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Teaching: From the Inside Out

By Jeffrey Pflaum

I photograph myself contained in four corners as the sun’s rays streak across a whiteboard highlighting me in front of my lens talking to children listening to my self as inward eyes those invisible hubs focus on a teacher: Subject revealed transparent in the light face illuminated now a split image slightly overexposed.
I become the motivation holding students’ gazes feeling their feelings on a cool fall day: I see my class sitting calmly in their golden auras giving into the recognition of us in another world.
I start thinking of boundaries:
can they see inside? discover their lives?
My camera snaps away click, click, click, click zooming in, zooming in searching for the pictures through miles of imagination panning the mind’s floors from basements to attics straight into consciousness when everything erupts: Past days are recaptured explored in nature’s glow reflecting off the whiteboard onto me and to the children.
These eyes wander all over
following the phantoms
haunting my students
as a long afternoon
of the blues unfolds:
Their penetrable orbs
expose one troubled tale
hidden behind another
humbling me instantly
through hostile winds
of oppressive years.
I am jammed
between coats of paints
on classroom walls
working out conflicts
coming from every corner:
I
am
the
stick
figure
spinning
disoriented
disappearing
ready
to
roar
into
my
lens.

These three photos were all taken by the author, as described in his poem.

Jeffrey Pflaum is a teacher-researcher-developer-experimentalist who has taught elementary/middle school students about their creativity and everyday lives. By helping kids understand their creative side, to be self-aware, focus, and discover self-motivation independently, they realize an organic purpose for learning. Once children penetrate these inside worlds, they begin to see themselves, others, and the world in fresh, imaginative, perceptive ways and recognize the possibilities in life. Coming this spring is my Emotional Intelligence and Social and Emotional Learning Project written for the Texas Home School Coalition website featuring over 135,000 members.