

Teaching Philosophy

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The division between teacher and student is a precarious dimension. As a mediator striving to explain the complexities of art and its context in today's somewhat "uncaring" world, I constantly judge myself and my ability to instruct those I come in contact with. Who can honestly believe that their specific method of teaching is the "best" way? In this regard, who then is truly qualified to instruct students with respect to artistic style and conceptual meaning? These, and other philosophical questions constantly re-surface when I inspect my place in an institution of art and, even more importantly, my position in society.

As a promoter of positive reinforcement, I believe that my thirst for knowledge should be dispersed freely and without dogma. I approach each student separately and individually, never underestimating their maturity, position in society or their willingness to learn. At the University level, I encourage each student to question their previous exposure to art, thoughtfully inspecting all social and political archetypes they find misleading, enlightening or invalid. This investigation helps to prove that incongruous concepts can lead to positive artistic endeavors. Through a juxtaposition of technique, design and craft, I hope to convey a sense of the precise conceptualization required for each student to visually and verbally explain themselves and the inner meaning behind their work.

A typical work environment should be one of experimentation, correction and perfection. Beginning art students, especially those working in the craft-based arenas, tend to frustrate quickly, due to various technical complexities unforeseen during the design process. The transformation from thought to actuality, although a difficult one, requires specificity and commitment. My goal as educator is to ease students into and through the third dimension, assuaging any preconceived fears they have towards their selected medium and the permanency their actions as artists should take. Once they have the basic understanding of what they can create and the various methods required to produce specific ideas, students can develop more rapidly. The midground level of learning becomes the crucial area in a young artist's career, where guidance and attention on my behalf can expound or deflate their dreams and desires. Each student undergoes a form of catharsis, where their vulnerability interacts with their knowledge, pushing them forward towards a more personal art ideal. In the end, this transformation elicits an emotional response, where I learn as much, if not more, from the students than they learn from me.