

EMILY CALDERON // Educational Philosophy

The purpose of education in the arts is to expose students to a new way of thinking and engaging across fields, incorporating and encouraging creativity in all subjects they are learning. As an art teacher, it is my goal to facilitate and present a foundation in the visual arts for students to construct their own meanings. This will open doors to new ways of understanding as students grow and mature into artists and individuals.

A critical pedagogical approach in education links teaching and learning with praxis.

With reflection and action, knowledge can emerge “through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other”

(Freire, 1970, p. 72).*

I believe the art teacher’s role is to foster the experiences and knowledge each student brings into the classroom, while introducing new knowledge to challenge their understanding. The purpose of this approach is to promote students’ capacity for reflective and collaborative critical thinking. As an art teacher, I invite students to question what it is they are learning and how they can use this knowledge to construct new meaning through the visual arts.

Art education should be fluid and intertwined with students’ lives, prompting in them a desire to discover and create. At the same time, teaching is as much about learning as it is about educating others. My professional learning goals center around the students I am working with and the school community they are a part of. I hope to continue to learn new ways to introduce materials and lessons in context so that students are continuously excited to create art. In the art classroom, inquiry involves both the teacher and the student in deep questioning and creative investigation.

It is essential for students to engage in a range of practices, from painting, drawing, and pottery, to digital media, photography, and more. I am most excited to teach students various skills in clay, mixed media and textiles, though I want students to become familiar with a wide variety of materials. My personal art practice displays my knowledge in a range of media including ceramics, painting, drawing, mixed media, sculpture, and digital arts. My classroom is organized and fluid, where students have the opportunity to work collaboratively in small and large groups, as well as individually. Students have agency in the classroom, becoming responsible for the materials and tools they use, and learning to treat the shared space as a working studio space. I view engaging curriculum as the best form of classroom management. I want students to be excited to come to class to learn and participate in projects, with the focus on positive aspects of their behavior, while giving students choices in deciding repercussions for misbehavior.

In my teaching practice I like to begin each day by asking how students are doing on a scale of 1-5. This opens up a casual opportunity for students to share while providing important information about student experiences outside of the classroom. I also make it a point to ask for student feedback throughout my lessons; I use responsive curriculum and formative assessments to gauge how students are experiencing their learning, and to make adjustments as needed. My goals for students center on developmental growth in their art practices through the process of learning technical and conceptual skills. I want students to also make a connection between what is taught in the classroom and their own experiences, to gain art

appreciation through a hands-on art practice.

My art lessons teach technical skills alongside conceptual frameworks, pulling from contemporary artists and community assets to inform my pedagogy. I look to what is happening in students' lives, their other classes, and the school community to help create developmentally appropriate art lessons. I differentiate my instruction to address all learners, making sure to write out directions, have visual step-by-steps and video demos available, as well as repeating verbal instruction. I review each day what was done previously, and encourage students to help and talk with each other. I also make it a habit to circulate the room the entirety of class time to help students and speak with them one-on-one, providing verbal feedback on their work.

In closing, I want students to discover how art is relevant in their everyday lives, how art can spark a new way of thinking about the world we live in, and how they can use art as a platform for communication and discovery. My point of view is informed by society, just as students are, and I look to innovative techniques, tools and trends to keep my pedagogy current. With this approach, students begin to question more and strive to make a difference in every aspect of their lives, while also gaining and developing skills in art making.

*Freire, Paulo. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.