

# B

## CREATE A HEALTHY CLASSROOM CULTURE

**GOAL:** Teaching Artists are capable of creating a classroom culture that supports quality teaching and learning.

### Classroom Culture

Teaching Artists create a positive, strengths-based and distinctive classroom culture by:

- Challenging negative attitudes or practices
- Ensuring all students are honored in the program
- Helping prepare students for college, career, life, and ongoing artistic practice
- Reflecting a shared belief in the importance of learning and hard work
- Modeling the highest levels of civility, honesty, and respect
- Valuing students for their strengths, desires, self-determined needs
- Allowing students to play a role in planning instruction as appropriate
- Avoiding top down communication styles and acting in a strengths-based, sensitive manner
- Offering warm, caring, and developmentally appropriate feedback

### Personal Self-Awareness

There is an inherent power to the Teaching Artist role when working with students. Awareness about how this power plays out in the classroom can help Teaching Artists check their own assumptions, understand their own privilege, and operate in a way that relies not on role power, but on the powers of teaching and artistic practices.

In particular, Teaching Artists cultivate personal self-awareness by:

- Developing and reflecting on a personal inventory of self (e.g. personal identity, motivations, needs, limitations, strengths, values, beliefs, emotions, habits, and implicit or explicit biases)
- Understanding their own cultural identity in the context of the cultural identities of students and communities and challenging their own assumptions
- Monitoring how they react when anxious, confused, traumatized, or uncomfortable
- Not confusing their position as a teacher with power of authorship over student experiences

### Artistic Self-Awareness

Artistic self-awareness is a part of personal self-awareness, but more closely tied to the Teaching Artists' lived experience within the art form. Teaching Artists teach with artistic self-awareness by:

- Bringing their own experience in the art form and the artistic community into the classroom for students to see, experience, and learn from
- Leading with curiosity about and love for the art form
- Demonstrating how personal and artistic self-awareness can inform and deepen the artistic process and improve artistic products
- Embracing improvisation within the art form

### Cultural Inclusion

Teaching Artists provide culturally-relevant programs by:

- Demonstrating sensitivity to language preferences
- Taking extra steps to demonstrate accessibility and avoid projecting elitism, especially when working with Western traditions or “the Canon”
- Communicating directly with families about how they can be better engaged
- Understanding how to create safe spaces within the classroom
- Understanding and being sensitive to potential abuses of power within the youth development space
- Possessing knowledge and understanding of the community at hand

### Professionalism

Teaching Artists embody professionalism within their organizations as well as within school and community partnerships by:

- Attending every class session and seeking coverage for planned absences
- Working with patience and energy
- Leading decision-making processes that are grounded in the organization’s mission, vision, and values
- Complying with policies and practices of the organization and its partners
- Enacting the highest standards of teaching, artistic, and personal integrity

