

Undergraduate

Art Therapy

Educators



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

Welcome to the 2026 Summer Edition of the Undergraduate Art Therapy Educators Newsletter. This biannual publication, released each summer and winter, aims to support and connect those involved in undergraduate art therapy education. Inside, you'll find information on upcoming events, emerging trends, pedagogical topics, and program highlights. We invite contributions and reflections on diverse topics and voices, and hope this newsletter fosters a sense of community, collaboration, and shared purpose in our field.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor	2
AATA Undergraduate Committee Updates	3
Why Thesis Matters	5
Showcasing Senior Art	6
Culminating the Academic Journey	7
Lived Experience & the Art Therapy Classroom.	8
Tending a Creative Salon	9
Upcoming Events	10
Call for Submissions	12

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings as we move through the height of summer and the threshold of the solstice, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. In New England, where I am based, this season is marked by the resonant buzz of June beetles, the calls of gulls overhead, and the salt-tinged air drifting in from the Atlantic. It is also a time, within the academic cycle, of reflection and renewal—catching up on writing projects, shaping new ideas, preparing upcoming courses, and drafting syllabi for the year ahead.



Photo of Krystal Demaine

I am pleased to share this Summer issue, which brings together reflections from the spring semester, student thesis and capstone work, and considerations of peer support as an essential dimension of pedagogy in the arts therapies. These contributions speak to the depth of learning, creativity, and relational engagement that continue to shape our field. I am deeply grateful to all contributors whose work has made this 2026 Summer issue such a pleasure to curate.

As you read, I hope you find inspiration in the ways our community continues to think, teach, and create together. I also warmly invite you to consider submitting to our Winter 2026 issue, with a deadline of January 15, 2026. Thank you for your ongoing presence, generosity, and commitment to this vibrant community of educators.

Warmly,

Krystal Demaine, PhD, REAT, MT-BC, RYT
Professor of Expressive Therapies, Endicott College
Editor, UGAT Educators Newsletter



AATA UNDERGRADUATE COMMITTEE UPDATES

AATA's Undergraduate Committee (UG) has been actively working on several initiatives to support and advance undergraduate art therapy education. Here is a brief update on our current projects:

We have two new undergraduate student representatives, Sophia Rogers (Taylor University) and Wren Morales (Temple University). As student representatives to the committee, Sophia and Wren will represent the undergraduate student voice on the committee. We look forward to their contributions.

Educator Meeting: The annual educator's meeting will take place on October 14 from 1-4pm EST. This session will be available in person at the AATA Conference or on Zoom. Anyone is welcome to attend, and there is no cost. If you are interested in joining, please [register here](#).

AATA Conference Dinner: We are planning an undergraduate educator dinner on Wednesday, October 14th (location to be determined).

AATA Conference Marketplace Fundraiser: We are also planning a fundraiser at the marketplace to raise funds to pay for the AATA memberships of our student representatives. Please visit our table- and if you would like to donate items for our marketplace table, please contact meera.rastogi@uc.edu.

What follows is the chair's report on the working groups:

- **Career Options Document Working Group** (Workgroup Chair: Heather Denning): The Undergraduate Guidelines Workgroup has drafted a new career options document (formerly Draft Appendix A of the UG Guidelines) for undergraduate students. This document will provide students, educators, and advisors with job titles for bachelor-level graduates.(Career Options Working Group: Heather Denning, Jennifer Schwartz, Michelle Pate, Jonathon Haag, Ryan Kirkpatrick)
- **Graduate School Education:** (Seung Yeon Lee, Ashley Hartman, and Cathy Goucher): The committee reviewed applications for our two undergraduate student representatives. The committee will continue to gather information from graduate programs about admissions priorities and expectations for prospective applicants, to inform undergraduate educators and students. Additionally, the committee will examine how graduate programs are currently structured and how they facilitate culminating projects. Finally, the working group plans to monitor and report on changes related to ACATE standards and graduate program admissions practices, with updates anticipated in Spring–Summer 2026. We will also oversee the application process for our new call for undergraduate student representatives.

- **Undergraduate Awards** (Michelle Pate): Our proposals for an Undergraduate Educator Award and Student Award are currently being reviewed by the AATA Board.
- **Newsletter** (Krystal Demaine): Krystal continues to serve as the newsletter editor. Thanks to those who submitted articles. We welcome additional brief articles about your programs, teaching ideas, students, and more.

We have several new subcommittees starting in September. These include:

Drop-In Sessions for Educators: These informal sessions will provide a time where educators can drop in to seek information, discuss ideas, or meet with the committee.

Professional Certification Options: This subcommittee will create a document of different, professional certificates that will make undergraduates more marketable and eligible for specific jobs.

Join us on Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/12941510777576>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/undergraduate_arttherapy/

We invite you to connect with us—share ideas, offer feedback, or get involved.

Warmly,



Meera Rastogi (meera.rastogi@uc.edu)
Chair, AATA Undergraduate Committee



Cathy Goucher
Vice-Chair 2025-2026



Jackie Wilson
Co-Vice-Chair 2026-2028



REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGY

Why Thesis Matters: Cultivating Creative Scholars in Undergraduate Art Therapy

I teach at a liberal arts college where every senior, regardless of their major, completes a year-long culminating project; thus, a senior thesis, with different instruction models and methods determined among schools and professors who taught the course. Five years ago, there was a motion to restructure senior thesis, and departments were asked to teach a research component in the fall and to choose between a senior capstone or a senior thesis to be taught in the spring. I elected to maintain the thesis model for our undergraduate Art Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy students. While other arts programs in my school of Visual and Performing Arts, including Studio Art, Photography, Graphic Design, and Performing Arts, all transitioned to a capstone model, I felt that a traditional thesis would better serve our students' future academic and professional development.

Many people asked me why I chose a thesis model over a capstone for our students.

As allied health professions that integrate the arts, Art Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy occupy a unique space between creative practice and scholarship. I believed that learning to conduct and write a formal five-chapter thesis with an introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion would provide students with a foundation for graduate study and the possibility of publishing their work. In fact, several students have gone on to present and publish research developed through this process.

In my 14-year tenure teaching in this program, I have required students to conduct an arts-based heuristic study, investigating human need across the lifespan through creative inquiry and personal experience. Working within one or more artistic modalities, students immerse themselves in a studio practice for two to four months, allowing the art-making process itself to become a vehicle for discovery. By March, they have typically generated both their artistic findings and creative work. They then write the methods, results, and discussion chapters of their thesis, which are added to the introduction and literature review they wrote in the fall, all in one seamless PDF document.

In April, the work moves from the page into public view through exhibitions, installations, and performances. The resulting projects are often compelling, socially relevant, and artistically sophisticated—demonstrating how creative practice, research, and scholarship can inform and enrich one another.



Krystal Demaine, PhD,
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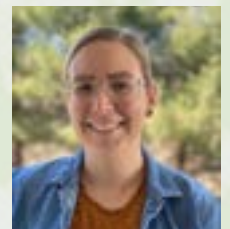
REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGY

Showcasing Senior Art

Each Spring, all Marywood University (Scranton, PA) Senior art majors participate in a collaborative Senior Art Show showcasing their artistic experiences and expressions throughout their Undergraduate studies. This year, on Saturday, April 18, 2026, 13 of the 14 graduating Senior Art Therapy majors participated, presenting their unique perspectives and reflections on their creative growth and development in Art Therapy.

Our students demonstrated not only their craft but also a deepened understanding of the field of Art Therapy, using their individual processes as a form of personal art exploration.

Marywood University's Pre-Art Therapy undergraduate program supports students to continue their artistic endeavors while introducing them to foundational Art Therapy theory, approaches, and applications. Students complete a 90-hour internship which allows them to work alongside a Board-Certified, Registered Art Therapist, visiting various local community organizations. This course and their Senior Art Show serve as their capstone projects, preparing them for further Graduate Education.



Pictured, Top row, left to right: Elizabeth Gething, Jackalynn Wilson, MJ Haynes Bottom row, left to right: Jenna Zerilli, Tatiana Amaral, Madi Grose, Oliver Lampke, Lila Anderson, Chloe Kiernan

Submitted by
Jackalynn Wilson,
MA, ATR-BC
Instructor of
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Therapy, Marywood
University
UGAT Ed Committee
Vice-Chair

REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGY

Culminating the Academic Journey

As an undergraduate student, I was part of a small fine arts department that created culminating books for graduating seniors. These books thoughtfully showcased each student's artwork alongside elements of their personal and creative journey. They served not only as a celebration of artistic growth, but also as lasting keepsakes of a formative time. To this day, I continue to cherish those books. When I joined Lesley University, I was inspired to bring a similar tradition to our art and expressive therapies program.

My goal was to provide graduating students with a tangible reflection of their creative development, their dedication to the field, and the community they helped to build during their time here.

Each spring semester, our students take the initiative to design and produce these culminating books. The result is a meaningful collection that honors both their artistic work and their commitment to the profession. Over time, we have seen that these books resonate not only with students, but also with their families and friends, who value the opportunity to witness and celebrate this achievement.

What began as a meaningful internal tradition has also grown into an effective way to share the strength of our program more broadly. These books now serve as a powerful representation of our students' talent and the vibrant, supportive community that defines our program. Take a moment to see the final culminating book <https://canva.link/2hahr63yui1sjt6>



Submitted by Michelle Pate, DAT, LCMHC, LPC, ATR-BC
Associate Professor, Art Therapy
Lesley University
UGAT Ed Committee

REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGY

Lived Experience and the Art Therapy Classroom

How do we help students navigate their mental health when it's the inspiration for their academic journey? Within undergraduate art and art therapy classrooms, there is an emotional labor required that often goes beyond typical undergraduate college coursework. Lived experience surrounds the work and exists within it.

I listen closely to my student's stories, paying attention to their subtle shifts in energy and my inclinations to disclose aspects of my personal life to affirm their experiences.

My story shares common themes with many of theirs. Growing up in Overland Park, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, like many, I participated in athletics. The summer following my junior year of high school, after losing the baseball state championship, I suffered a panic attack during a summer league game. The culmination of many factors, this defining and isolating incident marked my last game. Overwhelmed with fear that it would happen again, I turned in my uniform. My baseball life was over, and the beginning of my journey into the world of mental health had begun.

Now, 30 years later, as an assistant professor and the program coordinator of ASU's undergraduate art therapy program, nearing 12 years in recovery, I find there is no shortage of mentoring and teaching opportunities to share my lived experiences. At semester's onset, I remind my students that my role in our relationship is that of an educator, not a therapist. Establishing clear boundaries within a healthy sense of containment is requisite. I err heavily on the side of caution when it comes to personal disclosure around my sobriety.

However, I find myself asking: Is it not my role as an educator, and not a therapist, that might give me some passage into discussions that could ethically and responsibly convey certain aspects of my journey in order to provide support and affirmation that is more personal than case studies or theory? Is my recovery identity worthy of sharing, considering so many college students are navigating addiction? These are questions that I wrestle with and consider worthy of ongoing reflection and dialogue in academia, art, and mental health.



Ryan Golden Kirkpatrick, LAC, ATR-P
Assistant Professor of Art Therapy, Arizona State University
AATA UG Ed Comm

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Tending a Creative Salon Across Time and Distance

Seventeen years ago, the four of us were expressive arts therapy doctoral students at Lesley University. Today, we are undergraduate and graduate arts therapy educators living and working across Indiana, West Virginia, Massachusetts, and Israel. While geography has carried us in different directions, we have continued to tend the relationship that began in graduate school, gathering every other Sunday on Zoom to create, reflect, write, and support one another. Like a well-loved garden, this creative community has been nourished through shared experiences, mutual curiosity, and a commitment to staying connected.

Over the years, our salon has become a space for peer supervision, artistic inquiry, scholarly collaboration, and personal support.

Together, we have navigated teaching challenges, clinical questions, writing projects, life transitions, joys, and losses. Grounded in our shared belief that the arts offer a vital pathway to reflection, insight, and connection, we continue to engage creative processes as a foundation for supervision and teaching. During the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, our gatherings became an essential source of creative sustenance and belonging.

This summer, the fruits of our collaboration came into bloom through an unexpected opportunity. We were invited to serve as guest co-editors of a special issue on Arts-Based Supervision for The Arts in Psychotherapy (Elsevier). The issue features ten articles exploring innovative approaches to arts-based supervision across the creative arts therapies.

As educators, we hope to cultivate in our students the same spirit of creative connection that has sustained us. Like branches extending from a shared root system, may the relationships formed in training continue to grow, intertwine, and bear fruit long after graduation, offering future generations of arts therapists a source of creativity, support, and collective wisdom.



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Jill McNutt PhD, LPC, ATR-BC
Director, Art Therapy & Counseling
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Krystal Demaine, PhD, MT-BC, REAT
Professor of Expressive Therapies
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Spark Art Therapy Educator Collective Virtual Event August 14 and 22

The Art Therapy Educator Collective's mission is to ignite that spark that encourages sharing, learning, and co-creating spaces that are accessible to all art therapy educators. Through collaboration, we aim to better serve students and strengthen the profession.

Our goals in creating this space include:

- Updating practices in pedagogy and supervision
- Building a supportive network of educators
- Sharing resources

Interactive teaching sessions will be held on Zoom. Participants will collaboratively build shared Google Drives, creating take-away resources. There will also be time to network in innovative virtual spaces hosted on Spatial/Remo, where you can move freely to connect with other art therapy educators or join virtual tables focused on specific topics.

Join us for \$15, which includes both days and 17 CEUs less than a dollar per CEU

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/SPARKArtTherapy>



UPCOMING EVENTS

Call for Papers and Attendees!
Buckeye Art Therapy Association (BATA) Symposium
November 5–7, 2026
Mt. Vernon Estates, Ashland, OH
"Amplifying Expressive Therapies"

www.buckeyearttherapy.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

*We hope to see you at AATA's 67th Annual Conference:
Rooted and Rising!
October 14-17, 2026
Charlotte, NC*



**AATA's 57th
Annual Conference**

**ROOTED
AND
RISING**

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We accept **text and imagery** on a wide array of topics, including upcoming events and announcements, reflection or opinion papers, and new initiatives in undergraduate art therapy education and pedagogy.

Submissions for the Winter 2026 issue are due on January 15

Please upload your submission to the Google Form:
<https://forms.gle/JpfuqG8q6iNcJjXR9>

