

Lucy Bartholomee, Ph.D.

Teaching Statement

Third year review (2023-2026)

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Their success is my success.

The creative experience of opening doors for others to express their ideas, emotions, values, and beliefs through art is an incredibly rewarding way to live your life. My teaching role in Art Education focuses on preparing students to be such artist-educators, empowered to inspire their future students through creativity and artistic knowledge and skills. I introduce and model for them a wide range of pedagogical philosophies and teaching strategies. We study contemporary themes, issues, and school curriculum, in addition to skills required by the Texas Education Agency and the College of Education. In the arts, the experiential creativity of learning-by-doing is inspiring and instructive, and thus informs the student learning outcomes, assignments, and goals of my art education classes.

I strive to be an encouragement to my students, to seize upon every available opportunity to challenge and uplift them. Through teaching and mentoring, I seek to be a persistent voice for truth and integrity, and to create an environment where all students feel included, represented, and welcome. Each year it is my goal to provide a learning environment that is both stimulating and safe, where students are exposed to new ideas, artwork, philosophies, and perspectives, and where they are comfortable asking questions and risking creative answers to solve new challenges.

As Area Coordinator for Art Education, I give considerable attention to the curriculum and student learning outcomes for the art education courses I teach: ART 3322 Introduction to Art Education, ART 3323 Planning & Constructing Arts Curricula, ART 3359 Applying & Teaching Arts Curricula, and ART 4365 Technology in Art Education. These courses facilitate building knowledge about art curriculum for Early Childhood-Twelfth grade learners, introduce child development, and address compelling issues in the field of art education. We study and practice teaching strategies and methods in a variety of settings. The courses must also support the Bachelor of Fine

Arts degree requirements and prepare students for the expectations of the College of Education for clinical teaching (also called student teaching). The Texas Education Agency has many requirements for certification that are included in these courses, such as a thorough understanding of strategies to meet the needs of special education students (through physical accommodations, instructional modifications, and adaptive media and tools). They must also prepare for two formal exams (Art Content and Pedagogies and Professional Responsibilities), earn clearance to register, and pass these exams to achieve state certification. As Area Coordinator, it is my responsibility to ensure that the coursework and overall program are designed to prepare our students to meet all of those expectations by their graduation date.

Therefore, I am responsible for a wide range of support for about eighty Art Education majors. This includes advising them on course planning, giving approval to register for restricted courses, and guiding them through their course selections in coordinated support with the advisors. Each week I respond to dozens of emails and meet with a few students in person for academic advising. I coordinate about 20 students per semester in the completion of 50 hours of observation in EC-12th grade classrooms with certified art educators prior to student teaching (required by the Texas Education Agency).

I prepare students for their certification exams both inside and outside of course work. This begins within the art education classes with a thorough review of materials provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Khan Academy, Flipgrid, 240 Tutoring, and other resources. After they complete my practice test for the TEA Art Content exam with an eighty percent or higher, I notify the College of Education Certifications office to clear them for the real exam. There is a similar process for clearance to take the TEA Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam. This typically happens in the senior year after they have taken required education courses. Students must pass both exams, complete clinical teaching, and graduate before they are recommended for teacher certification with the state of Texas.

Leading up to their summative semester of clinical / student teaching, I guide students in preparation with an orientation meeting describing the expectations and requirements, and advice for navigating the space of their mentor teacher's classroom.

We meet periodically during the semester to reflect upon their current experiences, transitions, and steps they should take to get hired for their first teaching job. As their student teaching ends and their job hunt begins in earnest, I am regularly contacted as a reference by schools and districts. This includes phone calls, confidential questionnaires, and emails. I am always proud to give the recommendation that precedes the offer of a contract for their first art teaching job.

I am a firm believer in experiential learning as a meaningful and effective pedagogy. I strive to provide hands-on experiences in a meaningful setting. One example of this pedagogy is an assignment that begins with selecting a relevant issue or topic in art education, conducting independent research, then presenting their findings to their peers in class. This serves as a first introduction to the embodied experience of teaching – standing in front of a classroom and effectively delivering information, conducting discussion, and guiding creative activities.

My research endeavors consistently inform my teaching practice. In this next passage, I will provide a summary of recent research that inspired a significant innovation to my curriculum. I conducted a nation-wide research survey in 2022 called *Exit/Us: Reversing the Exodus of Art Educators*, and in 2023-24 I conducted another national study called *Picturing Equity*. (More details can be found in my research statement.) Although this research was conducted prior to the window of this review, it is important to demonstrate how my research directly impacts my teaching during the review period. A significant portion of both studies examined strengths and weaknesses of teacher preparation programs to better prepare the next generation of arts educators. Two significant findings showed a need for increased emphasis on classroom management and more experience in schools with younger students *prior* to clinical teaching. Survey participants (new and experienced art educators) all expressed that they felt under-prepared in these areas. By spending more time in well-run art classrooms, they felt they could learn more hands-on skills and strategies for their own teaching.

As I read and analyzed the data, I made some immediate adjustments to the curriculum in the UTA Art Education courses (Spring 2023). The first was to add two weeks of study specifically on classroom management strategies. This includes pacing

of activities, planning instruction and materials, and strategies for managing groups of young students. I contacted one of the arts magnet schools in the area to set up an opportunity for my UTA students to practice teaching with “real” students in a “real” school. This took place in February of 2023. For the first time, our art education students prepared and delivered lessons to high school students at the Arlington ISD Cavazos Center for Visual and Performing Arts. This facility is marvelous, with advanced art students selected from across the district. I felt this would be a situation where my UTA students could experience delivering a lesson with the best possible setting for success, as indeed it was. They were well prepared, delivered their lessons effectively, then worked with the high school students to create the art projects. There was an immediate boost of confidence among the art education students. They came away with the knowledge that they *are ready and able* present information and guide younger students in successful art making.

With a goal of increasing authentic teaching experiences, I have implemented two additional programs that began the fall semester of 2023. The first is a mentoring program with I.M. Terrell Academy for STEM and Visual and Performing Arts in Fort Worth ISD. Working with art educator Shahrzad Abbasi, a colleague I have known for many years, we developed an ongoing mentoring program. We meet about twice each school year either on their campus or at UTA. They share their artwork in progress and portfolios while the UTA students provide feedback to encourage growth for the younger students. Our students also prepare short art activities to teach and make together. At each gathering there is much enthusiasm and ‘happy chatter.’ Informal mentoring also occurs as they talk about career goals, becoming a college art major, and more.

The second program is a mentoring and teaching opportunity with mid-level art students at Martin High School in Arlington ISD. Here I devised an activity called Table Teaching. UTA students prepare and conduct short lessons, such as guided origami (paper folding) or monoprints (a form ink printing design), with small groups of the high school students sitting at a table that can be completed in about thirty minutes. Then the groups rotate and repeat the lesson. This mentoring program also includes discussion about being an art major and careers in the arts in addition to encouraging them to advance their creative work. This is now an annual program that we conduct every year.

The third school program is a continuation of the first teaching experience at the Cavasos CVPA with Arlington Independent School District. Each year in the early spring, my UTA Art Education students team up to teach a full formal lesson to the high school students. They plan ahead carefully in response to the learning goals and needs shared by Mr. Bruno, the classroom teacher. I discuss their ideas and make suggestions about materials, artists to include, timing, and other issues to consider. They prepare and rehearse, then conduct the lessons for a designated class. Most recently, I added an elementary teaching option for the UTA students who are interested in experience with younger students. For Spring 2025, all students visited their classroom for 6 hours of observation and interaction with the students. Then they planned and conducted a lesson for those classes.

The feedback from these field experiences is excellent. The UTA students gain real world experience and grow in their confidence about becoming a teacher. The teaching expectation is scaffolded, so that they start with leading short discussions in our classroom and gradually grow in complexity and depth of the curriculum and the size and location of the audience. Numerous aspects of teaching are observed and experienced, including classroom management, student abilities and behavior, pacing a lesson, and school climates.

Museum education is another important facet of the UTA Art Education curriculum. The field experience with the Kimbell Art Museum has been in place for several years and provides our students with the opportunity to experience teaching in a museum setting. We have four sessions scheduled for the spring semester. During the first session the Kimbell Museum Educators will give UTA Art Education students guidelines for the program. They will form groups and select the artworks they will use for teaching. We introduce object-based pedagogy and discuss strategies for effective questioning and guiding a group discussion. At the second session UTA students will study and develop an art making activity related to the artwork they selected. At the third session, they will need to be prepared with the presentation and questions related to the art object. They will rehearse this with the rest of the group. Then we will go to the Kimbell's studio classrooms to prepare the art media and materials. For the final session, middle school students are brought in for the museum learning experience.

Our UTA students will conduct their prepared lessons in the gallery, then they will go to the studio area and teach the art making portion of the lessons. This program enhances our students' abilities to prepare and conduct art lessons in a variety of teaching settings and elevates their confidence as they have more encounters with young students in the role of educator.

Additional field experiences I organize for art education students includes visits in the fall semester to the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and the Kimbell Art Museum for presentations about the wide range of programs offered by the museum education staff. We also visit the Art Station, an art therapy organization in Fort Worth, for a comprehensive review of the services they provide, ways that art therapy benefits their clients, and career paths to become a board-certified art therapist after their art education degree is completed. We always have a few students interested in pursuing art therapy as a career, so this is a crucial event for them. I also invite other students who have contacted me about art therapy to join us and learn more about the process.

I also teach a summer course called ART 4392 Visual Culture & Creativity. This course traditionally implements topics in contemporary art with visual and material culture to inspire and guide student art projects. Students research and share current events from the art world such as international exhibits, controversies, crimes, aspects of the art market, and innovations from contemporary artists. In the last two years I have brought in activities that reveal students' awareness of their own creative process and elevate strategies to increase ideation and innovation. This is an exciting course open to all UTA art majors and provides a unique opportunity to build their portfolio and their inherent creativity.

Finally, I have launched a new study abroad program that will travel in May 2026 to Spain. Called "Art & Culture in Spain," this program is carefully designed for UTA Art students from all areas. Students will examine a wide range of Spanish art, architecture, museums, and culture through an immersive program for 15 days in Spain, specifically Seville, Cordoba, Madrid, Bilbao, Guernica, and Barcelona. Activities will include on-site lectures about the art, architecture, history, and culture of each designated place; critical discussion and analysis; creative work and immersion in daily lived experiences. At designated museums, we will meet with education and curatorial professionals to

examine their programs and make global connections. The courses for this Summer 1 program are ART 4392-001 Visual Culture & Creativity taught by myself, and ART 4396-001 Special Studies: Explorations in Art, Culture & Time taught by APOP Cheryl Mitchell, who is also my co-leader for this program. Additionally, graduate students may sign up for ART 5391-002 Independent Study for which I will be the instructor of record.

I have traveled extensively with students over the last 23 years, visiting twenty different countries with mostly high school students and adults. This will be my first formal study abroad program with the university. I began preparing for this in the summer of 2024. I attended a UTA Professional Learning Community for Study Abroad during the 2024-25 school year, 2 sessions per month, to learn about the many expectations and procedures for conducting a faculty led study abroad trip. After designing the itinerary, I began working with Prof. Mitchell to recruit students. I have also spent many hours tracking down scholarships that are available from UTA and elsewhere and putting links to those opportunities into the hands (and inboxes) of interested students. I am looking forward to seeing the fruits of this labor in the form of abundant scholarship funds for the students followed by a fabulous learning experience in Spain.

As we 'live' together in the classroom, students and teachers alike learn about the talents and challenges of those who come from diverse backgrounds and different life experiences. Through creating and talking about meaningful artworks, we find common ground and celebrate the unique ideas we each contribute to the class community. It is the human connection, the empathetic moments of sharing meaningful experiences and cultivating relationships, which brings the deepest joy to my life as an educator.