

My goal as a teacher is to prepare students to meaningfully navigate and situate themselves in the contemporary world. I am introspective, hold high expectations, and appreciate critical thought; these values are immediate reflections of what I hope for in my students. By creating a safe, respectful space to work, I understand how all learners can become autonomous and self-motivated in the process of learning.

All classrooms should be highly reflective and personal environments in which to learn. An art classroom holds opportunities for students to raise questions and seek answers on important and relevant issues within their lives, and to recognize how these ideas connect to the world at large. Making art is a way to more deeply and presently connect our minds, bodies, and spirits to *inter-be* with the world around us. I value meditation, reflection, mindfulness, and deep listening as ways of being in the classroom. In terms of content, I believe that the study of semiotics, or *sign and symbol systems*, will provide learners with a deeper understanding of the postmodern world. The art classroom is a place for students to become multi-literate in systems of visual language, written text, image, video, and sound through active interpretation of visual culture and contemporary art. As a result, I have structured lessons on symbol making, logo designing, and combining text and image, to name a few.

According to Bloom's taxonomy, *to create* is the highest level of cognitive thought; there is no doubt in the importance of providing students opportunities *to make* as ways of developing artistic habits of mind, such as *envision, engage and persist, and express*. These habits service students to become intrinsically motivated in other areas of learning. By combining both discursive and non-discursive methods of constructing knowledge, I equip my students with skills to think deeply and critically, not only in the realm of art making, but also in a broader, more global context.

*"Our own life has to be our message."*

*-Thich Nhat Hahn*

