

My Teaching Philosophy

What does it mean to be free? Free to question, free to explore, free to imagine, free to create... I think it starts with being in community with our students. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. imagined a “beloved community”, conceptualizing a world where people would bond on the basis of shared humanness. By bonding with our students, walls of resistance start to fall, and doors of opportunity begin to open. Through art engagement, those developed bonds work to create meaningful experiences which can serve as our most powerful tool to communicate with one another, raise awareness about issues, and progress society. I want students to feel seen, heard, and free. I want to create freeing, enjoyable learning spaces that relate to my students’ interests and experiences. The art classroom can serve as an access point to creating these “beloved community” learning spaces. The key components I plan to integrate in my art classroom are collaboration, validation, and multiculturalism.

Historically, most art that students learn about has been focused on individual self-expression; however, art can also be influential from a collaborative standpoint. Teaching my students collaborative skills will help them understand different perspectives, generate group solutions and build relationships; skills students can take beyond the classroom into the wider community. Moreover, incorporating students’ various lived experiences into the classroom celebrates their identities, nurturing their brilliance and unique assets which can equip students with tools to transform themselves and society. Centering multicultural education lends itself well to the multitude of identities and experiences students bring with them into the classroom. It decenters whiteness from the core of curriculum content and prepares students from all backgrounds to be

better community members and understand how multicultural issues shape the social, political, economic, and cultural fabric of society.

As a Black educator, I can help my students deconstruct dominant narratives of White- European experiences in art and use counter-narratives to center non-White artists and art practices, connecting students with diverse cultures. One effective and authentic way to do this is by incorporating [community engagement](#) projects into my multicultural curriculum creating a “beloved community” within my learning environment. I think there must be collective acceptance and understanding of the unique and diverse cultural strengths that each community member brings with them. By supporting one another in a “beloved community”, my students and I will grow closer in understanding and connectivity, consider each other's needs, and make a collective effort to create and reimagine learning spaces where we will be free to simultaneously teach and learn; creating art that can improve the world around us.