Education Philosophy

Arts Integration is more than meets the eye, or more than the term indicates. For myself, and many others that I know, Arts integration education was life changing in so many ways. Right now the practice is small, and schools are few and far between, but the process and the ideas behind the practice yield excellent results. This is especially true for learners that fall outside the norm of our school standards as far as the pen and paper learners we cater too.

In our ideas of deconstructing the colonial classroom meant to generate factory workers of general education, it seems to me that arts integration solves a lot of problems. These problems of colonial structured rows of desks become highly configurable rooms that often remain irrelevant as students get up on their feet to craft something with their hands, or walk the space to convey ideas, or act out historical stories. My philosophy is to find these avenues of highly visual and kinesthetic works that stick in people’s minds as quality, memorable moments that help to retain the source material better in their memories. After all, think back to your fondest memories, or why you remember facts from schools. There probably were lessons that were hands-on, and artsy that tie to your learning. I know I have them, and I constantly have those memories kept alive by seeing similar lessons that remind me of them. I remember going to a different room and dissolving lifesavers candy in water in a number of ways that we chose while tying it to the necessary work that science required. I also remember building a toy boat with my grandfather to enter in a competition about buoyancy. Point is, these are the things that stick with me, and not the 100-question math worksheet.

Which of these are inclusive? These are all great assignments to teach group work with! Experiments and hands-on work. I found in my experience that students are more likely to be kind and collaborate with fun group work than to compare and contrast to others on individual assignments. It’s easy to monitor and assess these groups by walking around and watching them interact, speaking with them, and having them explain their work. It helps if you scramble the groups up as well to create full classroom cohesion. This is my belief, and experience.

Ultimately, I would like to find these avenues in lessons in my teaching, hang onto them, and have them to use year after year until my units are largely memorable work tied to the necessary tasks within school.