

I situate my work as a teacher through the lens of current significant educational theorists and approaches to learning. My pedagogy is concerned with how my student's feel in the art room; encouraged, calm, and purposeful. I embrace anti-deficit teaching, which encourages students to identify the resources and experiences that contribute to their achievements. Students feel at home in my classroom and are able to express their authentic selves. Understanding that student's come into the classroom with unknown thoughts, feelings, and experiences, I am committed to a "whole-child" centered approach to education. As educational leader and theorist, bell hooks, states in her book, *Teaching to Transgress*, "Love is an action, never simply a feeling."<sup>1</sup> I show this love by fueling potential for interest in the art room, building creative confidence through the immediacy of one-on-one relationships with students.

In terms of my own teaching practice, I appreciate Fink's taxonomy of Significant Learning as a guidepost for educational progress. Significant learning takes place when there are key factors working together: caring, learning how to learn, foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension.<sup>2</sup> My pedagogy is robust in content and explores trends throughout art history with students, providing opportunities to see the phenomenon of art as a response to life together. I enjoy incorporating art history, especially paleolithic art (cave drawings), medieval art, and color scheme exploration in relation to emotional wellness into my lesson plans. I prioritize teaching a diverse range of artists, both contemporary and historically relevant. Keeping with the wisdom shared in the *Art Education* article from 1996, *Exploding the Canon*, I see the importance of featuring artists that represent the cultures, nationalities, and histories of the people present in the art room.<sup>3</sup>

Assessment-wise, I align my standards with process-oriented assessment, which is concerned with the actual task performance rather than the output or product of the activity. There is more to an assignment than simply the end product —especially for students who are experimenting and exploring with new materials, methods, and ideas. By enforcing the expectation of the art room as a collective studio space, I provide room in student's assessment to take into account the development of new skills – typically mastered through process-based trial and error. I include the Studio Habits of Mind framework for all projects, focusing on key areas of content mastery: Develop Craft, Engage & Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, Reflect, Stretch & Explore, Understand Art Worlds.<sup>4</sup> I strengthen creative intention for each student, and encourage quality craftsmanship and pride in work. My students are confident in their response to life through the practice of making art.

Art-making stimulates critical and radical thinking, and I enjoy bringing interdisciplinary standards into the art classroom. Interdisciplinary concepts, borrowed from math, science, and language arts, are common-place in my lessons, strengthening verbal/writing skills in tandem with visual skills. Artistic creation can also double as creative investigation and suits many varieties of learning styles. Social problem solving through application of the design process - simultaneously strengthening social-emotional responses to the classroom community (kindness!).

Educationally, my background is aligned with Universally Designed Learning (UDL), a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. As a teacher, I follow the UDL perspective, which "embraces the idea of instructor creativity in developing teaching strategies and assessment techniques that are effective for all learners..." as well as creating, "a learning culture in which diversity is accepted and embraced, and where all students are encouraged to learn and demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways."<sup>5</sup> Alongside this approach to designing lessons, my projects always have a choice-based component, meaning students have a say in where and how they want their expression to be created.

As I begin my teaching career, I am dedicated to reversing the archaic idea that "The artist is an extra special person who must defy the restraints and rules of the academies in order to express deep insight from their souls." At the end of the year, I want my students to feel comfortable trying out an idea and seeing it through to the end without pressure to be perfect or ingenious. Like teachers that have a background in Reggio Emilia theory of learning, I "plan lessons based on student interest and adjust lessons in real time based on what they are seeing in the students."<sup>6</sup>

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5 Bernacchio, C., & Mullen, M. (2007). Universal design for learning. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 31(2), 167–169. <https://doi.org/10.2975/31.2.2007.167.169>

6 Edwards, Carolyn P. (1993). *The hundred languages of children : the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. Norwood, N.J. :Ablex Pub. Corp.,

1 Hooks, Bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. London: Routledge.

2 Smith, E. L. (2013). Using a new taxonomy for significant learning in the theory classroom. *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy E-Journal* 2013-2017, 1(1), 2.

3 Stankiewicz, M. A. (1996). *Exploding the Canon*. *Art Education*, 49(2), 4–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.1996.11651428>

4 Hogan, J., Jaquith, D., & Gould, L. (2020). Shifting perceptions of quality in art education. *Art Education*, 73(4), 8-13. [doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2020.1746161](https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2020.1746161)