

From the outside, I seemed like a happy, outgoing kid. I had many friends and was a good student. Inside, I was struggling: I couldn't get my brain to turn off. Dance class was the only place where I felt free. I could lose myself in the music and the movement; I was able to turn off the voices in my brain of what I "should be, and just be myself. When I got to college, I decided to audition for the school musical. I was here that I realized that not only was dancing a huge passion, but theater are well. In theater I could be what've the script called for. I could be my bizarre, unique self!

I believe that children need to be their bizarre, unique selves, and my classroom is just the place to do that. On the first day I tell them, "Listen. I'm weird. You're weird. Let's be weird together!" It is always magical to see their faces light up when I say that. You have permission to be your strange wonderfulness in my class. Laughter and silliness is encouraged, as well as thinking critically about theater and dance.

My students will feel free to create, explore, and make mistakes. In order to succeed, you need to feel. And when you fail, you'll be encouraged to get back up and try again. I believe in them. I believe that they can succeed. Stress is placed on progress, not perfection. My students will also learn that life in the arts isn't just about performance and recognition. Theater and Dance is also about hard work, collaboration and commitment; skills that will help them not only in school, but also in life after school as well.

Not only am I passionate about the fields of theater and dance, I am passionate about teaching my students how to be kind and treat each other well. I stress that not everyone will like everyone else, but that it is important to be kind in spite of our differences. Although I would love it if my students all loved one another, I think it's most important that they leave my classroom loving themselves. We are a dysfunctional family, but we are a family just the same, and we need to treat one another as such.

I believe my passion and curiosity about the art forms will inspire my student's passion and curiosity as well. Although I don't claim that any of them will grow up to be actors or dancers, it's quite possible that they may! If they don't, my hope is that they will have an appreciation for art that they might not have had, had they not attended my class. Participation in the performing arts is the study of what it is to be alive.

Theater and dance have taught me how to appreciate and understand humanity. They have also helped me appreciate and understand myself. From a child who didn't understand her brain to an adult who has been able to create meaning in the world around her, theater and dance have absolutely changed my life. I hope they will change your student's as well.