

## **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

Over time I have tried a variety of teaching methods, and through that experimentation I have arrived at a pair of principles that direct my pedagogy. The two most important things to me as a teacher are tailoring my instruction to each individual student and fostering an atmosphere of rigor and hard work.

In its purest form, the challenge of teaching is to figure out how to effectively communicate a concept or idea to another person. I find that much easier to do when I know my students, so I make a concerted effort to learn about each one. This familiarity helps me ensure that my biases and preconceptions are not coloring my judgement, and it allows me to convey concepts and techniques to each student in a way that is relatable and digestible.

Additionally, I find that treating students with dignity and encouraging them to contribute their thoughts and perspectives to the class conversation complicates and enriches the content of the course. The diverse viewpoints and experiences extant in a classroom are an educational asset to utilize for the benefit of all. It is my job as the teacher to provide a safe and open environment for those ideas to be shared and to direct the discourse toward constructive ends.

Though many of my students are artistically talented, I usually find that of secondary importance. I believe that effort and rigor are much more predictive of success than talent. As such, I try to structure my classes in a research-oriented manner. I stress the value of practice and the development of ideas through iteration. I direct them to consider the implications of those ideas, and we discuss the ways in which their formal choices alter how their work functions. During critiques and discussions, I generally shy away from offering definitive answers. Rather, I pose questions to my students intended to help them find their own answers. When required, I favor offering explanations that reflect the complexity and contingency inherent in art making.

Despite taking the work of teaching seriously, I try not to take myself too seriously. I generally keep the atmosphere in the classroom light; I find that the students are easier to penetrate when they are enjoying themselves. The levity usually opens the class discourse and loosens their guard. Once I have their attention, it's easy to infect them with my enthusiasm.