

# Philosophy of Education

## Active Studio Practice

In the field of art education, it is my belief that the best of teachers are not simply art teachers, but rather are artists, educators, researchers, documenters, and lifelong learners. Maintaining my own studio practice, centered on ceramics and sculpture, has helped to inform my teaching strategies, inspiring new lessons while enriching the classroom atmosphere with visuals and teacher samples.

## Interdisciplinary Approach

Perhaps it is my own diverse set of interests, but I believe in incorporating interdisciplinary connections throughout my curricula. Science, math, engineering, digital technologies, reading, and writing are all inherently connected to the arts. In encouraging my students to explore these connections with the common core standards, I believe I can critically engage, and better prepare them for their future careers.

## Integration of Digital Technology

With the technological world growing at an astounding rate, I refuse to ignore the implications, and benefits of such resources. These technologies can help to engage students and assist in the researching and problem solving that occurs in the classroom. Whenever possible, I will integrate, and educate students on such technologies and digital media.

## Differentiating Instruction

Working at Wesley Spectrum Highland—a school for students with special needs such as autism, oppositional defiant disorder, and emotional issues—provided me the experience of balancing the various needs of different students. I was forced to provide different modes of teaching critical material to students. My time spent at the Pittsburgh Gifted Center also provided me with the experience of catering to students at the highest end of the achievement spectrum. Such experiences have prepared me in differentiating instruction based on the needs of my learners, and managing a classroom of learners at various achievement levels. With these skills, I will see, reach, and build the potential of my individual students and my classes as a whole.

## Classroom Environment

From the moment I greet students at the door with an enthusiastic, “Buon giorno!” or “Hello there!” they understand that they are entering a safe environment, where the expression of their diverse interests and personal cultures will be encouraged. My students will value reflection, the development of technique, critical thinking, and personal growth throughout their own creative journey. To reinforce the critical skills and techniques my students will be introduced to, I will ensure that the classroom environment is rich in visuals—student artwork, posters, contemporary artists, traditional artists, etc. I will also involve my learners in updating classroom artwork and décor.

## Community Engagement

The Philadelphia area offers endless opportunities for young learners. I believe community exhibition—inside and outside of the classroom and school—is crucial in building a community of artists and learners. As I have in the past, I will continue to support my students through entrance in juried exhibits, and community showcases. Just as I partnered with organizations like the Andy Warhol Museum and the Cultural Trust in Pittsburgh, I hope to partner with Philadelphia area museums, and programs which offer grants and enrichment to schools.

## Professional Development

I have the highest expectations for my own professionalism in education. I consider maintaining an active studio practice, staying involved in the community, and furthering my own education to be responsible, and crucial in ensuring my own success as an educator. Even during student teaching, I continued to take classes in ceramics at a local studio, The Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild. With my certification in Art K-12 complete, I now seek certification in Technology Education, through woodshop, metal shop, foundry, and digital engineering technologies. Beyond the art room, I hope to become involved, as I have in the past, in school activities such as coaching, sponsoring clubs, assisting in the school yearbook, and anywhere else I can be of use. I hope to participate on a team of educators driven to raise school spirit and awareness through programs like PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports). I hope to raise money for programs like the arts through fundraising and grants—a process through which I have previously experienced the benefits. As an art educator, I believe my job reaches far beyond the art room, and far into the school hallways and the streets of Philly.

**-Alison R. Bongiorno**