TEACHING STATEMENT

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Teaching television production or any other electronic medium is a uniquely problematic pursuit. How do we teach our students to be creative? Can creativity be a learned and practiced exercise? Is this an impossible dream or is it just a matter of smart course design and adopting a modern approach to teaching? I think it's a much more complex question than that. Ultimately, in my classroom, I employ a hybrid model of teaching that relies on programming choice (via the learner-centered teaching model) and intimate one-on-one mentoring. This mentoring model is crucial in its response to tackle creative challenges originated by the student. Early in their coursework, students are subjected to intense critical reflective practice that helps convey that the work they do in the course does not only belong to "them" but it will be in fact a collaboration with the student, teacher, and online communities. In addition to this individual work, all of my courses include group collaboration that emphasizes discourse and delegation to accomplish a common goal. Class discussion as well as online critique of student work is crucial to understanding and evolving the creative process. Some questions posed in these discussions may help determine the value of a specific digital work, determine what social issues can be raised or what our responsibilities are as artists. Given the relationship between the art, craft, and technological processes that create the imagery and expression conveyed in their projects student can better contextualize their work.

As a teacher of Television Production and Digital Technologies, I have three goals. The first is to ensure that my students can navigate the technical landscape with proper skills and understanding required by the course. Students should grasp the limits and inner workings of the digital tools available for the medium used in that particular class. As these skills are addressed, the proper aesthetic goals can be more easily achieved. This is where the idea of "craftsmanship" is introduced as a way to dispel that the technology is the most important aspect of the work. We explore together how their craftsmanship is defined, how is it significant to their work and more importantly, why craft cannot be avoided and the medium should always be secondary to the conceptual underpinnings the piece itself. Each student is pushed to define and defend *his/her own* version of this digital craftsmanship. These explorations are important to students and artists more than ever as new forms of digital media are created on a seemingly daily basis. Although these new technological forms offer some truly unique possibilities for storytelling and creativity, the technology often overshadows the content and the medium becomes the art. When understanding digital context, students attention should be focused only on

the work they are creating and how that fits into the larger world around them.

My secondary goal as a teacher is to introduce students to concepts of visual analysis, not only in their own work, but in others as well. Dependent on the medium, this is often referred to in the classroom as reverse-engineering or reverse-vision. By working backwards in the understanding of a piece of design, students are taught a host of aesthetic systems to judge work in visual terms. Components include composition, time-based concept models, motion, color theory, approaches to storytelling, subjective aesthetics, and the principles and elements of design. Outside works will often be emulated specifically as an exercise to explore the nuances of a piece of work. Systematic breakdown of works at a granular level also has the advantages of reinforcing attention to detail.

After these two areas are engaged, the class moves beyond the purely aesthetic. The final goal is to introduce students to critical investigation of their own work as well as others, with the intent to apply this analysis to their future work. They learn to make careful decisions in regard to the application of design, specific technologies, content, and form as it applies to the theoretical context of their work. On top of these decisions, they learn to formulate conceptual and tangible objectives for their art. As this relates to coursework, their projects will be judged according to goals and obligations that they have set for themselves. The project objectives assigned in the course are meant to be a general starting point with the emphasis on evolving their work to become, above all else, a personal creative investment that matures over time. The media that was conceived early on in the creative process will inevitably be changed due to the intense reflection and investigation as the physical or digital media is realized. The feedback from the work itself will lead to the refinement of the next and so fourth. My personal ambition here is to introduce and develop an ever-evolving body of work that is a manifestation of individual student ideas and interests. This is the first step in their professional development as a lifelong artist in their chosen medium.