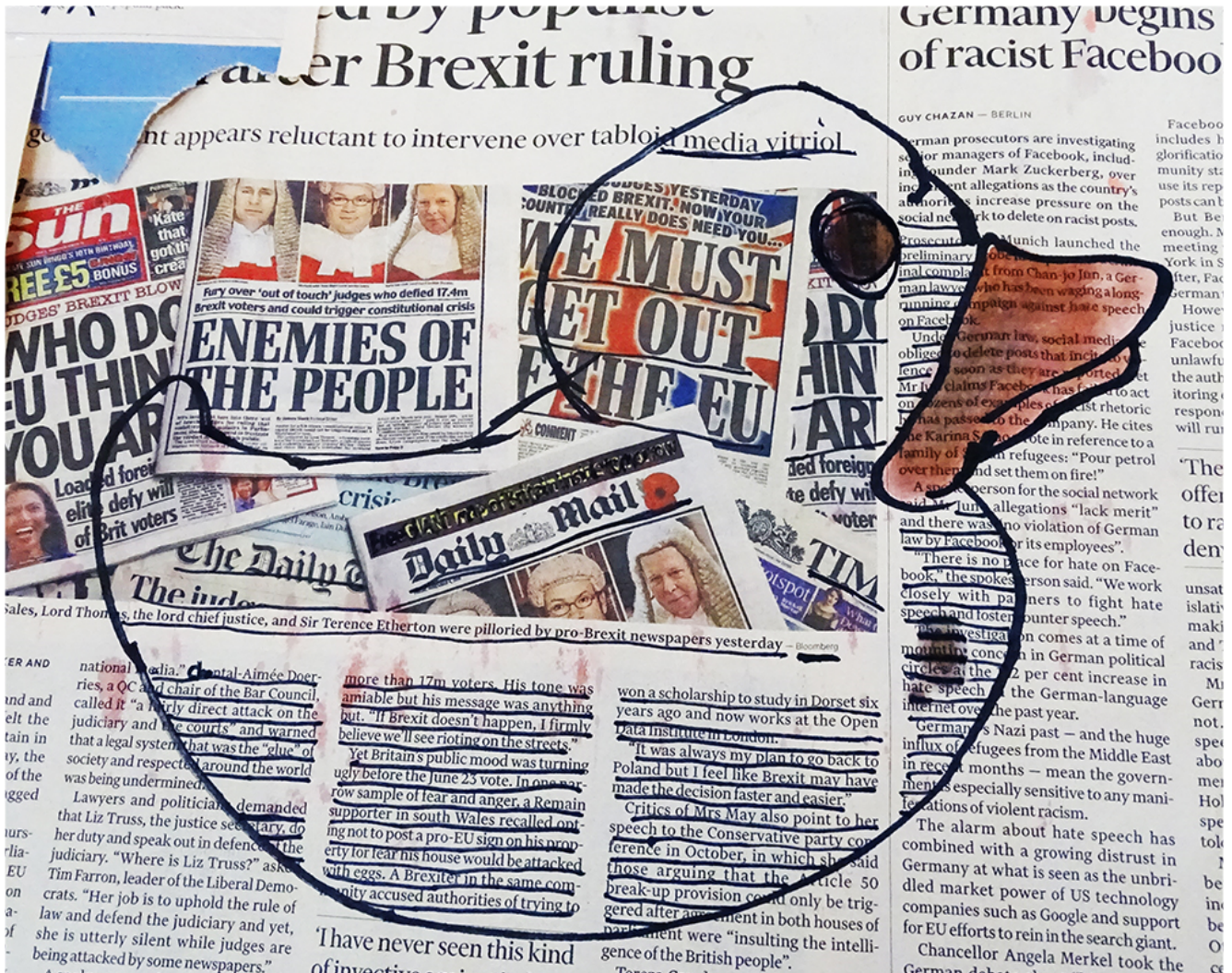


Practice and hone technical skills, use of tone and colour, observation and time spent in the landscape.

Sketchbook Exercise: Drawing Brushes with Charcoal

Filling a Sketchbook: Sketchbook Exercises

What is a Canvas?



Making drawings which compete with the background

Making a Charcoal Animation



Inspired by the animations of William Kentridge

Making Ruler Drawings



Using 2 grades of pencil and only straight lines

Drawing Brushes with Charcoal



Using varied marks to capture the qualities of brushes

Many thanks to Pink Pig International for the sketchbooks



Making Sketchbooks at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This post shares how Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt and Kate Noble from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, enabled teachers to make sketchbooks and explore them as a physical space to connect and collect ideas and observations from museum collections.

Using Sketchbooks, Drawing and Reflective Tools in the 20th Century Gallery at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This post shares how Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt and Kate Noble from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, enabled teachers to explore 20th Century paintings and sculpture, through using sketchbooks & drawing as tools for looking and remembering.

Filling a Sketchbook: Ruler Drawings

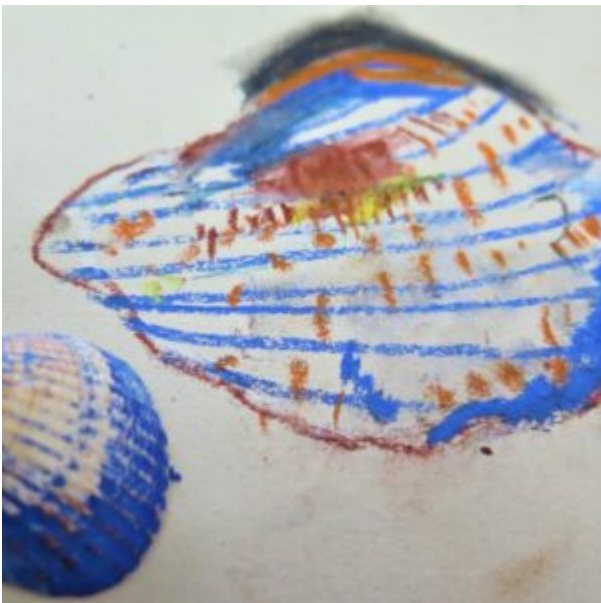
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Pathway: Exploring Form Through Drawing



[This is featured in the 'Exploring Form Through Drawing' pathway](#)

The drawing journey



See Drawing Projects for Children for more Drawing Exercises



Early Primary Sketchbook Exploration

Developing Sketchbook Work with Pink Pig Sketchbooks

Find more drawing and making ideas!



[Drawing Projects for Children and Make, Build, Create. Blackdog Publishing 2015/2016](#)

Simple Easter Sketchbook

Teachers Start the New Year with Sketchbooks

AccessArt introduces teachers from English Martyrs Catholic Primary School in Worthing, whistle stop introduction to drawing and sketchbooks as tools for recording and thinking.

Illustrating ‘The Jabberwocky’

In this resource, AccessArt contributor Eleanor Somerset, illustrates how she worked with a group of 7-10 year old pupils and another of 10-15 year old budding artists, at the Little Art Studio in Sheffield, on a series of workshops to illustrate Lewis Carroll's The Jabberwocky.

Make a Sketchbook, Ideas Book or Travel Journal this Summer!

AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class worked during their final session this term, on making their own books for summer ideas (and delightfully their parents joined in at the end of the session and made their own books too)

Teenagers Make Prompts to Overcome White Page Syndrome

Fabulously inspired teenagers at AccessArt's Experimental Drawing Class made prompts to help each other overcome the

'white page syndrome'.