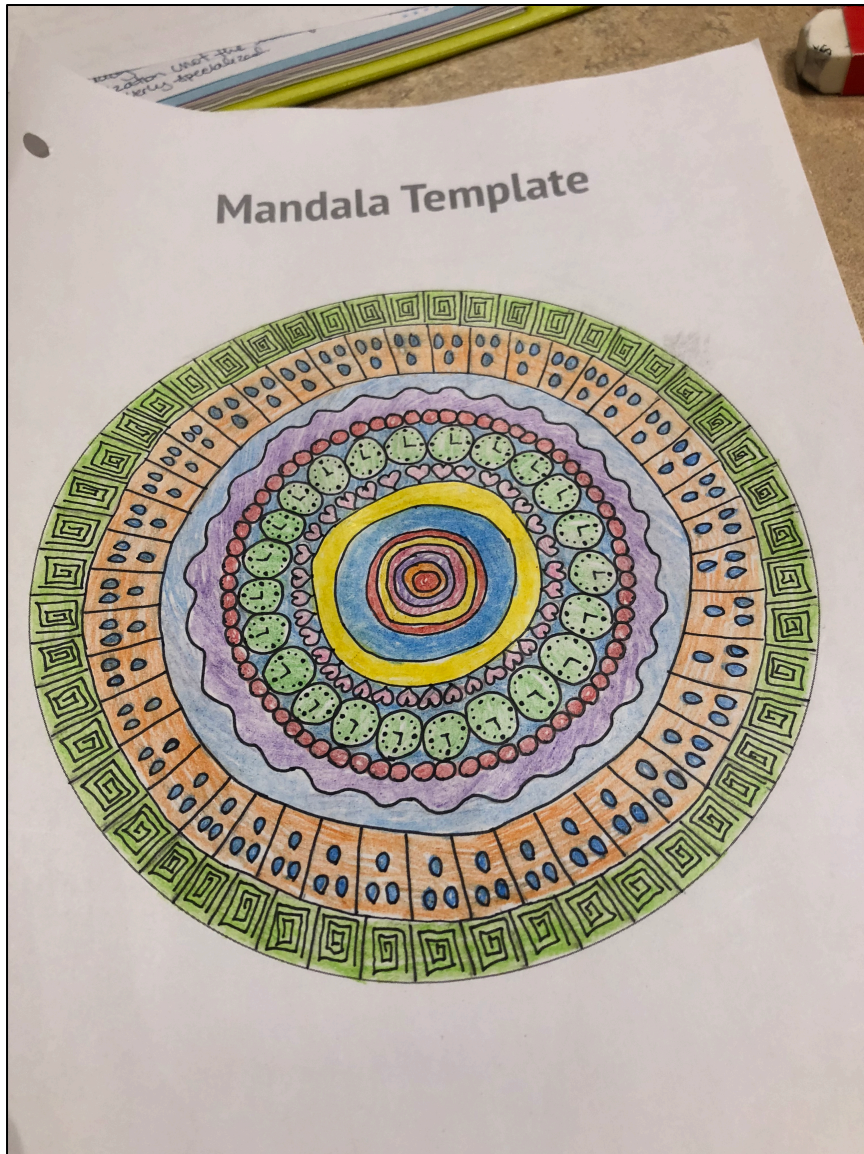


Melissa Green
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Artist Statement

My math story starts from a place of frustration and embarrassment, which is symbolized by the red circles in the mandala representing my self-conscious face and the square mazes, representing the chaos of frustration that filled almost every day of my math education. Represented by the clocks is one of my strongest memories around math in elementary school: never completing “mad minutes” and then publically having to share my test score in the class when my name was called. I remember being pushed through each unit; never given enough time to practice

the concept until it connected in my brain and the pathways were created. The clocks also represent time, both this lack of time and also the gift of time that came later on in my math journey. My nights of homework were filled with tears as I tried to get through the days math work with the layers of homework sheets and frustrations increasingly growing. This time in my life is captured by the rectangles symbolizing homework and the ovals that represent teardrops within the rectangles symbolizing my emotional state and feelings towards math. These early experiences told me that I was not good at math and led to years of dreading numbers.

I began to see that I was capable of learning math when I started helping others with math. Stories are shared about me teaching my brother the whole grade 10 math curriculum in the week before his provincial exam; he was going to fail the course if he didn't do extremely well on the exam. I remember things connecting in my brain as I tried to find ways of explaining to him what the textbook was trying to teach. I've represented this through the yellow ring, yellow being the colour I feel when things begin to connect. At the same time I was experiencing what happens when math begins to "click", this was discovered through teaching and was transformative for me. This is represented by the blue ring connecting with the yellow ring to form a larger ring within the mandala. At the same time as these connections were beginning a patient and caring teacher, symbolized by the hearts, arrived in my life. Mr. Klugie quickly realized that I needed to be able to repeat a concept many times in order to understand it and be able to use it. There was time, symbolized by the clocks, and there was patience. This process provided the opportunity for math to build upon itself and begin to connect. One of the keys to the change in my math experience was repetition, which is symbolized throughout the mandala as patterns repeat themselves and connect together.

While my math journey was one of struggle, symbolized by the blue wave line, I hope to empower my future students to know that they are good at math, symbolized by the purple wave line. Through the process of learning how to teach math with a new outlook and new strategies I know that I can continue to hold a positive mathematical mindset that will inspire the development of positive mathematical mindsets in all of my classrooms. I want to equip students to embrace mystery and mistakes, to try again and again and again, to not have a fear of failing and to never be embarrassed. I hope my students know that math problems can be solved in many different ways, that our brains are growing while we are exploring and trying and that they will be supported to embrace the confidence that each of them can find within them. I will strive to provide my students with the time they need for the connections to be discovered. I hope to create a classroom environment where we are all working together, students and teacher, to discover, create and be inspired. The growing circles in the centre of the mandala represent the layers and strategies that I hope to bring into my future classrooms, based around inclusivity and encouragement.

The imperfections throughout the mandala represent the imperfections of my math journey and the areas I will continue to develop, revise and honour throughout my life as a teacher.