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## Instructional Philosophy and Strategies

Keeping in mind that students enrolled in my classes are contracting to be taught and learn the discipline of the course, has been one of my points of focus. I lead classes by the Socratic teaching method guiding the students to discovery. This generates confidence, integrity and pride in their understanding of the subject and ability to define problems and figure out the answers. Blending a combination of short lecture, examples, demonstrations, critique and discussion (both as a group and individually), I teach the process for working through design problems. The process is reinforced by a solid foundation of theory and principles and technical skills. My goal is to balance teaching concrete skills and theories with providing them multiple avenues to figure things out, ask questions, collaborate and pursue excellence—all within the common constraints of time and money. I thoroughly enjoy the students and campus environment and find it immensely rewarding to motivate, teach and encourage students as they launch into their careers.

**View of Student:** As a professional, my long-term success as a graphic designer has been contingent on a positive relationship with my clients—always remembering that they are the customer. In many ways I like to view the student as my client. They pay for their education and it is my responsibility to deliver it in a quality manner representative of the University's highest standard. When the students view themselves as the consumer, they are naturally more motivated and eager benefit from their education. Establishing this viewpoint in the beginning has been successful in creating a value-added perspective on the particular course. When a student recognizes their education is an investment, they will be more likely to invest themselves in the course.

**Groundwork:** A clear and concise syllabus establishes an agreement between instructor and student at the onset of the class. Clearly outlined academic goals and expectations for performance, attendance and evaluation give a solid foundation of understanding and respect between the student and instructor.

**Defined Goals:** The primary goal is to convey the course content in a manner that is meaningful and purposeful to the student. It has been my experience that when a student sees the life/career application of the material, it shifts from being simply coursework to material they may actually take ownership of, and subscribe to. My professional experience brings a lot of practical and tangible insight and application into the classroom experience.

**Method of Instruction:** In simple terms the *tell, show, and do* technique has worked well. However, I have expanded that as described below, which has been successful and applicable. This format is flexible and adaptable to different course content but has worked especially well in a lab environment.

## TELLING/EXPLAINING

Explain concept through short lecture and outlining main points.

## DISCUSSION

Solicit input, insight, observations and experiences from students. Group effort to define problem and establish criteria. Attempt to lead students to derive the appropriate conclusions on their own.

## EXAMPLE

Showing samples of professional work, case studies, slides, books, and past student projects. Prompt for further discussion and observation.

## DEMONSTRATION

Always try to integrate demonstration of methods and techniques both in hand skills, and use of software. Solicit sharing of techniques during critiques so we can all learn from each other. Introduce students to relevant skills, tools and technology. Continually, demonstrate ways to work at creative problem solving in approaching assignments. Incorporate various presentation techniques as best suited.

## WRITTEN DIRECTIONS

Clearly written assignments provide a global understanding of a project's objectives as well as providing necessary specifics regarding, format and evaluation. Provide supplemental handouts to support concepts as appropriate.

## STUDENTS DO IT

Have students work through appropriate stepped process for particular assignment or problem. Check, critique and evaluate along the way.

## CRITIQUING

Class critiques are conducted with established criteria for evaluation. Students learn to evaluate solutions against assignment instructions, defined problem, and design criteria.

## EVALUATION

For graded assignments, detailed evaluation using a matrix or rubric provides valuable feedback so they will know precisely the areas in which improvement is needed as well as where the most success was achieved.

Finally, I strive to lead students to the point of meaningful understanding of the course content and its useful application in the world; ultimately experiencing the excitement of discovery, learning and creativity.