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Teaching Philosophy

I believe education is a process that is constantly evolving. It is something that happens every day, yet all too often is taken for granted. I value an approach to critical pedagogy that interrogates worldviews and embraces discomfort for the sake of transformation. As a teacher, I work to provide opportunities for learning through aesthetic means. My teaching style highlights the role of embodiment through performance as a way to practice discomfort, deconstruct binary modes of thinking and expose the tensions of in-between spaces to allow for the transformation of thought and acquisition of new knowledge.

Education does not exist in a vacuum. My teaching style recognizes culture as a form of knowledge that is in a state of continual negotiation between a being and its environment. As a teacher, I acknowledge there are different styles of learning, plus many outside circumstances that can influence a student's education. It is important to take these outside factors into account, diversify the methods of instruction to accommodate various learning styles, and take an interdisciplinary perspective to education to create learning communities within the classroom and beyond. What a student learns in one class can be applied not only to other classes, but also to situations that occur outside the classroom.

My own personal philosophy toward artmaking provides the framework for my teaching methods. This philosophy is communicated by posting the following guidelines in the classroom: 1) Art is messy...be prepared to get dirty, 2) Art is hard work...be prepared to get frustrated, 3) Art is never finished or done...ask, *What else can I do to this?* and 4) Art does not have to be pretty to be beautiful. These "warnings" are meant to be engaged with on a day-to-day basis and are used as starting points to interrogate students' ideas about their projects, their worldviews, and ultimately, themselves. Through an ongoing dialogical process, I work with students to co-construct our shared space together, using my own embodied knowledge as an artist/researcher to actively create a classroom culture that values artmaking as a means of critical inquiry. As an educator, I aim to set up the classroom/studio as a place of possibility and exploration. By combining experiential knowledge with traditional didactic methods, I teach through a practice of ongoing artistic inquiry, namely through visual journaling in addition long-term and academic projects which allow space for students to disrupt, deconstruct and re-construct the narrative they tell themselves about themselves and the world at large. I believe that artistic inquiry creates opportunities to practice and provide lasting evidence of a student's ongoing methods of contemplation and critical self-reflection that are crucial to the educational process.

One of the most important areas of education is the relationship between the teacher and student. This relationship needs to be based on trust and mutual respect in order to provide the best possible circumstances for learning. Teachers and students both need to realize how easily and frequently their roles can become reversed; teaching and learning happens on both ends of this relationship. It is a teacher's responsibility to look at the unique needs of every student that walks into the classroom. While some sort of learning and education will certainly take place in the classroom, it should not be assumed that what is being learned is the same as what is being taught. The role of the artist/teacher is not to close the space of differences, and smooth over discomfort and pain, but to dwell in the differences of embodied knowledge through critical performatives as a way to unsettle, disrupt and create new relationships that can foster a sense of critical pedagogy to educate and transform.