

Daniel Gray, M.A. in Education: Holistic and Integrative Education



As a teacher at Idyllwild Arts Academy, Daniel Gray is accustomed to taking a unique approach to education. Nestled in California's San Jacinto Mountains, the Arts Academy is an innovative residential high school that teaches creative writing, dance, theater, film, and visual arts to students from around the world. However, no matter the talent, Daniel notes that a life in the arts is not an easy path; many young artists face immense challenges in pursuit of their careers. In order to equip his students with the tools to meet the

challenges ahead, Daniel focused his energy on developing a curriculum that addresses personal growth, balanced living, and coping skills. The result is documented in his project, *The Creative Warrior, A Holistic Approach to Health and Longevity*. His innovative work has helped propel his career forward and earned him the Outstanding Project Award for 2015-2016.

Daniel's new curriculum addresses the demands of being an artist. Reflecting on the lives of the many great artists whose brilliant careers were cut short due to an inability to cope with the weight of their unique professions, Daniel decided to create a curriculum for budding artists that would address the need for more effective coping and life skills.

He describes it as "a holistic approach to health and longevity. It encompasses the mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, and environmental aspects of successful living." The course units explore personal goals, values, community leadership, connection to the environment, and techniques for stress management, relaxation, and healthy living. The curriculum was evaluated by experts in these fields.

Daniel's original intention was to teach the course himself. However, the moment he had his diploma in hand, he was offered a promotion to an administrative position. "I literally had just picked up my diploma at the post office and had it in my backpack when the school administrator offered me a position as Director of Student Life," he commented. Now Daniel plans to use his new administrative position to apply his curriculum on a broader scale through school-wide activities. His curriculum will positively impact the lives of a new generation of artists.