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April 9, 2020

Teaching Philosophy

As an instructor of studio art my classrooms are spaces where enjoyment, empowerment and the cultivation of wonder is important, and self-care is included. Students specific passions and interests are identified, and support is given to focus on them. In this space each person is encouraged to be aware of their own mental and physical well-being to take steps towards healthy living and working. My philosophy of teaching prioritizes mutual learning and growth in a learning community where both students and teachers alike can feel comfortable and claim agency of their own academic voice. Individuals take the reins on their own education by setting goals and voicing their opinions openly while being able to accept critiques. Members of the learning community work to empathize with each other to understand their colleagues’ positionality and gain perspective. Inclusivity is a necessary component in the classroom, and I believe that unique backgrounds and varied experiences promote higher learning. It is important to facilitate well-mediated and structured discussions where everyone can openly speak with passion without becoming offended or overly emotional. Collaboration is a key element whereby working with other students everyone feels they can contribute, and everyone knows their voices are being heard and respect the voices of others.

Critical pedagogy is a strong component in my teaching method. Students are encouraged to investigate and challenge traditional modes of thought to learn that their own ideas are just as valued as anyone else’s. Institutionalized education systems constrain critical thinking and makes the questioning of our society, culture, etc., unimportant. In a studio setting there are instances where directions need to be followed exactly to understand specific processes but once these processes are understood it is equally important to have the freedom to experiment openly. A teacher I admired told me “You have to learn the rules so you know how to break them.” Assignments and curriculum will always be editable so that students can continue to claim agency in their own learning. One-on-one time will be included so individual progress can be evaluated and challenging issues can be brought up in a safe space.

Students will have input choosing subjects that they are researching so that they can become more engaged in learning about things that truly interest them. Being able to choose subjects that they are actively researching there is a feeling that they are contributing to their own education, which is imperative to academic engagement. Time will be provided each class period for meta-cognition and reflection on the material that was discussed, and students will be the ones to lead these discussions. Understanding and appreciating deadlines and how to budget time accordingly is a skill that will be practiced. The way in which I grade will be specific to the way each student learns most efficiently. I will make constant effort to understand and appreciate these learning styles and tailor my curriculum to best serve each individual. Through my experiences with people that are starved for education, not supported by our school systems and being seen as minorities, I strive to makes learning accessible to all, no matter their current situation. These guidelines are set in place to promote a positive and productive learning environment and to allow for classrooms unhindered by institutional scaffolding.