

Interview Questions for Art Educators:

1. What is your educational background and experience? (Why did you want to be a teacher?) Be thorough, but also keep it to the point and don't ramble!

I graduated Converse University with a BA in Art Education in May of 2023.

I have experience as a teacher, and I was employed at First Presbyterian Weekday School from August 2021- February 2022.

I am an artist and currently have a sculpture displayed in the Spartanburg Science Center for children, students, and their parents.

I am a member of the Spartanburg Artist's Guild and I have had work displayed in their gallery located inside of the Chapman Cultural Center.

In 2020, I worked for the United States Census Bureau as an enumerator in the 2020 Census.

I decided to be a teacher so that I can instill a love of art in my students. Furthermore, my passion is to provide the next generation with the skills they need to enable them to create works of art that allow them to fully express their true selves. I am a lifelong learner of many subjects, and I am confident in my abilities to prepare students to love learning too.

2. Why do you want to work at this school? Do your research ahead of time! We are lucky to have the internet now that allows you to find out all kinds of things about each school before you even visit.

(I am pretending I am applying to Dawkins Middle School.)

Dawkins Middle School stood out to me for its high level of student achievement and overall school morale. I am an alumnus of the school making it a special experience to teach students who are walking a path I once did. I was a practicum student of Dr. Frances Vaughan who worked at Dawkins in the past and spoke highly of the school recommending me to apply.

3. What makes you stand apart from other candidates? (Why should we hire you?) Now is the time to toot your own horn! Bring up all the wonderful qualities you have.

I am an experienced teacher with a diverse background in both artistic endeavors and the management of students. Since I professionally pursue art, I have the skills and knowledge to teach students techniques in fine art while developing a learning-rich environment that encourages creativity and positive self-esteem. I have experience as a professional artist selling my artwork and I am currently working on a portfolio to apply to schools to continue my education.

4. What is your teaching philosophy?

I believe that when a student is provided a positive learning environment along with a teacher that is passionate about their content area, then true learning takes place and students become the best versions of themselves. A positive learning environment occurs when students feel comfortable exploring, making mistakes, and asking questions. Students should feel safe and nurtured while in school and their time here should be structured with consistent routines. Positive student-teacher relationships should have a foundation of mutual respect which forms inside of the classroom. Lastly, having a growth mindset allows students to feel comfortable learning while maintaining high expectations for themselves.

5. What is your biggest strength? What is your biggest weakness? Do not say classroom management. Even if that is the case, you need to be able to manage a classroom to be an effective teacher. Also, being a perfectionist is a “cop-out” answer in my opinion. What I’ve usually answered was a certain area of art that I wasn’t an expert in but had a little bit of experience. Then, I would also say that I am currently learning more about how to use those techniques in the classroom (which I was learning about through research on the internet and books.) So, my advice is to pick a weakness (could even be something like assessment) but explain how you are going to learn more about it.

My biggest strength is my ability to implement academic choice and literacy into my art classroom. Literacy is the foundation of education, and I believe that students have the right to be provided opportunities to read and write in every class, including art. When students are offered choice-based learning, they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation to learn, appreciate their own strengths and learning styles, build positive peer relationships by discovering shared interests, and improve academic and social-emotional skills. I implement academic choice in my classroom through artistic centers. Among these centers are drawing, painting, clay, collage, and a literacy nook center. My book list for the classroom library encompasses a wide range of reading levels and provides students thorough knowledge about artworks, artists, and techniques.

My biggest weakness is printmaking. Although I have taken college-level courses on this subject matter, I still consider it my weakness. I am currently learning more about how to use printmaking techniques in the classroom through research and reading and I have developed lesson plans that explore an entire unit of printmaking that includes linoleum prints as well as mono printing lessons. I am gathering enough supplies for my classroom to include printmaking as one of the academic choice centers provided to the students.

6. Explain your classroom management plan:

There are certain classroom expectations about behaviors such as cell phone usage, tardies, and studio time. Students are given a weekly studio-grade of 100 points, equaling 20 points daily. Students can lose points for excessive cell phone usage or using it inappropriately, for disrupting other students, and for a lack of effort during class. They can also lose points for tardiness, which is 10 points off their daily 20 point grade. When redirecting behavior, I address the student privately, keeping in mind maintaining positive teacher language. If a student has to speak with me privately, they are required to fill out a behavior sheet for the encounter. This sheet asks the students to explain in their own words why they had to meet with me and why they are filling out the sheet rather than working with the materials in the art room. The sheet goes on to ask the students how they can improve their behavior moving forward and asks them to date the paper. This paper is collected by me and filed away. If the behavior continues and the student has filled out two behavior sheets, I call home to the student's guardian where I use the behavior sheets to report the behavior on the phone call. This way I record the encounters in the student's own words so that there is no miscommunication as to why a phone call home is necessary. Lastly, I use an office referral if the behavior still continues. I believe the best way to address classroom behavior is through relationships with students, treating the students with respect, and having this respect be mutual. These relationships can provide classroom management and reduce the need to take disciplinary measures. Private conversations with students about their behavior can demonstrate respect without embarrassing the student.

7. What kinds of extracurricular activities are interested in or have experience in leading?

I am an artist and am currently working on my professional portfolio to continue my education in art. I run a small art business where I sell ceramics, paintings, and sculptures on my art website. I also sell digital art on the blockchain as NFTs. I have a deep love for curating and am also currently working on curating a gallery for art students to display their work for a weekend in Spartanburg.

8. How do you use technology in the classroom?

Art21.com is a wonderful website to have students explore and research on. I use this website to allow students to pick an artist that interests them to write a research paper on. This research paper is their final grade, and they are allowed to use this website and other online resources to gather information. In addition, I teach a unit on digital art where students are allowed to use their school tablets to draw and create artwork for a grade.

9. Say a student is not working on his art project, what would you do?

I first will ask the student what their goal for the day is. Students are then expected to tell me what they will be working on in class and what progress they will be working towards before the end of the class period. If the student continues to be unproductive, I will deduct points off their daily grade. If a student is disrespectful when I ask them what their goal is, I ask them to fill out a behavior sheet. If this disrespectful behavior continues, I call home to the parent. My last resort is a referral.

10. Do you display artwork from an entire class or only select some of them to hang?

I chose artists from each of my classes to hang. This is a reward to the students and those who work hard on their assignments earn this. I always keep in mind having a variety of students and a diverse gallery of artworks on display rather than having repeating mediums.

11. What are 4 important parts of a lesson plan?

Four important parts of a lesson plan are the standards and objectives, this is where I ensure I am meeting state requirements. The next important part of a lesson plan is the hook activity, this activity should spark the students' curiosity about the lesson ahead of them. The third important part is the beginning and middle of the lesson plan; this part should be where the teacher instructs the students and where the students work on their projects. Lastly, the fourth important part of a lesson plan is the closure which should wrap up the lesson and instill the components of the information into the students' memory.

12. How do you feel about diversity at a school?

Diversity is an essential component of a well-functioning school where students can become well-rounded adults who have collaborative respect for all perspectives. A diverse school includes students and staff from a variety of ethnic, socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

13. How do you feel about talking in the classroom? (Yes, those last two are pretty vague!)

As long as students are productively working on their assignments and not hindering the learning of others, students should be permitted to conversate at appropriate volume levels. In fact, having conversations and discussing the relevant objectives is an essential part of a well-rounded classroom.

14. Describe a time you have collaborated with another teacher (or classmate):

When I collaborated with Dr. Vaughan, we worked together to produce a monoprinting lesson for eleventh-grade students at Dorman High School. This lesson included requiring the students to create an original artwork using the correct technique. This lesson introduced students to a new material of printmaking which was gelatin plates that when used correctly, can create beautiful prints.

15. Tell us about a time when a lesson did not go well and what you did when that happened. (This one I was completely unprepared for and had a hard time thinking of a good answer on the spot! We all have lessons that flop.)

One thing that I would improve on in a lesson from the past was that I used the topic of a spirit animal. It came to my attention after the lesson was delivered that spirit animals are a topic of cultural sensitivity. I took this as a learning opportunity and I was thankful for the way my cooperating teacher handled the situation with me.

16. How do you communicate with parents?

I communicate with parents at the beginning of each year with a letter introducing myself and visiting some of the topics I will be covering with their children in art class that year or semester. If a student is misbehaving in class, I call home to the parents. In this phone call, I like to sandwich the problem in between two compliments so that the parent does not misunderstand my respect for them and their child.

17. What would you do if a parent was angry with you?

Usually, anger stems from frustration or miscommunication, so the first thing I would do is try to make sure the parent clearly understands the situation. Next, I assure the parent that I am understanding of their perspective, and I remind them that we both have the same motivating factor: the best interest of the student.

18. How do you differentiate for various levels of learning in the classroom?

Technology is an excellent tool for classroom differentiation. Through a variety of modalities including webquests, internet based research, various apps, and district purchased digital programs like iReady, students can be met where they are regardless of their academic achievement.

19. Describe a time when you have had to deal with misbehavior of a student.

While participating in a practicum at Cleveland Elementary School, a student who was frequently disciplined by the classroom teacher had an outburst directed toward me. The student told me to stop speaking to him when I was offering him materials I thought he would be interested in. At that point I chose to deescalate the situation by giving the student the time and space he needed to calm down. At the end of the class period, I had a conversation with him and explained a better way he could have handled his feelings at that moment. I believe that self-reflection is an important part of a student's behavioral development.

20. Do you have a particular area of art that you work in most?

I am a well-rounded artist who explores several mediums. I focus on ceramics, painting, and sculpture and my work is available for purchase on my website.

21. What questions do you have for us? (Again, research the school to find out a little more before coming up with some questions for them.)

I noticed that you have a winning volleyball team would that be something I could get involved in?

How do students qualify for the Art Visions Program and are there any other extra curricular arts based activities that students can get involved in?