

Ms. Silver's M.O.

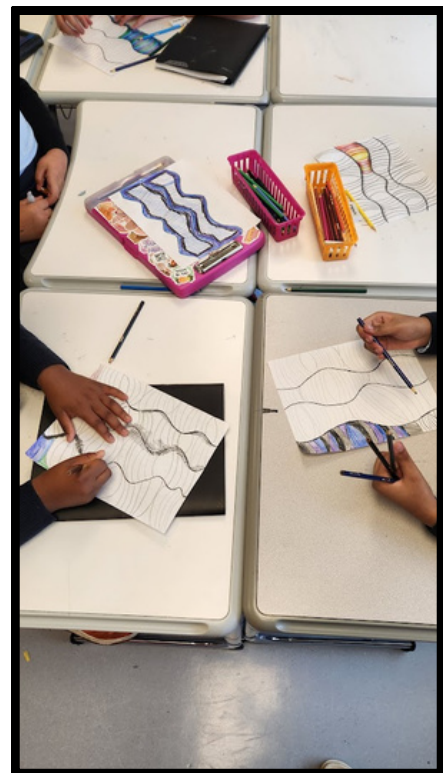


Over my years of teaching so far I have built a handy toolbox of techniques and methods that I employ to create a classroom culture of process-driven creation.

The techniques that I employ are studio-based pedagogy, which I use side by side with differentiated learning. I want my students to feel free to explore the arts through the lenses of their own experiences. This cannot be done if I tell them what to look at and what observations to make at every step of every class. Alternatively, providing only open-ended prompts for my lessons does not work for my students who need more specific and clearly defined instructions for each step of the activity. I design the *themes* of my lessons to be open-ended while also providing many resources to assist in the brainstorming process. As seen in the article titled “Arts Philosophy in Practice”, “Beauty and aesthetic have no standard, and students understand this through their personal and individual artistic discoveries.” My students will not be able to feel comfortable being themselves if I am not allowing them to create art that is inspired by the things that interest them and make them who they are, even if they need assistance in finding out what those things are themselves.

Working in today’s educational landscape I am not sure any teacher can avoid adopting a differentiated teaching approach if they truly want all of their students to be successful. It has been widely accepted that there are so many different ways that our students absorb and process new information and experiences. I feel very lucky that within the visual art classroom I am able to meet many of the needs of my students, to assist in them having full access to the activity. I am able to provide open-ended prompts, with resources to supplement that will encourage all of my students to explore specific ideas, materials, or processes that are personal and interesting to them.

If nothing else I want the students in my art class to learn that there is no limit to their creativity. I do my best to accommodate every brilliant idea that my they have, within reason of the resources available and goals of the activity, and even that may sometimes be altered to align with specifically creative ideas. I am truly invested in my students growth, and just as much focused on *their* investment in their growth. When thinking about the mindset I want my students to be in while in our class I am reminded of the following words, “Know what you desire to create, what feeds you and becomes the fuel for your growth”. (Adoquei, 2010) When my students come to me excited about an idea and ask me for help in how to reach that goal- that is the best sign I can get that my students are learning what I want them to learn. That they are creative, their ideas are important, and they have power to make them happen. Joe Fusaro put it well when he says “Art education can influence the work an artist makes later in life only if the educational experience- those few years in school or even that single class- is transformative in some way.” (Fusaro, 2010)



“Seeing the teacher as both artist and a mentor, students develop respect, trust, and increased confidence.” -Vieth