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## Teaching: From the Inside Out

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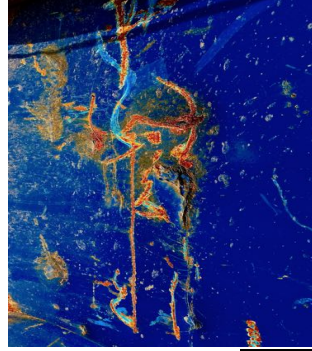
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# Teaching: From the Inside Out

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.