

My three goals as a foundations instructor are: to facilitate the acquisition of technical skills, to guide students as they develop problem-solving mechanisms that also perpetuate challenging questions, and to aid students in the development of critical thinking and speaking skills. Only when students develop bonds with each other and are offered a variety of ways to absorb information are these goals achievable.

My teaching strategies integrate both formal and conceptual content. I explore these ideas by creating innovative assignments with exciting problems for my students to solve. In the Architecture/Abstraction assignment for example, I ask my Drawing Two class to do a line drawing from a photograph they've taken of an architecturally challenging scene; I then have them turn the drawing upside-down and use value and organic shapes to create a new environment. The assignment refreshes value and perspective skills from Drawing One and asks students to use their imagination and technical skills with new intention.

I recognize that each student learns differently, and therefore I provide all-inclusive ways to participate in my class. For example, less vocal students may take digital snapshots of peers' finished works and email their written comments to the class. I reinforce important information via email, bring in new materials for demonstrations and hands on experimentation, give slide lectures, and take field trips to libraries and museums for the purpose of personal research. By offering these different conduits for learning, I am able to understand my students in ways that let me identify their individual strengths and weaknesses. I find that when assignments are even slightly adjusted for a student they are more likely to put time and effort into it, and eventually improve their dexterity.

I place an emphasis on critique in my class and change the structure often by alternating between initiating discussion and encouraging students to take control of the conversation. Because I believe strongly in the importance of building peer relationships, I ask students to have one on one discussions with each other during class. When students have had the advantage of talking with peers and seeing their development, critiques are more productive and constructive criticism is easily exchanged. In my experience these methods have resulted in spontaneous participation, skill building, self-evaluation and active discussions. This supportive environment helps students begin to learn the importance of aligning their visual and verbal voice. Most often, my classroom is a bustling and busy working environment with excellent attendance.

I feel strongly that my students and I share an equal amount of responsibility for learning. My effectiveness as an instructor is measured by the students' personal progress and continual enthusiasm to engage with peers, in class discussions and with myself. Teaching Foundation classes is important for me because I know that even if all my students don't pursue careers in art, they will have gained the ability to look at life through a new lens. I am dedicated to teaching and depend on the energy generated in my class to refresh and motivate my own practice. I cannot think of a greater satisfaction than knowing that when my students leave my classroom, they will leave with a greater sensitivity towards visual culture.