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This dissertation highlights the experience of adolescent immigrant and refugee students in a visual arts classroom in an urban middle school in Vermont. There is currently a limited body of knowledge that speaks to the experience of immigrant and refugee students within the visual arts. Literature that supports visual arts education outlines ways in which it is beneficial to all students. These benefits fall into the categories of social-emotional and academic/cognitive, and is referred to in this study as matters of the heart and mind. It is through this framework that the study takes place. I used a combination of action research and qualitative research methods to conduct my study. This is because of my role as a full-time art educator at the school in which I conducted my research. The data collected included student interviews, photographs of student artwork, photocopies of work related to the creation of visual art such as small written assignments, brainstorming, evaluations, and observation notes. All students in the study were English Language Learners and had never had formal visual arts education before coming to the United States. Matters of the heart that surfaced during this study include social-emotional aspects of being in a visual arts classroom, such as identity formation, cultural and developmental relevance, emotional needs, and empowerment. Matters of the mind that emerged during this study include language development, perceptions, definitions, and meaning making in a visual arts classroom, observation and problem-solving skills, and creative and critical thinking. By acknowledging the experience of immigrants and refugee students in a visual art classroom, an opportunity has been created to influence the knowledge, policies, and practices that relate to both visual arts education and immigrant and refugee students.