

DEREK COOK

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

It is important to me that my classroom is viewed as a community, where all the students, as well as myself, are able to communicate effectively with each other about ideas, projects, popular culture, artistic influences, and even day to day matters, such as what the students are learning in their other classes and how it can pertain to art.

Visual culture is an important aspect in my teaching, as it is most relevant to the students. Most students, especially at the elementary age, are not familiar with many working artists, so it is my job to introduce them gradually to these artists and their ideas, techniques, and works, through art that the students see around them everyday.

Multiculturalism is also an important facet of my teaching, as each child is different and can relate to different areas of life, so too must the artworks and activities I plan be different. No one activity will be able to satisfy every students' need as an artist, and in no way will viewing art from one vantage point assist the students in their learning of such a diverse subject as art.

Thus, it is my philosophy that if the classroom is viewed and experienced as a community, the students will be able to share many experiences and opinions on a range of different cultural and artistic issues. This will foster independent learning as well as student lead instruction; if a student is interested about a topic, I will encourage them to study further by offering resources and starting points for the student to begin his or her research. If a student is knowledgeable in a particular topic, such as one pertaining to his or her race, religion, culture, favorite sport, type of music, and so on, then I will encourage that student to inform our class of their knowledge.

I want to encourage my students to become independent learners and teachers, and the way that I approach this goal is by starting off the year, or unit, with teacher directed instruction, where I go through the basic information and techniques that will be needed to fully engage in the lessons to come, and then allow students to work independently from that point on. My goal is to be a facilitator in the classroom, but continue to work one-on-one with students. As a teacher, I excel at working individually with students on their goals within my classroom as well as outside of it; and as a teacher, it is my duty to instill in my students a respect for one another and to lead them to grow as responsible young adults.