

Teaching Philosophy

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I believe the most effective instructors teach to each student and not to a class. In order to accomplish this, one must have a deep admiration for the integrity and sincere goals of every student. Students must find their personal expressions within a safe learning environment where they are made to feel secure enough to take chances, make mistakes, feel confident by successes and draw enthusiasm from a receptive, synergetic classroom environment. As the instructor, I am accountable for molding this climate. A student-focused approach in the classroom is the only successful way I know to facilitate a student's achievement of personal excellence.

Art allows us to contribute to experiences of unbelievable sophistication. Through its enduring progress and the diversity of its forms, we proceed down a path of dynamic expression and extraordinary potential. The instructor must encourage each student to find his motivation, and create a union between positive reinforcement and honest, articulate criticism. Dilbert creator Scott Adams reflects my philosophy with the following: "Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep."

Along with the necessary studio courses, aspiring artists should be aware of the complexities of the human experience. In order to nurture a student's success as an artist, I feel it important to treat art in a holistic approach – establishing a firm groundwork in philosophy, history and the language arts, among other subjects. Art cannot simply be taught as a technical vocation. If approached in such a way, students will not be prepared to view their own work in terms outside technical precision; instead, they will feel less comfortable with artistic experimentation, and they will lack experience in speaking the language of art – fluency vital to accessing the art community. Instruction in the arts must also provide balanced coursework that introduces students to various schools of thought, both historic and contemporary, in media that embrace a variety of learning styles.

In my teaching, I strive to be technically proficient, but patient and open-minded enough to enable each student to work from his own heart to find a voice that contributes to the international dialogue of contemporary art.