



**CLAUDIA ENNIS**  
artist / nerdist / teaching enthusiast

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## PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT

Choice based classrooms allow for student artists work together in the classroom and navigate through the studio. Often students work together during open studio time, making art that to adults may have no meaning, but for them is a fully articulated world and work of art. While direct student teaching as “experts” may not be visible, students often silent teach, done through copying, collaboration, and advisory critiquing. I would become a coach and advisor to my classroom, never explicitly stating what I want students to do, instead challenging students to find their own creative solutions.

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## PERSONAL CONTEXT

Teaching to me is about bringing fun and the student’s personality into the work. My artistic education was the epitome of standardized and systematic teaching, focusing only on skill and final product, not the process or personal style. Those teaching methods mentally blocked me from making work outside the norm. Only recently have I been able to explore what I truly enjoy in art. I want my students to feel this freedom through material exploration. I want them to be able to take risks, play, try a method and fail, try another and succeed. The foundation of choice-based pedagogy is that the student is the artist. This means more than creating, it means they have control over what they make and how they make it. This sounds like it has potential to become a chaotic classroom, but through big ideas that cast a wide-umbrella for interpretation, a reign of control is created.

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## CLASSROOM CONTEXT

More often than not, classrooms are regarded as the teachers space. It is my goal that the art classroom be the student’s space. I want them to feel comfortable there and that they have a safe place outside of rigorous academics to be themselves. I often think about ways that students can own the classroom and utilize the space. Using class artwork to adorn the classroom is the first easy step, but I would also like to use student choice on instructional posters, decorative themes, and comforting spaces. Having open material stations creates a fun and exploratory environment during open studio time and assignments that do not limit creativity.

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