

Philosophy of Education

By Wesley L. Stewart

Becoming a lifelong learner and active artist are the two anchors in my philosophy.

Education is a collective learning process for both student and educator. My job is to guide students to observe the world around them externally and internally, think critically, and communicate ideas through artistic, oral, or written expression. I foster a classroom climate that allows students to speak and engage freely about all types of content, personal interests, motivations, and influences. Opinions are valued. Laughter, support, openness, hands-on experience, and discussion amplify this idea further. In addition, students are encouraged to be ambitious in their own learning and responsible for the outcome during projects and grades. The structure of my teaching should build in every student self-confidence, curiosity, hard work, personal expression, time-management, creativeness, team building, and meeting deadlines, which are key skills in any field. How I teach Art Appreciation energizes me. This class provides the opportunity to engage with a melting pot of students who know little to nothing about art. These students give me fresh perspectives on historical and contemporary artworks. For studio courses, I want to give practical knowledge in tools and techniques that carry on outside the classroom and collaborate to implement a safety culture that works for everyone.

Making art is very important to me. It is and will always be an outlet during the best and worst of times. Young artists are overwhelmed when coming to higher education, some with lack of emotional support. Through their actions, my mentors showed me what a professional artist is. I carry on that tradition by being a role model to my students, both in and out of the classroom. As an educator, I help students improve their conceptual, technical, and professional skills throughout their time in school and post-school, such as writing letters of recommendation. As a working artist, I can provide an understanding of public art opportunities, contemporary trends, and gallery work.