

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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My teaching philosophy is Progressive and student-centered, positioned around the belief that students learn by doing. My job as an educator is to provide an environment in which students feel safe and motivated to take an active role in their learning. I introduce techniques, materials, and concepts while encouraging students to treat knowledge as a tool rather than an authority. This approach creates reciprocal learning – I offer context and practice skills, and each student offers a unique blend of experiences and perspectives.

I was raised within an educational model designed around Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which approaches learning through distinct modes of intelligence rather than a single, general ability. Physical intelligence refers to stored knowledge developed through tactile, practiced learning. This type of intelligence governs the ability to create and express oneself with the body. Control over the physical body and the relationship between mind and body is considered part of a wider scope of human potential. As an educator, I place high value on the tactile intelligences that are learned through the body and created through practice. Becoming attuned with materials and hand skills requires a trained attention that is invaluable for this generation of young artists.

Having worked in several different academic environments as a teacher and a student, I understand the distinctions between successful and unsuccessful classroom experiences. Students experience the most growth within inclusive, accessible atmospheres. There are many barriers to entry for people who feel unwelcome or incapable in studio environments. I have personally experienced gender exclusion to varying degrees throughout my career. My most valuable mentors have seen me as a capable person, encouraged me to use my voice, and held me to high standards. I am committed to creating spacious, safe, and rigorous learning environments for future generations of artists.

During a three-dimensional design foundations course, I was teaching students how to use the tools in the wood shop. None of them had any experience with the process, and many felt intimidated by the saws and heavy equipment. By the end of the week, they were comfortably chopping 2x4s, creating curves on the band saw, and using a nail gun to attach components together. Their final products reflected a confident use of tools, and more importantly, the learning process instilled a belief in their ability to move through the initial apprehension that comes along with learning a new skill.

Students must feel secure before this environment can emerge. I set a clear tone in class immediately by implementing inclusive policies such as the use of gender-neutral language

throughout my syllabus and course materials, standards of respect, and value for diversity in the classroom. Through pre- and post-course questionnaires, I solicit feedback from students, which helps me to continuously grow as an educator. I treat students as capable and valuable people whose perspectives are worth sharing.

To create generative spaces for students, I ask careful and targeted questions rather than prescribing answers or conclusions. I acknowledge the inherent difficulties that come along with sharing artwork and process, outputs that can be personal and emotionally charged. With an established climate of respect, students consistently speak up and engage one another in class. In critiques I stand back and allow students to strengthen their voices, offering clarification and support when necessary. Providing openings in these critical moments allows students to arrive at profound stages of self-discovery through their own investigation.

The efficacy of this communication hinges on my ability to be perceptive and adaptable to individual learning styles. As I sharpen my communication skills, I can offer richer and richer learning opportunities for students. This approach is shaped by the experiences I had as a student, where my most significant artistic development happened under the tutelage of professors who held me to a high standard while pushing me to make independent choices and develop my voice.

During the pandemic, I adapted an introductory ceramics course for online delivery. Students picked up supply kits and dropped off assignments for firing. I guided them through setting up workspaces from home, created video demonstrations for each assignment, and kept them engaged with the content. The students worked hard, completed every project on time, and fully participated in class discussions. In course evaluations, a student said that it was their favorite course they had taken at the university. My passion for the material, paired with students' curiosity and work ethic allowed us to sustain an exciting learning environment in the face of many obstacles. Adaptability is an essential, mutable skill that I will always practice and teach.

I am kind to my students and often use humor to set them at ease. The content we cover cultivate curiosity, and students have a role in shaping their learning through the investigation of their personal interests. Because of this, the content of each course is unique. Students are always held to a high standard of effort, time investment and participation in class activities. Students always move me with their hard work, thoughtfulness, and growth. Creating the opportunity for people to realize their creative potential is profoundly rewarding, and my background has given me the sensitivity to relate to students and provide a supportive foundation for their creative expression to thrive.