

## Teaching Philosophy

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A classroom is a lot like the night sky: it is full of beautiful stars that are, growing, bursting with color and charisma, and waiting to shine. As a teacher, it is my job to see each star. I will see their lights, I will nurture them, and I will help them to shine as brightly as they can. Being a facilitator of the arts, I want to encourage my students to use art as a vessel. This vessel, this space ship, will take them on untold journeys, help them to explore tangible and abstract ideas, and find a voice- quiet or loud- with which they can respond. Using art, I can give my students another perspective; a new opportunity to view the world.

While giving this opportunity to my students, I believe there is much room for play and discovery. Philosophical thinker Alan Watts said, “This is the real secret of life- to be completely engaged in what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.” I agree with this, and I believe that each moment must be cherished and enjoyed. The art room should be a place where that happens- where students are engaged in what they are doing, where students can use play to explore, creatively problem solve, and make connections to one another. Although, I carry myself as a professional, I feel there is an incredible amount of enjoyment to be had in the art room and the incorporation of humor and liveliness into the art room is necessary. It makes sense for the room to be a place of recreational and investigative experiences, light heartedness, and creativity. A place that fosters not only personal growth through morals, life, lessons and decision making, but an art room will be a place that calls upon one’s inner child.

Without that child, we cannot be truly happy, and practicing happiness is something we all need to do a little more of. Modern research from *self growth.com* and the Association for Applied Therapeutic Humor claim that young adults laugh on average between only two and

sixteen times each day; full grown adults laugh even less- between only one and eight times per day. With happiness being closely related to the development of the whole person, promoting one's happiness and fostering a sense of positive personal growth makes sense. And according to UNICEF, the learning process is most successful when an individual or a child is happy.

When one experiences happiness, genuine learning can take place- and art can travel beyond the art world, for it is through art that curriculums can be crossed. I will help my students to steer their space ship from galaxy to galaxy. We will travel- scientifically and geographically. Simultaneously, diversity and global citizenship will be respected and practiced through social studies. The humanities and nature sciences can be explored through art as well. An emphasis will be put on contemporary issues, and my students will be aware of matters such as ecological problems, calls to stewardship, and much more. Art can serve as a vessel to explore these enduring ideas, these other curricular areas; and students can take on not just the role of the explorer, but also the role of the creative thinker or the problem solver. Without this role in our society, contemporary issues will not be solved; new products will not be designed. And it all starts in the art room. In *my* art room.

Taking a humanistic approach to my teaching philosophy, my students will know me, and I will know them. I can teach them art, and I can teach them "life." I can foster happiness and positivity. Eventually, they will be given the keys to the space ship. But perhaps most importantly, I will teach that we all must be our beautiful selves, and I will show my students that I can see their star lights shining, even when they cannot.