

## Teaching Philosophy

I'm Theo Tweeddale, I'm an artist and educator who holds a BFA in Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University School for the Arts and certification to teach Visual Arts PreK-12. I currently reside in Richmond, Virginia, with experience teaching PreK-12 art in public school, museum, and community settings. I balance my work as an educator with my artistic practice by remaining active in exhibitions and community arts spaces and maintaining proficiency in a wide variety of art media including ceramics, photography, painting, drawing, collage, printmaking, and sculpture. As a teacher, I facilitate collaborative, student-driven opportunities through hands-on applications and guided inquiry, center cultural responsiveness and sustainability, and maintain high expectations through encouragement.

I believe arts education should empower students with the knowledge and skills to develop their own meaningful concepts and refine their problem-solving skills through guided inquiry and exploration, while understanding how art and artists can contribute to and shape their communities. By teaching a breadth of art media, concept development strategies, art studio safety, and classroom organization, I equip students with the skills to bring their ideas to life while cultivating the responsibility and sense of belonging that come from contributing and caring for a shared art studio space. I value facilitating collaboration and student-driven opportunities, including classroom jobs, guided dialogue, and open-ended questions. Through coordinating local and school-based student art exhibitions, community partnerships, and family engagement opportunities, I provide hands-on learning experiences that allow students to practice the role of an artist within their school and broader community. My curricular and pedagogical methodologies are informed by Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB), Reggio Emilia, Big Ideas, Design Thinking, and Arts Integration. These approaches enable me to foster meaningful visual arts programming that is accessible to learners of all abilities, connected to real world applications, strengthens critical thinking, and aligns with state and national standards, while remaining engaging to students and their interests.

Art and culture share an interconnected relationship. An art teacher plays an active role in sustaining, appreciating, and representing arts and cultures. I develop culturally sustaining curricula by centering artists of the global majority, presenting contemporary artforms, and highlighting global interconnectivity. It is my goal that students come away from art class with an enhanced understanding of geography, history, ability to form cross-cultural connections, and excitement to represent themselves and their own cultures through artmaking.

As an educator I strive to lead with encouragement while maintaining high expectations for every student. My approaches to classroom management and engaging instruction are strongly influenced by PBIS and democratic educational methods. I value cultivating authentic and restorative teacher-student relationships through establishing rapport, keen observation of student's personal interests, sending positive notes home, and providing genuine and specific praise where appropriate. By delivering frequent, individualized feedback and assessment, along with deliberate scaffolding and differentiation I'm able to uphold high standards for each student. I find these strategies effectively encourage student effort, foster a growth mindset, and provide a holistic education that encompasses social-emotional well-being. Believing every child is approaching a bright and successful future teaches them to believe the same.