

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Introduction

There are several points to consider when describing my teaching philosophy. As I thought about how to approach this statement, it took me a while to condense all of my thoughts. What I realized though this discovery is my purpose in teaching centers around six main areas. These include Giving Back to My Profession, Student Success, Course Core Competencies, Interpersonal Skills, Linking the Classroom to Work Experience, and Adapting and Learning to be the best teacher I can possibly be.

Giving Back to My Profession

I thoroughly love what I do everyday working as a graphic designer. I would like to help others who are interested in becoming a professional artist to succeed in their passion. Another reason for me to get involved in the creative community is to help solve a problem I encounter as a working designer. One of the main areas of deficiency I see regularly during my work day are the struggles creative people have articulating their ideas effectively to non-creative people. There is a disconnect in our academic experience as creative professionals to be taught or trained properly on how to communicate. I would like to help bridge this gap by emphasizing interpersonal skills in the classroom combined with our art and design curriculum. Exercises to improve these skills for creatives include expanded vocabulary, presentations, brainstorming in teams or as individuals, and engaging in the critique process. Continuous use of these experiences will help build tools for creative professionals to paint a clear picture of concepts and ideas to clients. Abilities to negotiate and adapt to ever changing demands will improve as well. My goal is to share and engage with students to inspire them to be successful in their creative endeavors.

Student Success

My main goal when I teach a class is to help each student succeed. Part of my introduction on the first day of a particular class is to talk about success and that my purpose as an instructor is to help the students achieve the best results possible. I look upon a student that does not do well as a personal failure. This is why I do all I can to nurture the student to do their best on each and every assignment including attending class. Consistent support is the key while being fair and accountable. Creating an academic environment of respect and trust between teacher and student builds a connection by which learning and growing is achievable for all.

Course Core Competencies

Each course has a set of core competencies to accomplish set forth by the institution. These competencies should be listed in the syllabus and are the backbone of how the course should be taught. I design each course to meet every core competency through a variety of resources. The course textbook and the publisher are excellent resources for concepts, vocabulary, presentation materials, project and brainstorming ideas, and testing. I also rely on information from previous and present instructors of the course as well as industry and other professional colleagues. Arranging each class period around the ideals of meeting the core competencies of the course helps create a very interesting experience for both instructor and student that is full of variety and never boring. It also helps balance the mix between developing creative skills and attaining academic knowledge.

Interpersonal Skills

As previously mentioned, I believe interpersonal skills are vital to success for a creative professional. Public speaking and expressing thoughts intelligently and understandably are critical for an artist during communication with peers and clients. My classes are designed to have opportunities for interpersonal skill development every time we meet. I know this can be very difficult for many so I approach it in a very team oriented fashion. We all introduce ourselves on the first night. Each week, we do team and individual brainstorming sessions and workshop or sketch sessions. Students interact during the sessions and present the results to the class upon completion. We also follow a peer critique process for each project where each student presents their project and class members provide feedback in a professional manner. We follow critique guidelines which include being professional, focus on the project and not the person, and use concepts and vocabulary pertinent to the theme of the project. I also assign a critique paper where each student selects another student's final project to formally write a critique. Developing strong interpersonal skills builds competence and confidence professionally and personally.

Linking the Classroom to Work Experience

The value I bring to the classroom is my many years of work experience. Besides having the academic credentials, I have the ability to relate concepts directly to work experiences. This gives me credibility but also helps illustrate topics covered in class with real word examples. Bringing on-the-job experiences helps remind the students to focus on their career.

Adapting and Learning

Flexibility and adapting to any situation are skills creative professionals must have to be successful. We are in an age where a lifetime of learning and training are necessary to remain competitive. The classroom is an excellent way to gain new skills and refresh some old ones. People, fellow instructors, students, administrative and IT staff, and associates and work colleagues, are all inspirational. Technology enhances continuously to make our experiences interesting and challenging. Combining the human element with state-of-the-art technology can achieve great results. Adapting to the unique characteristics of each student is a challenge and an endeavor that I thoroughly enjoy.