

Linus Parr
Educational Statement of Philosophy

As an educator, we give students different tools to communicate the knowledge they have learned in the general classroom, all of this while creating an environment that is intellectually and emotionally enriching. And, in my particular case as they grow as an artist in the art's students might be able to realize that this a path they would like to follow in life. It becomes important to learn through research and understand the theories that apply to arts and life experiences. As a Visual Arts educator, I like to use a hands-on approach, using various methods to help my students understand art concepts, solve problems, and develop critical thinking skills. Either by working in groups or by themselves on a project, art encourages students to use their critical thinking skills to discuss and solve the problem at hand. These skills play a vital role in the decision-making processes essential to the creation of successful works of art regardless if it is in the realm of visual art, music, theater or drama. As students grow through their education, the arts prepares them to interact with others and think through problems logically.

As a current Department Chair of the Visual Arts Department, I am always assessing how my students are learning the curriculum they are engaging with. It is imperative to first make sure they are accomplishing the vision set forth by the school and then making sure they are achieving the State standards and benchmarks. I feel it is my job to get students involved in identifying their learning needs, outcomes, and attainable objectives. Ultimately, I believe it is important to align the curriculum of the arts to the rest of the school. Through cross-curriculum lesson planning, this can be done by selecting lessons, strategies and materials that give the students the chance to try out their ideas and take risks, in turn promoting learning. This year I took upon myself to infuse the arts deeper into all classrooms by aligning my classes to the schools curriculum, i.e.: if they are learning Life Science in the Elementary then they will be doing art projects based on Life Science, High School, and Middle School student have been creating art based on Western Civilization and Classical Literature because that is what their curriculum is this year. Next year it is already set up that art will be based on U.S. History. This way of thinking has never taken place at my current school until this year.

When it comes to students needs I also found it effective to be willing to adapt lesson plans and strategies to fit their current needs as learners, yet continued focus on the goals of the curriculum. As an educator, I will provide my students with the ingredients, tools, and knowledge that will be needed to create their own successes. So, the ideal outcome for the students in my classroom is that they will feel challenged, pushed and expected to deliver to the best of their learning ability. At the same time Creating a classroom atmosphere that is genuine, empathetic, and caring will open doors for students and provide for a level of mutual acceptance of trust, respect and cooperation. I feel that if this type of relationship is established the students will be willing to try new methods and techniques through trial and error giving them the experiences that are needed today in the visual arts and life.

My background has allowed me the understanding of how to implement effective classroom management techniques that keep the focus on education within the classroom and, this happens when a fair and consistent practice is in place in my classroom and with my colleagues. An essential part of my management and organization skills involve developing a climate that encourages my students to do their best and to be excited about what they are learning. I have managed and supervised over 200 adults while working for the State of Michigan and as an Art Director in advertising you have to have a good understanding of the needs of your client while at the same time keeping a team of designers on the correct path.

When the situation entails technology, technology can be both assistive and actual, meaning I can take my iPad from being a document camera for doing demonstrations on a projector so all students regardless of the number can see too, conducting online research in most any museum in the world. This type of classroom atmosphere allows for a student's creative expression that fosters problem solving and reflective thinking while promoting originality, imagination, and creativity. Because I am a self-driven person I read my many blogs, websites and, attend conferences and watch webinars that help promote my interest of technology and how it can be used both personally and professionally as a life long learner. Beyond the classroom, I also teach and run the Yearbook at my current school, teaching students everything from layout design to running Adobe Suite Software.

On most days, you can find me at most every event in the school and eating lunch in my room with students. And, when I have a class canceled for whatever reason I like to get out and to greet people I normally would not see. This gives me a chance to meet parents at the end of the day I might not get to see, cheering on students at a sporting event or even sitting with one of the younger students in the hallway while they read a book. In the end, I like to be engaged in every aspect of the educational environment, as a teacher, a mentor, a colleague others can depend on, in general, a well-rounded person.