

## Aliah Selah Clar Rheinstein CMT, ABT, CQI, Ph.D.(c)

CA CMT - Certified Massage Therapist • ABT - Asian Bodywork Therapist • CQI - Certified Qigong Instructor • Earning \*\*Ph.D. in Holistic Life Counseling, finishing dissertation • University Of Sedona

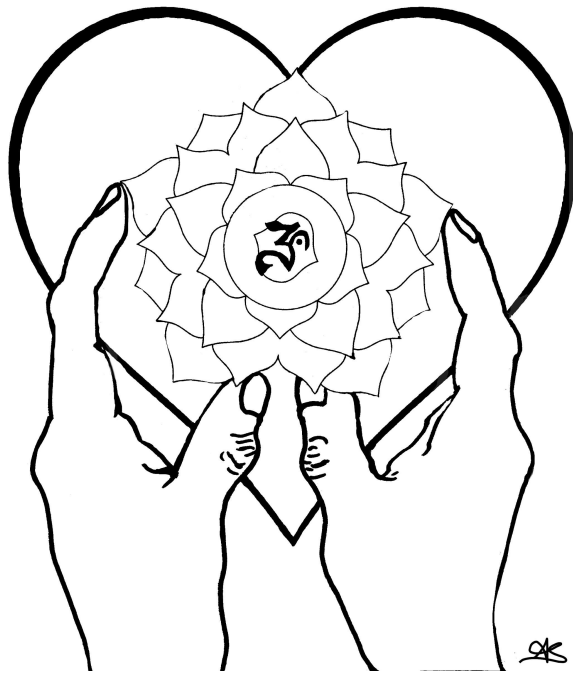
**Action Research for Ph.D.:** SEL CoCreative Arts & Communications (Social Emotional Learning)

*SEL Curriculum Developer • Educational Framework Designer*

*School Culture & Community-Building Consultant*

Developing: **Emotionally Intelligent Arts Education (EIAE)**

**Preventative & Restorative Community Building Through Art**



### Guiding Focus

Connection Over Perfection

*A classroom where every student is seen, supported, and welcomed as an artist.*

"Best In Each ∞ For The Good Of All"

### Overview

I am developing CoCreative Arts & Communications as an educational approach that integrates visual art, communication skills, and social-emotional learning to create classrooms where students feel safe to express, connect, and grow.

Through real-world teaching, I have seen how the art classroom can become a space where creativity and community naturally support one another.

### Origin & Impact

I first developed this work in an inner-city K–9 school, where I witnessed a meaningful shift in classroom culture. Students who once struggled socially began sitting together, collaborating, and encouraging each other's work.

As trust grew, older students began offering spontaneous peer tutoring and peer counseling. The classroom evolved into a supportive learning community grounded in respect, engagement, and shared growth. This transformation grew naturally as students shared their artwork, expressed their thoughts and feelings, and learned to appreciate one another's work through a simple feedback process I learned from my longtime mentor, artist and educator Tobin Keller (whose recommendation letter is included at the end of this portfolio).

Tobin called it the **Feedback Sandwich**:

1. An insight — something that stands out.
2. An idea — something you might try differently.
3. An appreciation — what holds the work together or what you appreciate most.

That early experience became the foundation for the Friendship Circle Community Accountability framework that I continue to develop today.

## Core Elements

- CoCreative Communication – listening, expressing, and collaborating with respect
- Interdependent Boundaries – developing self-awareness while honoring others
- Creative Expression – drawing, painting, movement, and mixed media
- Social-Emotional Learning – confidence, empathy, and self-regulation
- Community Practices – Friendship Circle Community Accountability™ (K–6) and Artist's Circle (7–12)

## Whole-Student Approach

Drawing from my background in holistic wellness and Qigong, I incorporate simple grounding and focusing practices to help students arrive, settle, and enter a creative flow. These practices support attention, reduce stress, and create a classroom atmosphere where students feel calm, open, and ready to learn.

## Expanding the Work

These SEL-based educational frameworks are designed to support students, teachers, and school communities through creative, relationship-centered learning.

### **Friendship Circle Community Accountability™**

A preventative and restorative community-building framework that strengthens belonging, communication, empathy, and shared responsibility within the classroom.

### **ArtMath™**

A practical visual approach to mathematics that helps students understand mathematical concepts through drawing, observation, perspective, proportion, measurement, and spatial thinking.

### **BodyMath™**

An embodied approach to learning that integrates movement, body awareness,

proportion, anatomy, and kinesthetic learning to strengthen mathematical understanding through physical experience.

### **Spelling & Typing in the Global Village™**

A multisensory approach to literacy that combines visual communication, etymology, storytelling, geography, and the choreography of typing to help students understand not only how words are spelled, but why they are spelled that way.

**Interpersonal Art Practices:** students strengthen communication, collaboration, creative confidence, problem-solving, and healthy relationships through shared artistic experiences and constructive feedback.

Building on communication practices such as the Feedback Sandwich described earlier, students learn how to give thoughtful observations, offer respectful suggestions, and appreciate one another's work in ways that strengthen both artistic growth and classroom community.

## 4-Year High School Vision (Program Snapshot)

### **9th Grade – Wellness & Self-Awareness ("The Chill Room")**

Grounding practices, movement, reflective journaling, and creative expression support emotional regulation, resilience, and a positive beginning to the high school experience.

### **10th Grade – CoCreative Arts & Communications**

Students strengthen communication, collaboration, creativity, and community through shared artistic experiences and constructive feedback.

### **11th Grade – Purpose & Peer Coaching ("Compared to What?")**

Students discover personal strengths while developing leadership, peer coaching, accountability, and purposeful goal setting.

### **12th Grade – Networking & Presentation ("Passion in Action")**

Students transform their interests into meaningful presentations, portfolios, collaborative projects, and real-world communication experiences.

## Future Vision

These curriculum frameworks are designed to support not only students, but entire school communities. My long-term goal is to develop interpersonal and life skills into the curriculum, educational resources, and teacher professional learning that strengthen belonging, creativity, communication, and preventative, restorative community-building throughout a school.

While I continue preparing to earn my Art Teaching Certification, I have come to realize that my greatest contribution is not only as a classroom teacher, but as a curriculum developer and educational framework designer who helps teachers, principals, counselors, and school leaders build healthier learning communities.

My goal is not to ask schools to adopt another program, but to provide practical instructional frameworks that strengthen the remarkable work teachers are already doing. Through collaboration with educators and administrators, I look forward to helping schools create learning environments where students become more engaged because learning is meaningful, creative, and connected.

The Graphic Design Certificate in Visual Communication is an important part of this vision. It provides the professional design skills needed to transform educational ideas into engaging curriculum, teacher resources, educational illustrations, visual communication materials, and interactive learning experiences that teachers can immediately use in their classrooms. These skills also support the continued development of educational initiatives such as ArtMath™, Friendship Circle Community Accountability™, and Spelling & Typing in the Global Village™.

Website & SEL Educational Frameworks: **CoCreativeConnections.com**

### Selected Teaching & Community Impact Highlights

- Developed and taught CoCreative Arts & Communications within a K–9 inner-city school, strengthening student engagement, communication, collaboration, and peer connection.
- Created Leadership Bully Safe Training to build confidence, communication, self-advocacy, and positive leadership.
- Designed and facilitated Peace Camp programs that fostered creativity, emotional awareness, cooperation, and community through art and movement.
- Led after-school programs, church youth groups, and private mentorship centered on creativity, confidence, communication, and personal growth.
- Integration of Qigong-based grounding practices that help students improve focus, emotional regulation, creativity, and readiness for learning.

- Currently developing interdisciplinary educational frameworks that integrate art, restorative education, communication, wellness, and community building through Emotionally Intelligent Arts Education (EIAE).

## Background Snapshot

I am an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and wellness practitioner with more than forty-five years of experience across the arts, movement, communication, and holistic wellness.

I began my creative journey through music, earning early recognition from the Arizona Songwriters Association and later receiving a vocal scholarship to Berklee College of Music.

My professional background includes work as a musician, media producer, community educator, Asian Bodywork Therapist, and Qigong instructor.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, I returned to higher education where I earned multiple associate degrees and certificates with high honors. Today, my studies are focused through Austin Community College as I continue developing SEL based curriculum frameworks that integrate art, restorative education, visual communication, and community building.

Returning to school taught me something unexpected: it taught me how to teach. By intentionally becoming a student of outstanding educators, I have studied not only academic content, but also teaching methods, classroom culture, mentorship, and the ways exceptional teachers help students flourish.

Along the way, I realized I was not simply preparing to become a teacher—I was learning from outstanding teachers while developing SEL & Life Skills into the curriculum that could support many teachers, many classrooms, and entire school communities.

My work is grounded in real-world classroom experience, including the development of CoCreative Arts & Communications, which strengthened student connection, reduced conflict, and increased engagement within a K–9 inner-city school. Today, that experience continues to evolve into Friendship Circle Community Accountability™, Emotionally Intelligent Arts Education (EIAE), and a growing family of heart-centered lessons that are designed to help schools become healthier communities.



## Rise of the Super Empaths: Soul∞Blossoming

This painting celebrates the emergence of compassionate, emotionally intelligent leaders who strengthen their communities through creativity, empathy, authentic human connection, and service.

As both an artist and educator, my work focuses on helping students discover these qualities within themselves through creative expression, communication, community building, and social-emotional learning.

Emotionally Intelligent Arts Education (EIAE) is built upon a simple belief:

Education should not only prepare students for careers. It should also help them become thoughtful, creative, compassionate human beings who strengthen the communities they belong to by helping create classrooms rooted in kindness, belonging, creativity, and friendship.

Education today needs more than stronger behavior systems. Schools need stronger communities. My early classroom experience demonstrated that intentionally building friendship, creativity, and shared responsibility can transform classroom culture. I believe those same principles can continue helping schools today.

Friendship Circle Community Accountability™, together with Emotionally Intelligent Arts Education, offers a preventative approach that complements restorative education by strengthening relationships before disciplinary problems emerge.

I believe art classrooms can become places where students experience belonging, creativity, fairness, encouragement, and mutual respect. When students create together, share their work, and learn to appreciate one another, accountability grows naturally through community.

My vision is to continue developing practical SEL educational frameworks that support teachers, administrators, school leaders, students, and school communities in building healthier learning environments where creativity remains deeply human, and every learner has the opportunity to belong, contribute, and flourish.

This is the Letter of Recommendation from my mentor teacher of 7+ years:  
Tobin Keller for my MFA at Academy of Art University application:  
On Oct 26, 2023, at 11:47 AM, Tobin Keller <[tokeller@cabrillo.edu](mailto:tokeller@cabrillo.edu)> wrote:

Dear Academy of Art University.

Please accept this letter of recommendation, copied and attached for:

Aliah Selah Clar Rheinstein, MFA Candidate, Painting & Drawing

Recommendation for: Aliah Selah Clar Rheinstein

Tobin W. Keller  
[tokeller@cabrillo.edu](mailto:tokeller@cabrillo.edu)  
831 588 3033  
Tenured Faculty/Art Department

Cabrillo Community College  
6500 Soquel Drive  
Aptos, CA 95003

I'm a current tenured faculty in the Cabrillo Community College Art Department. I've been teaching at Cabrillo since the spring semester of 1990 with other part-time work at the San Francisco Art Institute, Monterey Peninsula College, and a graduate assistant at Mills College, Oakland, CA. In addition to teaching, I am in my second three-year term as our faculty union president, past vice-president, and COPE chair.

Through teaching, collaboration, volunteering for my courses, Aliah and I have established a close working relationship based on trust and shared interest in teaching two-dimensional arts and with a co-creative mindset. I've known Aliah for more than seven years as a student and more than eight different courses including independent studies. We have collaborated on various exhibition projects for Cabrillo and public performances for private venues. Additionally, Aliah worked closely in my private studio on a personal textile arts project prior to the COVID pandemic.

Teaching at a California community college does not often lead to assisting and recommending students to a master's degree program. Most of our students earn certificates and associate degrees and some transfer to a four-year institution. During my tenure I have had the opportunity to encourage and support students to pursue a master's degree in the fine arts. I teach an independent section of Special Studies that allows a student to develop an individual portfolio that can be used for transfer. Aliah has taken Special Studies (independent by arrangement courses) in her pursuit of an Associate Degree and has successfully completed

four sections building and strengthening her fine art portfolio. Although the focus has been largely on painting, drawing, printmaking, and mixed media, her writing has been an important component. In fact, part of the requirements for Art 31C (advanced painting) was to write and present an overview of three inspirational artists of historic and contemporary importance. Special Studies requires a written project outline of content and approach for each independent project. Over the years Aliah has shared numerous examples of her writing with me. Each time exemplifying her breadth of knowledge and thoughtfulness with her words.

Tremendously motivated and spirited with her goals, Aliah has an uncommon energy in following through. She sets her sights broadly and accomplishes a lot even when faced with physical barriers. The pandemic thwarted her studio arts practice temporarily but once conditions improved, she is back, excited, and persevering with her focus on expanding her skills with painting and printmaking. Never at a loss with intellectual creativity, Aliah expands on her ideas through the hands-on process of making. She forms concepts and visions into tangible objects that achieve personal levels of originality while fearless of experimentation.

As a classroom community builder Aliah shares her experiences and insights assisting others with creative approaches, concepts, and skills. She is open, generous, sensitive, when it comes to working with a diverse group of students, as is often found in a HSI college such as Cabrillo. She expresses her thoughts both clearly in writing and verbally. Our group discussions are often an open dialog for students to share insights and inspirations about their work and that of others. And while Aliah has an advance ability to orally express her concepts she engages others by encouraging a dialog.

Without a doubt I strongly recommend Aliah for the MFA in Drawing and Painting. Her expansive experience alone are indications that she has the ability to succeed.

Sincerely,

Tobin W. Keller  
Tenured Faculty,  
Art Department, VAPA Division  
Cabrillo College