

I believe a strong education is like the building of a sphere. Rather than a linear progression or a ripple in a pond which weakens as it expands, I imagine the development of learners as being like the solid accumulation of a snowball or the forming of layers on a pearl. These layers are comprised of technical information, experiences, and discovery of connections. My goal as an art educator is to guide students through fundamental principles while encouraging experimentation, theoretical and conceptual development, self-reflection, and an open dialogue which will prepare them for experiences and art making beyond my class.

One of my primary roles as a teacher is to be a positive and encouraging guide: enthusiastic, flexible, and approachable. My communication style is sincere, direct, and transparent. Through a consistent, open dialogue I also encourage students to become participants in the development of their peers' work. I strive to facilitate diverse forms of interaction and collaboration among students. I see an environment of community and active exchange of ideas as vital for healthy development in any classroom.

In a studio art class, attention is given to understanding of design principles, mastery of technique, and intentionality with material choice and craftsmanship. With these goals as a foundation, I encourage exploration and risk-taking in my students. I expect them to push beyond the parameters of class assignments, and to consider social and cultural context, as well as alternate materials and ways of working. Ultimately, I hope for my students to experience success, growth, and comfort in their self-expression.

As preparation for a future not only in art-making, but in all endeavors, I want students to have confidence in their ideas and abilities. I structure courses to give my students as many tools for success as possible. I present information in a variety of ways to solidify concepts and make information accessible to all types of learners. This includes demonstrations and presentations, readings, hands-on exercises, projects, and conversations. I expose students to historical, contemporary, and visual cultural reference points, so they have a broad sense of context. To aid in time management, I divide projects into developmental stages from initial brainstorming, research, material exploration, and sketching to the creation and revision of a final work. As they progress, I encourage students to pull away from this structure and develop their own working process. These formal aspects of my teaching prepare students for future experiences in looking at, discussing, and making art.

Developing creativity, comfort with self-expression, and a strong work ethic is vital for any well-rounded individual, regardless of field of study or career path. In keeping with the spherical concept of education, I encourage students to consider the relationship between my class and their other interests. Studio art, specifically, cultivates in students the ability to think critically, to approach technical and conceptual problems, and to engage in thoughtful conversation with others. These skill sets aid students in pursuit of any endeavor. For me, the most rewarding aspect of teaching is when students find excitement in making connections between their artistic process, their intellectual pursuits, and their place within our greater community.