

My Teaching Philosophy

I am incredibly fortunate to have found my goal of working with children and pursuing a career in teaching at a young age. More than that, I cherish the diverse range of opportunities I've been given to do just that across various settings. From schools and summer camps to religious education classes, private homes, day programs for adults, studios, and museums. When asked about what makes a great teacher Anissa Ramirez says the following. "I am the product of great teachers. They can show you something that you have never seen before. And awaken that little something inside of you that you've never seen before." (Kamenetz, 2019). I feel this sentiment truly about both the teachers I have had, and the environments and communities that I have been a part of. Each different environment has provided unique opportunities, experiences, and challenges. Yet, one thing has remained constant: my expectations for myself as an educator.

Within each teaching opportunity, I have a high standard for how I conduct myself. I aim to be present and attentive to the variety of needs of each individual, prioritizing kindness, compassion, respect, and patience. With this culture my students and I are able to collaboratively work towards a creative, positive, and ultimately enriching experience for all. These guiding principles have been created and shaped by the myriad of mentors and experiences I've encountered. Beginning with my days as an art student and continuing throughout the variety of chapters in my teaching career, I have observed, experienced, and created art experiences founded on these principles. While holding firm to these principles, it also can not be denied that teaching is a dynamic profession that requires a constant ability to shift to an ever changing landscape, and I have learned to embrace this fluidity.

I was raised to live the values of understanding and kindness and these are values that I carry with me in every interaction I have in my classroom, and expect of each student in my classroom. My most important goal is to ensure the safety of my students' physical and mental wellness and this is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Second to their safety, is the ability to foster a creative and engaging environment. This is not a simple task and takes knowing the needs of your students. Sometimes it's about fostering joy and excitement in activities, while other times it's about ensuring students are leaving with new skills, knowledge, and/or a sense of pride. It is essential to recognize that positive experiences can be a collaborative or individual experience.



Furthermore, I firmly believe in the power behind the statement: “Meet them where they are.” Each student is coming into my classroom with unique interests, abilities, learning styles, skills, needs, and backgrounds. In order to truly work towards a successful experience for all my students it is vital to acknowledge these differences, as much as the similarities they share. It is with recognition of this that I can create the most effective opportunities, challenges, and creative experiences for each student individually, and collectively. Setting goals that are challenging yet achievable builds confidence and a positive self-image. Through encouragement to take on difficult tasks, celebration of their successes, and support through setbacks, we foster an environment where students feel safe and empowered to take on new challenges and not be diminished by failure. Ken Vieth has a list of “Guidelines for Artists/Teachers”. Number 4 states “increase student empowerment”. (Vieth) I try to follow this beyond a guideline, and more so as a responsibility.

Teaching has awarded me an opportunity to share how passionately I believe that “Art is for everybody”- (Haring) . All the while, providing me with some of the most rewarding moments and feelings of accomplishment. These moments happen when I am able to witness children’s excitement in learning something new, their pride in their work, and, most importantly, the growth of their self-confidence. My ultimate goal is to consistently strive for these transformative moments to be the norm in every class.