

## Mikal Odom - Teaching Statement

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My goal as a teacher is simple: to instruct and provide the tools necessary for my students to become effective communicators. Through creative arts-based projects and assignments that help in building communication skills, I am constantly pushing to have an impact on future leaders, whether they pursue a career in arts or not.

Foremost in my instruction is the student voice and how integral it is to the foundation of all work in my classrooms. Students are encouraged to explore and utilize both their creative interests and “backyards” (i.e., places or situations close to, or directly involves, them) for sources of inspiration. With a particular interest in teaching individuals from underrepresented communities, I enforce the motto that all voices matter and that self-confidence can be gained in knowing that there are audiences who are interested in hearing their stories. Thus, when it comes to lesson planning, my goal is to create and frame them around my students, which in turn, ensures the highest level of engagement possible.

Along with the reliance on one’s own voice, I teach the importance of responsibility and accountability. Students are consistently reminded of how powerful their ideas can be and how serious thought and care must be taken in what they present. As for accountability, my students are held to the utmost standards when it comes to both creating and completing work. There’s no such thing as a useless assignment in my classroom. Every assignment is an opportunity to present or discover something great.