

Transitioning from *Student to Teacher*



Neri Luzietti listens as fourth grade students explain their understanding of how to marble paper.

Pam Stephens

As a student teacher—or someone who will soon be a student teacher—who is it that you picture in your mind's eye when you think of yourself? Do you see yourself as a student, a teacher, or a combination of the two? Chances are you feel a bit ambiguous about who you are or where you will fit in the school environment. After all, as the label implies, you are simultaneously “student” and “teacher.” While it is true that as an educator you should be a lifelong

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learner, the reality is that you are much closer to being a teacher than a student.

Visualizing yourself in the role of professional educator requires that you recognize certain characteristics and habits of mind that set students apart from teachers. Some of the most important teacher attributes fall under the broad categories of knowledge of students, content knowledge, curriculum management, and professional responsibilities.

This brief checklist is offered as a self-evaluation tool; an instrument to help you gauge where you are in your personal transition from student to teacher. While this should not be considered a complete list or a scientific measure, it nonetheless provides markers to help you determine your progress.

Instructions: Place a check mark by each skill or habit of mind that you meet. When you are finished, count the number of check marks. Draw a continuum that begins at zero and ends at forty-five (0 = Student Mode and 45 = Teacher Mode). Place your number on the continuum to roughly estimate your progress from student to teacher.

Knowledge of Students

- Know that individual differences (e.g., personal backgrounds, abilities, and interests) in students exist.
- Be aware that students have different learning styles.
- Realize that students learn in different ways and at different paces.
- Understand that artistic development is complex; that physiological, experiential, and social factors affect this development.
- Distinguish the stages of artistic development in regards to creating and responding to art.
- Insightfully observe students to determine individual differences and special needs.
- Allow students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Content Knowledge

- Know a variety of studio skills.
- Know traditional and new technologies.
- Understand the multiple contexts in which art is created (e.g., cultural and historical).
- Distinguish between aesthetic and artistic purposes of art.
- Make meaningful interpretations and judgments about personal artwork and the artwork of others.
- Develop a comprehensive and meaningful art-based approach to instruction to promote student learning.

Curriculum Management

- Know that the content of art is essential to curriculum decisions and should be coached in the context of student, school, and community beliefs and needs.
- Select, develop, adapt, and modify art-based curricular activities to support academic achievement in students.

- Develop a meaningful interdisciplinary curriculum that encompasses art history, a wide variety of art-makers, diverse cultures, philosophies, techniques, and processes.
- Make reasoned and insightful selections of artworks to support teaching goals.
- Manage simultaneous art-based activities.
- Communicate well (e.g., facilitating discussions and promoting critical thinking in students).
- Acknowledge that assessment in art is necessary.
- Understand that assessment in art is a joint venture for teachers and students.
- Use multiple methods of assessment (formal and informal, formative and summative,) and a range of strategies such as portfolios, journals, critiques, and discussions.

- Implement short-term and long-term planning.
- Exhibit well-developed teaching methods and practices.
- Design or implement art learning experiences that require higher-order and critical thinking skills.
- Provide learning opportunities for students to work in cooperative or collaborative groups.
- Introduce ideas about career options in the visual arts.
- Provide opportunities for all students to display what they know and can do in art.

Professional Responsibilities

- Recognize that involvement with schools and communities is vital.
- Publicly share curriculum goals.
- Communicate how the art curriculum coordinates with school, district and state curriculum guidelines.

- Conduct research in the classroom.
- Know that individual contributions to the field of art education are integral to the growth of the profession.
- Demonstrate fairness and equality among all students.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate success in art to their peers, family, and the community.
- Recognize that stereotypes about art and art educators exist.
- Provide leadership.
- Model to students what it means to be educated.
- Know that systematic reflection contributes to stronger teaching practice.
- Systematically reflect upon personal teaching practices and the practices of others.
- Articulate an art teaching philosophy.
- Know that professional development is ongoing.
- Seek advice, help, and mentoring from others.
- Practice positive attitudes towards art programs that, in turn, develop positive attitudes towards the visual arts.
- Accept responsibility for personal actions. 

References

Readers are encouraged to review their state standards for professional teachers, as well as the Standards for Art Teacher Preparation as defined by the National Art Education Association.

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