Art Autobiography

Danielle Bianco-Sheldon

Endeavor STEM Teaching Certificate Project

Recall

Some of my earliest memories of art take place before I even began school. My dad was creative and loved to draw and build things. I remember being a young child and my dad and I would have “arts and crafts” time. It might be a drawing activity, creating something, decorating a pumpkin for Halloween, or even building something together. My dad worked a lot, but I loved spending time with my dad when he was home and this was one of my favorite activities. As a small child, I also loved coloring in coloring books with both my mom and my grandmom. They would tell me I was “good at coloring in the lines.” From an early age, I saw art as something that was fun and something that I was good at doing.

When I began school, I must admit I did not have a lot of art lessons. I went to a small, catholic school and art was not a priority. We did not go to art class or have a school art teacher, but some of my teachers did incorporate art into the lessons and activities. I still remember some of the art lessons such as making Halloween witch mobiles, creating Valentine’s Day decorations, cutting out snowflakes, doing symmetry activities, and learning to draw a cube and an ice cream cone. The teacher who inspired me the most in art was my favorite teacher, Mrs. Klingner. She was my fourth-grade teacher and I loved her. It is ironic because I taught fourth grade for many years and love teaching this grade.

Mrs. Klingner was not only kind and encouraging, but she was also a gifted artist. She taught me to be a better drawer and to be creative. After she left my school, she went on to be the art teacher for a nearby private academy. She also started giving group art lessons afterschool and I was so excited that my parents let me attend these. Two or three other students and I would go to her house once a week for these lessons. I not only was able to stay in contact with my favorite teacher, but I also learned a great deal about art through these lessons. I remember Mrs. Klingner teaching me how to properly draw a face, how to show perspective in my drawings, and how to make fancy letters for posters.

I always enjoyed drawing and some of my artwork was chosen for yearbook covers and contests while I was in elementary school. If I had free time, I would sketch in a notebook and I loved to make cards and pictures for my teachers and family members. I would say I spent less time drawing in high school, but that is when I focused more on the performing arts such as dance and theater. I also gained a better appreciation for music and poetry at this time. I did not take any high school art classes but took several music classes and joined the color guard as part of the marching band.

When I began college, one of my first education classes was “Teaching Students Art.” I really enjoyed this class and remember making a portfolio of art projects and creating art lesson plans. I also had the opportunity to be creative and use my art skills often during student teaching. I did many fun

art activities with the students and helped my cooperating teacher with posters and bulletin boards for the classroom. Overall, I have had wonderful experiences with art (time spent with my dad, mom, grandmom, friends, and my favorite teacher) as well as a time to be creative. My memories of art are all positive and contribute to me enjoying art and wanting to do art activities with both my students and my own three children.

Reflect

I have spent some time reflecting on my own art experiences and seem to relate them to very happy memories. Art makes me think of important people in my life who were very supportive and influential to me. I was encouraged to be creative and to try new types of arts such as watercolors, pastels, oil paints, and sculpting. Over the years, I had many art lessons with Mrs. Klingner as well as other art teachers and took drawing lessons, painting lessons, ceramics, and enjoyed making various crafts (jewelry, wreaths, holiday decorations, vases, etc.) As I grew older, I realized that art can be a very special gift for others. I spent a lot of time making crafts and gifts, which I enjoy giving to others.

I am definitely not the best artist in the world, but I always try my best and enjoy doing art activities. I often think of who I am making a drawing or gift for and I have a desire to make that person something truly special. As a teacher, I feel that my love of art has been very beneficial. It has helped me

to create art projects and lessons for my students, draw pictures on the Smartboard to support my lessons, and even to design bulletin boards and classroom displays.

Connect

When I first think about art, I think of my earliest memories of art that include drawing, coloring, and other arts and crafts projects. I typically think of things such as paint, glue, scissors, coloring books, and maybe even glitter. When I dig deeper, I consider art to be so many more things now. I think of other areas of art such as theater, dance, poetry, and, music. I also think of important artists and their artwork such as famous paintings and sculptures. I have had the opportunity to visit art museums and exhibits displaying important pieces of art and have developed a true appreciation for the arts.

On the other hand, some of my favorite pieces of art today are those created by my students and my own children. A special card from a student, a picture from my son, or a poem made by my daughter are all now “masterpieces” to me. I have many of my own children’s art projects on display around my house and filed in containers to save. I have student artwork displayed in the hallways and in my classroom. All these pieces of art are important and unique and are very special to me.

I hope to make art a positive experience for my students and my children. My youngest daughter loves art and dreams of being an artist. I am always encouraging her to draw and create. I am excited to learn new ideas related to art and to combine art with some of my other favorite subjects such as math and science. I hope to create STEAM activities that incorporate cross-disciplinary learning in creative and meaningful ways. Art can be so powerful and I hope to be someone who can encourage my students to be creative and to love art like I do.