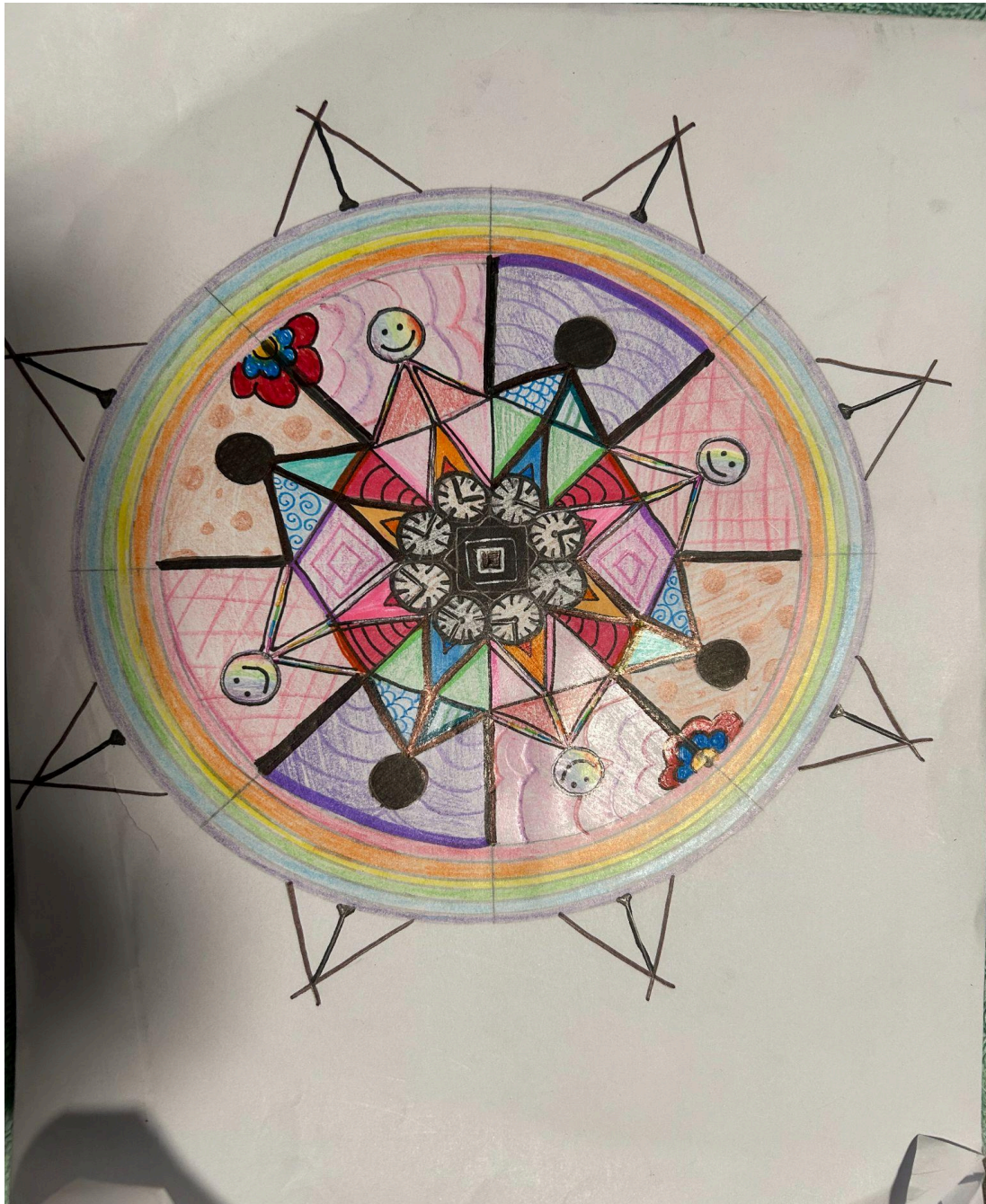


Artist statement- Mindset Mandela

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For this project I created a Mandala that shows how my math mindset has changed over time. Using shapes, symbols and colors, I aimed to reflect on my past mathematical experiences, express ideas for maintaining a positive mindset, and highlight strategies to support students in developing a positive relationship with math.

I began my Mandala with a drawing of a box to represent my closed mindset and all the times I struggled with math, thinking I was the problem and that it would never be fixed or helped. I decided to make the box darker to emphasize how hard those times in my life were. I also decided to make it the first layer of my Mandala, representing that I have since then built on my mindset.

I followed this box drawing with a set of clocks along the edges of the box to represent the extra time I needed growing up, and how closely related that is to my closed mindset. Knowing that I always needed additional time to read and understand questions often left me pretending to know what I was learning so I would not fall behind, when in reality, that was exactly what was holding me back.

When I think about my mathematical journey as a whole, the first time I remember being excited about learning math was through drawing simple patterns. Reflecting on that moment, I now realize it was how the lesson was presented that made me so excited about learning. I was so focused on the drawing portion that I did not relate it to the stress of not being able to understand word problems. I decided to incorporate a simple pattern in bright colors to represent the excitement behind learning through patterns, which supported my learning style and self-esteem while working on one of my weaker subjects.

One of the only other times I remember feeling like I belonged was when we worked collaboratively in mini groups or with an educator. I chose to draw mini stick people holding

hands along the clock circle to represent that collaborative working was the only thing holding my positive math mindset together. I made some of the stick people more colorful than others to represent those specific educators who would make that extra effort to realize that I was purposely isolating myself and pretending that I knew what was going on. These same teachers were the ones who took the time to sit down with me at recess or after school to explain math problems over and over in multiple different ways just so I could catch back up to the rest of my peers. Not every teacher noticed, but those who did made the biggest impact on my math mindset.

I then created division symbols with the head of the stickmen and added a line between each stick person to represent my university experience of relearning long division through the Math for teachers class. In this class, I relearned the beauty behind math and learned to love it all over again. I learned that there are multiple ways to get to a solution and that math can be enjoyable when your mindset is positive.

My mindset shifted because I found a motive behind what I was learning. I intend to help students find their own motive as an educator by incorporating math in other subjects to connect that math is everywhere, always, making math into mini games, and incorporating different card tricks. I also plan to use encouraging math language by asking open-ended questions, giving students time to struggle, celebrating mistakes by discussing a productive struggle, and celebrating effort over answers,

I drew a rainbow circle around the whole picture to represent a rainbow at the end of the storm; a feeling of wholeness and safety after finding out that math is as hard as you make it for yourself.

Following the rainbow, I drew teepees along the circle to represent my future intentions of bringing positive mathematical mindset strategies back to my home community to make an impact on younger generations. Lastly, I left intentional white space around the outer edges of my mandala to symbolize that my mathematical mindset is still growing. The journey isn't over. I now understand that a fixed mindset can be changed, and that math is something I can continue to grow in, especially through the right support systems, mindset strategies, and a bit of creativity.

Creating this mandala reminded me of how critical mindset is in shaping our experiences with math. Moving forward, I aim to keep a positive mindset by embracing mistakes as learning opportunities, using visual and creative approaches when possible, and continuing to be patient with myself.

As a future educator, I plan to support students' mathematical mindsets by:

- Fostering a growth mindset classroom culture, where effort and persistence are valued over speed or perfection.
- Encouraging collaboration and peer support, so students don't feel isolated in their struggles.
- Incorporating creative, engaging lessons that connect math to art, real life, and students' interests
- Being attentive and responsive to students with multiple means of learning and students who may be quietly struggling, just as some of my teachers did for me.