

*be like water ~ the way of emergent
strategy in library instruction*

CCLI 2026



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conversations*

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*large-group
conversation*



introductions



Leah Morin

she/her

Information Literacy Librarian
Michigan State University

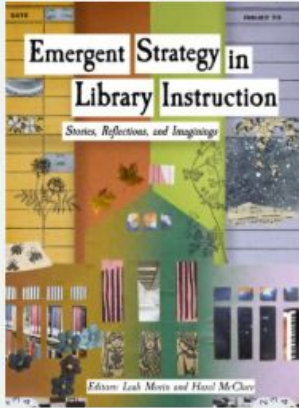


Hazel McClure

she/her

Head of Research, Instruction,
and Outreach
Grand Valley State University

our book



Emergent Strategy in Library Instruction

Stories, Reflections, and Imaginings

Editors: Leah Morin and Hazel McClure

Price: \$75

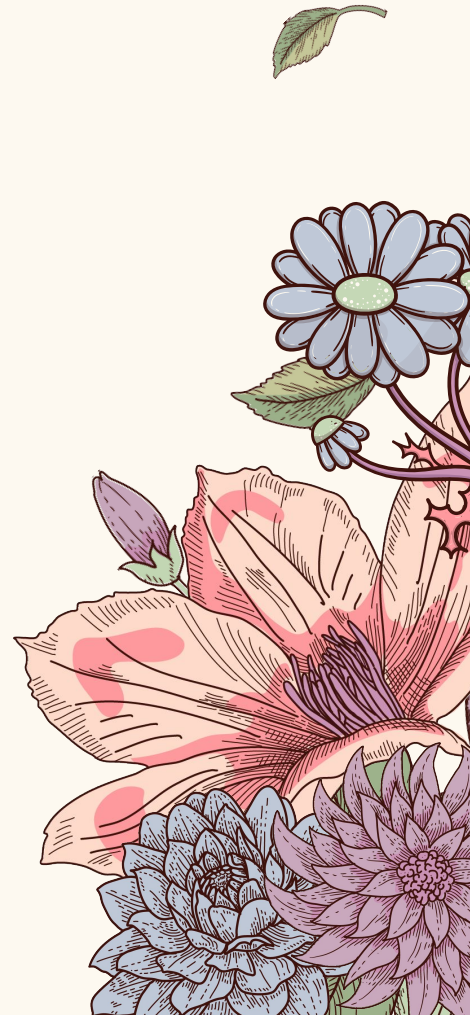
Expected: June 2026

ISBN: 978-1-63400-170-0





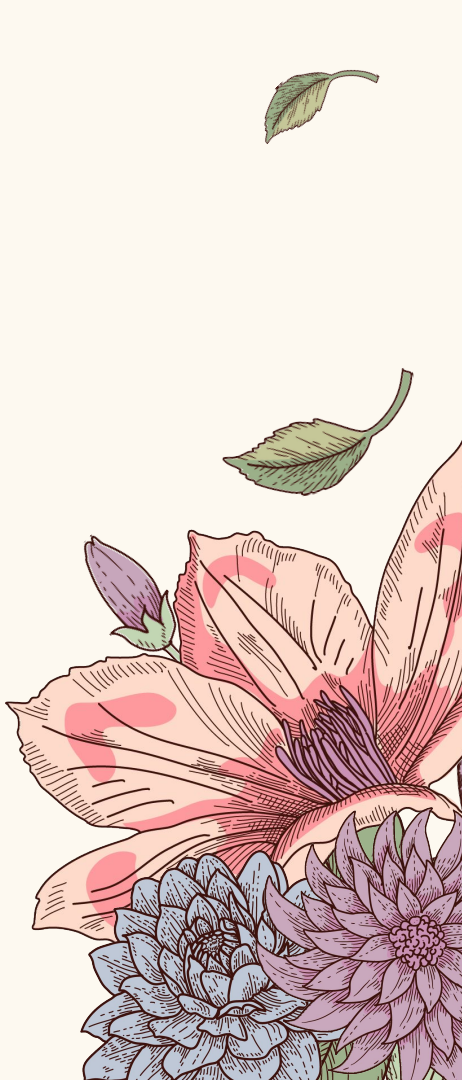
Stories
Scholarly writing
Lesson plans
Conversation transcripts
Reflective writing/journal entries
Poetry
Artwork/Student artwork
Doodles





learning outcomes

Participants will be able to ~

- describe emergent strategy and some principles
 - reorient their thinking around change, perfectionism, and presence in the classroom
 - evolve their instruction practice using emergent strategy principles
- 



reflection

Recall a particular time when teaching went really well, whether it be a single moment or an entire class session.

What happened?

How did it make you feel?

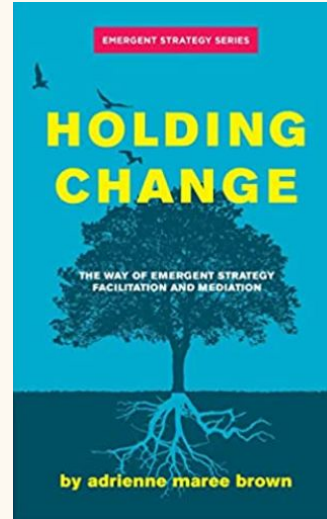
Take a moment to write/draw about it.



adrienne maree brown



brown, a. m. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. AK Press.



brown, a. m. (2021). *Holding change: The way of emergent strategy facilitation and mediation*. AK Press.



emergent strategy is

feminist, afrofuturist exploration of human responses to change
and imagining socially just futures and a better world


inspired by Octavia Butler's fiction, the work of activists such as
Grace Lee Boggs, the Tao Te Ching, and the natural world

an imagining of the possibilities of connection-making





emergent strategy is



“Ways for humans to practice being in right relationship to our home and each other, to practice complexity, and grow a compelling future together through relatively simple interactions.”





emergent strategy elements

adaptive

interdependent and
decentralized

fractal

non-linear & iterative

creating more
possibilities

resilience &
transformative justice

emergent strategy principles



Small is good, small is all. (the large is a reflection of the small)



Change is constant.
(be like water)



There is always enough time for the right work.



There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.



Never a failure, always a lesson.



Trust the people. (If you trust them, they become trustworthy)



Move at the speed of trust: focus on critical connections more than critical mass



Less prep, more presence.

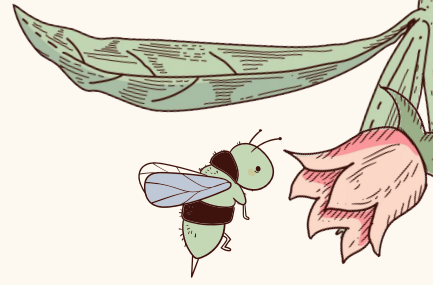


What you pay attention to grows.



*small is good, small is all...
(the large is a reflection of the small)*

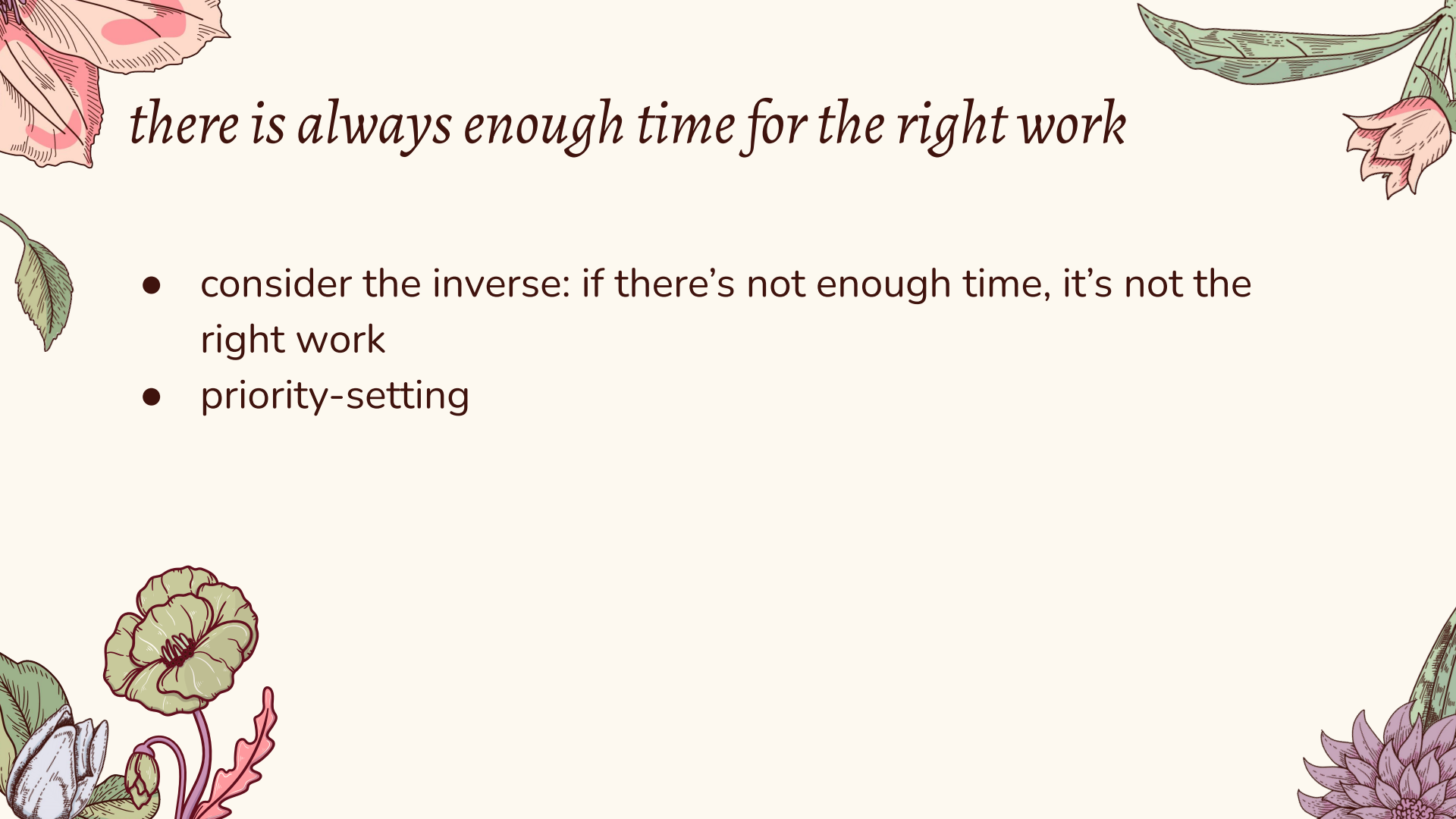
- authentic connection and care
- feminist care ethics
- find joy in small moments of connection with students
- belonging



The slide features decorative floral illustrations in the corners. Top-left: a pink and white flower. Top-right: a green leaf and a pink flower. Bottom-left: a green flower and a white flower. Bottom-right: a purple flower.

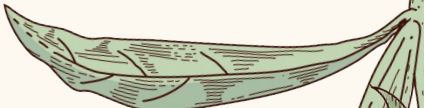

change is constant, be like water

- embrace change to find peace
- expect the unexpected
- battle imposter syndrome by understanding your presence is what matters
- welcome opportunities to change direction by discovering how best to connect with students




there is always enough time for the right work

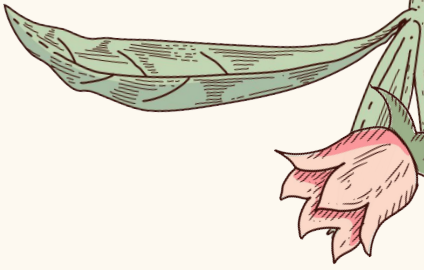


- consider the inverse: if there's not enough time, it's not the right work
- priority-setting





there is a conversation in the room that only these people in this moment can have. find it.

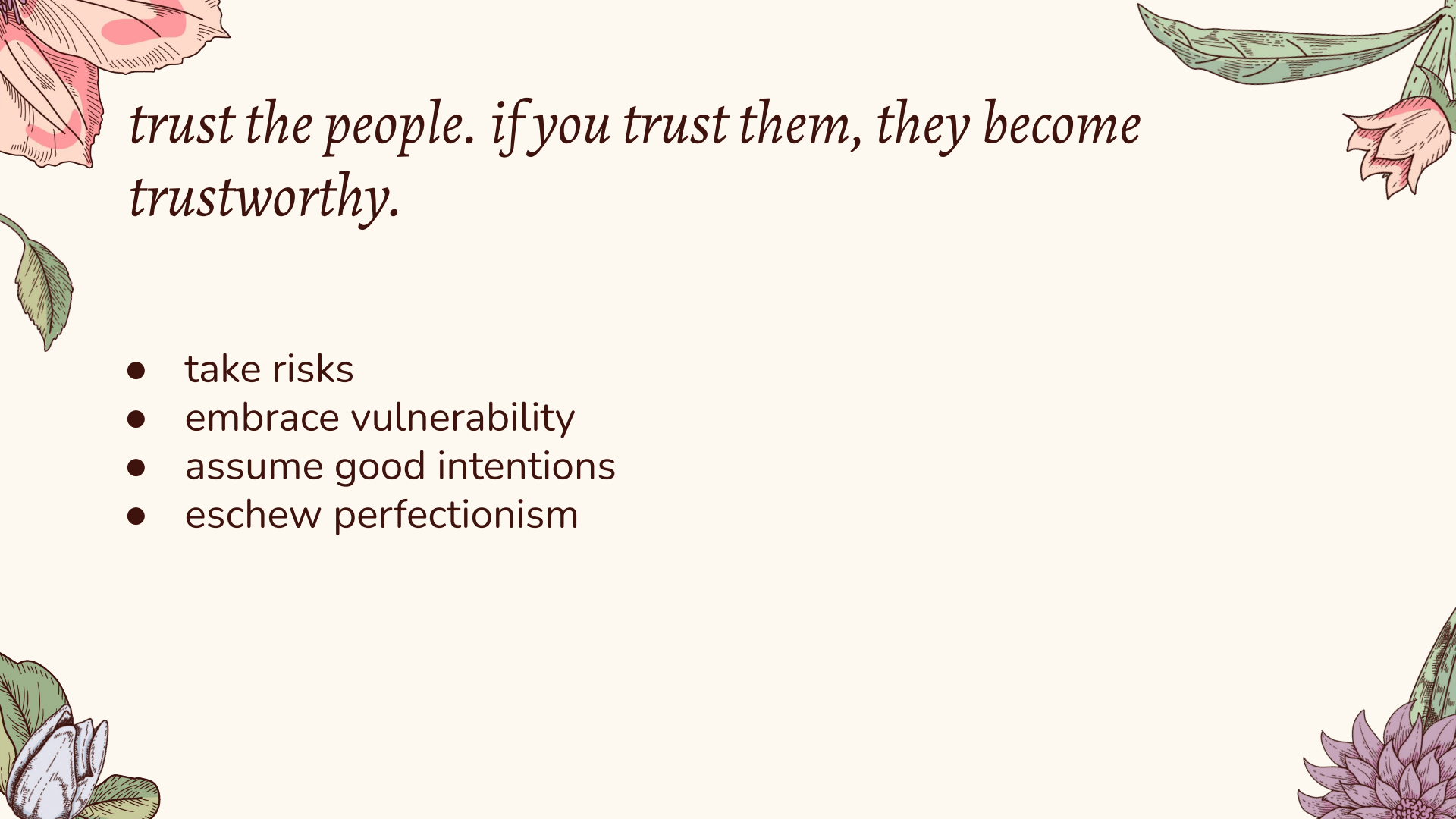
- attention
 - flexibility
 - feminist pedagogy: let the students guide your lesson
- 





never a failure, always a lesson

- anti-perfectionism
 - reflection and growth
 - vulnerability and relatability
- 
- 






trust the people. if you trust them, they become trustworthy.

- take risks
- embrace vulnerability
- assume good intentions
- eschew perfectionism




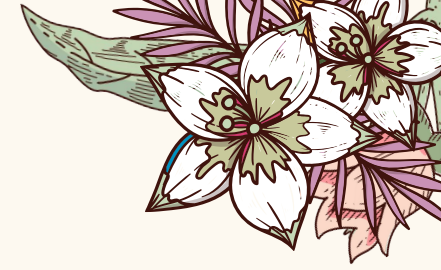
*move at the speed of trust. focus on critical connections
more than critical mass.*

- 
- so important in the single session setting!
 - students may actively distrust you, libraries, higher ed, etc.
 - work to earn their trust through caring follow-up on promises
 - encourage relationships (with you/the library) beyond the session
 - celebrate the small connection moments
- 
- 



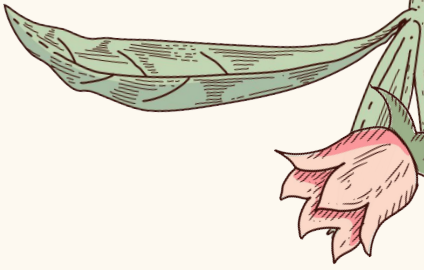


less prep, more presence

- 
- be fully present, even at the expense of a script
 - calm anxiety with the understanding that your genuine presence matters more than preparation (or topic expertise!)
 - seek connection through vulnerability
 - avoid burnout by letting the students guide your lesson rather than sticking to the same script.





what you pay attention to grows

- attend, learn, lean into pleasure
 - mindfulness in the classroom
 - reflection in your practice
 - lean into what you like about teaching
- 
- 
- 

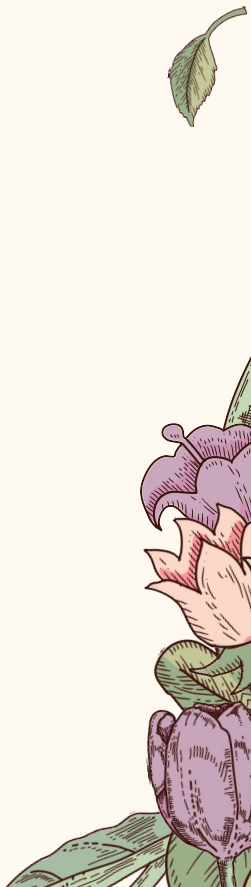


reflection

Read back your satisfying teaching
experience.

Can you identify any emergent strategy
principles at play?

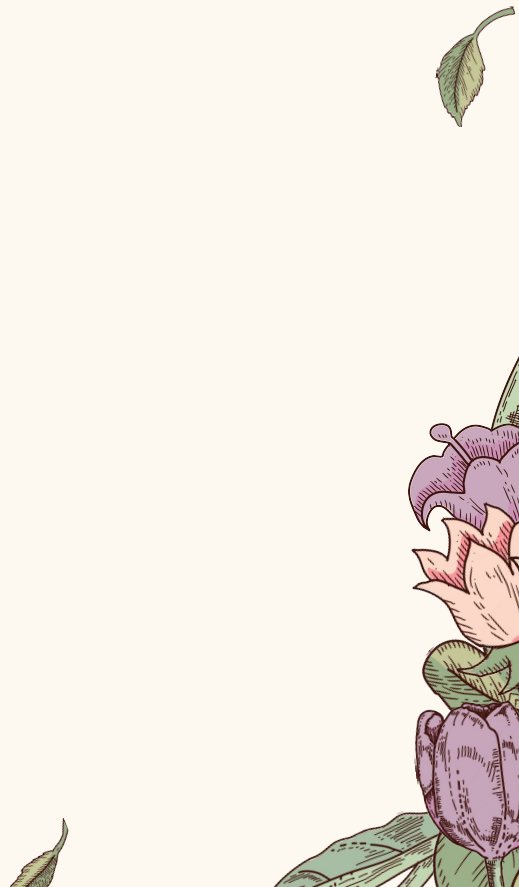
Take a moment to write/draw and
reflect.





small-group conversation

Please share about your experience
and the emergent strategy principles
you've identified (as you feel
comfortable).

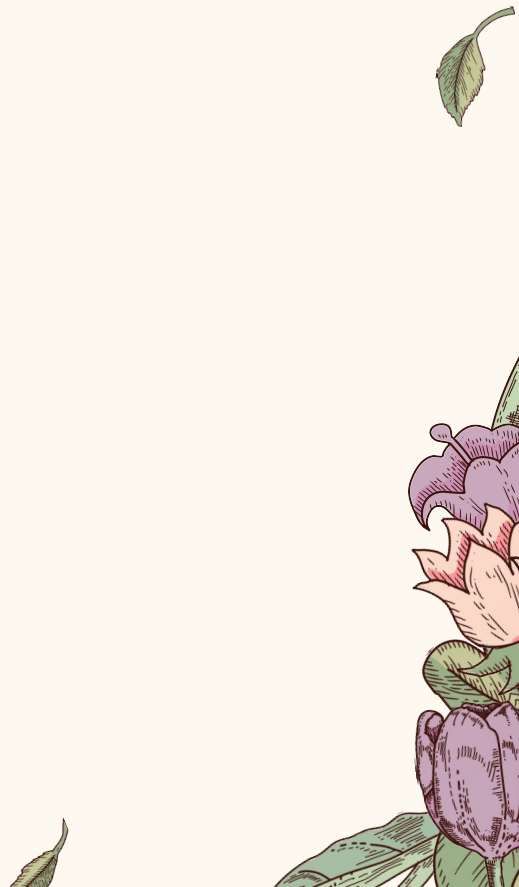




large-group conversation

After thinking about your moments
through the lens of emergent strategy,
what interests you about emergent
strategy?

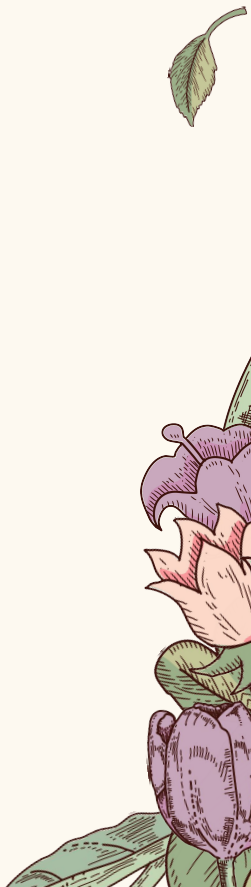
What questions do you have?
What resonates and what doesn't?





reflection

Dream of the future.
What principle can you picture yourself
embracing in the classroom?
Take a moment to write/draw about it.





THANKS!

Please keep in touch!

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