

My Teaching Philosophy, 2021

As an artist and educator, I believe art is a language that can be learned. Art can be described, analyzed, and interpreted. Art leads audiences to their emotions. Art is for everyone and can be made by anyone. At the same time, art is a serious, academic endeavor that has deep significance for societies and individuals. I care deeply about the arts and see it as a connecting force for many differences of opinion. I sincerely value my own education in the arts and like sharing what I have learned.

I stress the skill of observation as an essential asset in understanding self and others. I want students to contemplate big ideas about the world and their place in it. Observing human behavior is a starting point to understanding the drive for appreciation of human originality.

I believe a good teacher knows the difference between speculation and facts. Speculation embraces students' rich imaginations. Facts are determined with research and verification. I combine the joy of creativity with the discipline of research to expand understanding of self and the subject matter.

I believe a good teacher must constantly learn what is new in their discipline to stay relevant. Information moves quickly now, because of the internet. I need to know how new information in my field is organized, where to find it, and how it is linked to other disciplines. This more likely ensures my students can apply higher levels of thinking to current events.

I believe a good teacher is collaborative. Most learning happens through social interaction, and I structure teaching in order that students learn a process for productively cooperating with each other. Collaboration in groups stimulates peer to peer conversation that I can, by listening, gather clues for next steps and suggest new directions to take with a project or assignment.

I believe a good teacher is conversational with students. I am invested in conversation as a teaching practice because it can lead to several solutions for the same problem. Deep learning and engagement with a subject is stimulated through conversation. Conversation widens connections between people, places, and things and opens students to discoveries of their own. When a student is newly aware of a breakthrough within their group, I make time and find places to share that work more broadly so it can lead to further conversation and expand a student influence with an audience.

I believe a good teacher understands students, how they develop and learn. I participated in a world-wide, year-long, K-16 study where the research revealed that Challenge Based Learning (CBL) had strong benefits up to and including community college students. I have adapted CBL over the years because I see students actively engaged when they design original work products based on their past experiences and prior learning.

I believe a teacher is committed to making the world better for all and that a good teacher has powerful faith in the future. I want students to feel like they don't have to graduate before they can make a difference in the world and help ensure this with my overlapping of art and aesthetics to other disciplines.