

Teaching Philosophy

“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.”

- Pedagogy of Freedom by Paulo Freire.

Some of my greatest learning experiences have been in art classes. Every week we were given a themed work project. Each project challenged me to think about who I was and think about the world. It was a liberating process where I used the assignment to express myself. Each week after we completed the project we met as a group, engaged through dialogue, and critiqued each other's work. This process allowed me to get to know my classmates and connect with them in a meaningful way. It was through these classes where my learning really shifted. In my prior learning experiences I was doing the work without really thinking about the process or meaning behind it. In this new style of learning I was engaged and was thinking critically about my identity, the world, and new concepts. I would like for my classroom and teaching practice to reflect a similar experience to my art classes. An environment where the practice of engaging with others and focusing on the process rather than the outcome is part of the learning experience.

When I think about teaching and learning I think about those moments in class where I engaged with my college classmates. In this setting we were not just sitting listening to a professor lecture but we were dialoguing, sharing ideas, critiques, and analyzing the material in a meaningful way. When I envision my classroom space I envision a safe and inviting space that is designed for all students in mind. I think about recreating my art class environment where students get to connect, share stories of their work, come up with questions, build structure, and simply learn to be curious. I believe for a learning environment to be successful there has to be a sense of meaning behind the work. Meaning that students should not just learn concepts for the sake of learning but should learn concepts that can be tied to the real world. I would like the students to feel empowered by the concepts they are learning in class and think about how those concepts can be translated to real change in their communities.

In my classroom I hope to see students asking each other questions, challenging each other on mathematical concepts and ideas. You will see students engaged in warm up activities that are relatable and tied to real world issues. Some of these activities include would you rather questions, which one doesn't belong, number talks, pattern problems, and other visual representations that will motivate students, allow for dialogue and a deeper understanding of the content.

I believe that when students are allowed to work in groups they build empathy and connection to each other. When they are provided group roles (i.e. presenter, note-taker, facilitator) they feel accountable to the members of their group and further engaged in the process and material. Although lecture is important and will happen at times. My classroom will focus on dialogue by asking and answering each other questions. When we engage in dialogue I use the five math practices which include anticipate, monitor, select, sequence, and connect. Through this process students are taking ownership of their learning and work. In this setting students are empowered and have the confidence to share their ideas, understanding with their classmates. I am there to facilitate the conversation, take notes, and ask follow up questions but the students are running the show. This can be a challenging exercise because students will come from different levels of understanding of the math content. However, it is important to explain and demonstrate the content in different ways such as graphs, videos, dialogue, written examples, and practice in order to accommodate all learning needs. Students can build on their confidence by connecting with others through fun activities and projects. The group roles in my classroom are constantly changing to accommodate everyone's progress and to allow greater connection amongst my students. Some of the projects that I will use in my classroom are statistics projects related to social justice issues. Other projects will include data analysis to allow my students to understand the world we live in and the constant change and information they seek to understand. My students will also be able to create art by showcasing their creativity and building or designing tangible objects while incorporating math equations and solutions. In order to create these fun and engaging projects for my students I will have to know how to connect with them. By connecting and building strong rapport with my students I will be able to not only empower them but also provide the community they need to bring about their greatest assets. One way to connect with my students is by sharing my own experience and challenges I have had as a learner myself.

My experience as a person of color allows me to connect and build rapport with my students on a deeper level. In the past I have worked with all kinds of students, people, and learning needs. I have worked with non-verbal students, students with Down syndrome, students that are emotionally disturbed, newborn patients, elderly patients, and end of life patients. In essence I have worked with all ages and walks of life. These experiences have made me have a deeper understanding of people. It has made me understand people's needs, failures, and commonalities. This will also allow me to create meaningful individual connections in my classroom. Another way I can better serve and connect with my students is by seeing my student's level of progress through assessment.

Assessment allows my students to reflect on their work, areas of improvement, and areas of success. As an educator, assessments help me understand student needs as well as strengths, allow me to create new

fun learning activities, and allow me to think about how I can continue to expand on their understanding. It also provides me with the ability to create engaging activities. Some of the assessments include unit portfolios where students practice their math literacy by writing out steps for the individual problems and where students include previous work from the unit. Another way of assessing their level of understanding is by allowing the students to get creative. For example students can create video or audio recording where they explain math concepts on resources such as flip grid. Different forms of assessment allow my students to build the confidence they need to further their understanding and growth as mathematicians. Although personal growth and empowerment are key it is important to also think about how they can apply that learning into their community. Furthermore, I believe that in order for my students to be positive members of society they must also learn how to appreciate, honor, and respect others within their community and beyond. My students should have a deep understanding of equity and social justice.

I believe that the more I allow my students to get to know themselves and their personal backgrounds the more they will see each other as equal and create an environment of positive social change. I hope to create lessons that not only change their thinking as who they are as mathematicians but also who they are as people. By introducing lessons that are visual and promote verbal engagement my students can begin to understand that everyone can be “smart” in math. I hope that by also incorporating ethnomathematics and teaching students that math comes from all places and people and not just the traditional western cultures. Bringing in these new ideas my students will be able to gain confidence and respect for everyone within their classroom setting despite any differences. This change will have to include collaboration within the school and the community but I hope that by introducing these new ideas that break away from traditional ways of thinking my students will make a change for better social justice and peace.