

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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Education is the most important endeavor a person will pursue in their life. Yet, it is not an endeavor that should be undertaken alone. A teacher is a guide and facilitator to this endeavor. Teaching is an act of great responsibility that has the ability to empower students for a better future. As an instructor it is my responsibility to empower my students with the knowledge necessary to develop their potential. It is also be my responsibility to interact with the community and develop awareness of educational opportunities within individuals that are unaware that higher education is not a closed door to them. Interaction with the local area high school teachers and students to promote educational awareness is essential to student, school, and community success. By interacting with the local community and high schools the local colleges and universities are able to create opportunities that will aid in the development of better lives, a better community, and economic growth in an increasingly complex world.

Energy and enthusiasm are central to my art classroom, particularly on the foundations level where students can quickly lose interest in the content. Direct content instruction is something that often sounds frightening to students because it calls up notions of the monotone professor droning on without any awareness that the students have stopped paying attention. Yet, direct content instruction is something I have come to find as exceedingly valuable and essential to ensuring student understanding of the concepts and ideas being presented. Additionally, it allows for significant concepts to be explored through class discussion. By being energetic and enthusiastic about the content, students typically become more involved in the discussion and more eager to apply what they are learning. Additionally, I augment my instruction through the application of technology. The application of technology in every classroom, not only Art, is essential in an increasingly technological world.

Application is central to any studio art classroom. By building on a foundation of direct content instruction students are more prepared to face the visual challenges presented them in exercises designed to practically apply and reinforce the content. While exercises are useful for reinforcing content they can a somewhat prescriptive. Therefore, I divide my assignments into two primary categories: Research/ Application Assignments and Project Assignments. Research/ Application assignments allow for in-class practice of specific techniques and concepts and additionally allow for assignments that center upon researching historical and modern approached to the content presented. The project assignment is designed to allow the student to practically apply the content in a creative way and provide the student with work that they may include in their final course portfolio. The time spent on research/application and project assignments affords me the opportunity to move around the classroom and work with students individually to determine individual levels of content understanding. It allows me to answer questions, pose questions, and challenge students on the individual level.

Direct content instruction and practical application would be useless to students without a means of evaluation. Regular quizzes and a written final punctuated with writing assignments allow for evaluation of student understanding and application of terminology and process. Critiques, for both research/application and project assignments provide the students with a way to assert what they have learned and aid each other in their work. For critiques and grading I establish criteria for the students to meet. This criteria is established in a rubric which defines the expectations for the students. The criteria also provides clear explanation as to why the students have received the grades they have and notes for how they might improve.

The three-fold tactic of content, application, and critique combined with energy and enthusiasm has been very successful for me in the classroom. As an educator, I am willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that my students learn. As an artist, I support and challenge my students in ways necessary to their growth as artists, as individuals, and as part of their community.