

I believe that teaching and learning can be a mutually beneficial and collaborative relationship between teachers and students. My goal is to create space in my classrooms for the growth of communities that are safe enough for students to go beyond their comfort levels. I strive to create a supportive learning environment where students can discover personalized, new ways of being with the material and with themselves.

Some key strategies are:

Meet the students where they are.

I make sure I am organized with a deep enough understanding of the lesson in order to adapt to who is showing up to learn that day. This preparation and resulting confidence set me free to adapt and creatively adjust my angle of approach.

Connect to the students in a way that creates a safe space for learning.

One way to do this is to learn through play. By creating a game out of learning, the students and teachers alike can relax and bond, and the learning becomes more pleasantly integrated with the body and the mind.

Create Trust.

Creating trust between the members of the class and myself is an important part of any positive learning experience. At the start of a new class, I make sure to create an opening circle with the students where we try to meet in the present moment. I also respect if a student might be more shy than others. I practice patience in allowing their expression to unfold on their own terms. Understanding that there are multiple types of intelligences in the classroom is key. I also encourage collaboration and smaller group interactions to make more space to practice autonomy within the framework of the subject matter.

Never Stop Learning.

Teaching for me is a practice. Much like my art practice, my relationship to teaching changes from day to day and minute to minute. We are always moving through time, acting and responding to the environment. After years of teaching a variety of subjects, from art to silkscreen to graphic design history to yoga, the one thing I know is, no class is ever the same. This is the challenge and the gift of being involved in education. If I remain humble yet confident and firm as the class facilitator, I can learn from students about what is working and what is not working. In addition, I allow the students to support the lessons with their own knowledge and experiences.

Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

In the classroom, we work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. Like healthy soil, this coordination and cooperation across diverse backgrounds and circumstances makes the community stronger, more resilient, and able to grow and be self-sustaining.