

Trichia Cadette- Diversity Statement

“What is always needed in the appreciation of art, or life, is the larger perspective”. Connections made or at least attempted, where none existed before, the straining to encompass in one’s glance at the varied world the common thread, the unifying theme through immense diversity, a fearlessness of growth, of search, of looking, that enlarges the private and the public world.”..... Alice Walker

As an artist one of the most important or powerful abilities is the “deeper eye”: the ability to see, feel and understand the world around you. This vision requires acceptance and exploration of the differences that exists in this world; differences of race, culture, identity, thought, aesthetic, abilities, emotional connections and experiences. What a bland uninteresting world it would be if everything were the same or just the way we liked it. If there was nothing to challenge our thoughts or perspectives, no source of “discomfort” that forces us to forge our inner gems and create amazing works and innovations that constantly change the world. Our differences are the agents that bind us together and strengthens the bonds of human existence.

For me diversity means more than race or ethnicity, when I think of diversity in education I think of diverse perspectives, types of learning, abilities and contributions. I think of the individual and their distinct abilities. And how that individual’s abilities contribute to the human, creative and intellectual landscapes. My creative eye has always fueled my curiosity and need to connect with people; influencing my desires to travel and experiences cultures different from my own. Leaving home to earn my tertiary education abroad was a combination of opportunity and choice.

Upon completion of my Bachelor’s degree I returned to my home country to begin a career as a high school Theatre Arts teacher. I was placed at a school where students who were unsuccessful at the high school entrance exam were placed; it was an unfortunate (dumping ground) of young minds deemed unworthy. Many of the students suffered from low morale and self-esteem which affected their ability to perform academically. As a creative arts teacher, I was able to structure my lessons to suit the needs and cognitive abilities of my students which allowed for more experiential work, which for them was less terrifying than written assignments. Students were assessed during the first week of classes, I also held structured discussions with students to learn from them, what their perceived barriers were and what they desired from the class and the school. I tailored my lessons based on the information I received from the students and also restructured my evaluation and end of term assessment methods.

I learned a beautiful lesson during my tenure at this particular high school; we all have different abilities and education should function to develop those abilities without hindering the child. I worked with students who were unable to read or write efficiently but were talented and able to perform beyond expectations in their respective disciplines. A little extra care and deliberate action in addressing their needs and creating structures that served to help them and not hold them back went a long way.

One dimensional approaches to education are ineffective and often many are left behind because of their inability to comply with standardized expectations. As an arts leader and nurturer of young minds I hope to continue working to change exclusionary social and developmental norms and create programs that aid in developing diverse young minds.