



Dianne St. Clair

SECONDARY MEDIA & FILM TEACHER

TEACHER STATEMENT

I embrace teaching as an opportunity to challenge, inspire and empower, and I am deeply committed to providing quality learning experiences to support and develop each students' intellectual, emotional, and social wellbeing. I find this is most successfully accomplished in a caring, supportive environment which students feel safe to take risks, and to think and act critically, creatively, and independently.

Teaching provokes me to evaluate my own thinking, charges my curiosity and creativity, and pushes me to achieve academic and artistic excellence. Modeling these learner traits in the classroom is among the many objectives that guide my choice of pedagogy. Some techniques that I integrate into everyday interactions to motivate students and nurture relationships are: demonstrating caring (Kerman, Kimball, & Martin, 1980), recognizing student's strengths and success to instill pride (Kerman et al., 1980), communicating positive expectations (Kerman et al., 1980). Beyond creating a favorable learning environment, these approaches effectively buffer the impact of factors that might otherwise have a negative impact on academic achievement.

I am drawn to Media and Film studies as these subjects are aligned with my own expressivity and expertise. I enjoy teaching the how the cultural, creative, and communicative scopes within visual media shapes our perspectives of the world around us. Lessons in media literacy and film studies encourage respectful discourse, build citizenship skills, and foster collaboration as a team. I am particularly intrigued with the effects of the rich, ever-changing media landscape and growing trends among students towards increased passion for and reliance on technologies for communication and entertainment (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). This prompts me to address digital equity in the classroom, research how the internet is changing what it means to be literate, and create highly relevant learning experiences that serves all students (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). With my combined teaching experience and professional expertise, I especially enjoy teaching units in which students learn to tell their stories, promote a cause, or bring awareness through multimedia platforms.

I rely on my professional knowledge, extensive IB training and experience (MYP Language Curriculum and English Acquisition, and DP Film), IB examiner experience, and ongoing research and professional practice to inform my teaching strategies. Units are designed and delivered with a focus on inquiry-based learning through a constructivist approach. Global contexts and key concepts provide a framework of learning, and authentic experiences are provided through practical applications of skills and hands-on learning.

Students read, produce, and analyze written and visual texts respectively. To understand how writers and filmmakers communicate messages regarding the human experience, students learn to identify the elements used to convey meaning. Contextualizing texts through a theoretical framework and the practical aspects of producing texts (short stories, poetry, written novel analysis, film projects exploring specific roles) are often regarded as favorite assignments by students.

Embedded within my media curriculum is the theoretical framework found in new literacies (Leu et al., 2004), and new media literacies (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006) in which social skills are developed through collaboration and networking. These skills build on the foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical analysis skills. The new media literacies, contextualized within digital media assignments, require students to practice skills such as performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, and distributed cognition. I also employ the fundamental theory of multimodality (Kress, 2003; New London Group, 1996), including texts such as print, video, still images, audio, music to offer learners unique ways to create and convey meaning.

I've had the privilege of working with secondary students at all stages of development and from all walks of life. I believe every student possesses unique capabilities to achieve higher learning when given the appropriate support. To meet the needs of diverse learners (IEP, SEN, 504, ESL, EFL and ESL), I employ differentiated instruction strategies such as: visual organizers, audio/video materials and instruction, flexible grouping, peer helpers, tiered assignments, modified formative and summative assessments, accessible content and resources (print/digital).

Having worked in multi-cultural international schools has helped me to gain and foster a deeper intercultural appreciation. The study and inclusion of divergent cultures gives students access to information across the globe, creating a better understanding and appreciation of our differences. Students gain experience firsthand on how tolerance, respect for equal rights, and ethical/ moral issues can be practiced and applied responsibly within a global society.

My ultimate hopes for my students are that they enjoy discovering knowledge distinctly relevant to their lives and recognize that the overall participatory nature of the learning process is a life-long skill. It is most gratifying to facilitate learning as students discover their creative and technical talents, find their own 'voice, and learn to apply their own stylistic conventions to written text and/or practical film projects (transfer). I enjoy teaching students skills which they can apply towards the rapidly changing creative industries; however, the *true measure of student success* lies in how prepared they are to accomplish their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals through their knowledge, responsibility, their connection to the school and to the wider community.



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