



Lisa Beth Robinson

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

You have to know the rules to break them. When I am teaching, I see myself as a nurturer, guide, and catalyst. It is essential to teach the student fundamental skills and behaviors so that he or she develops a solid foundation in the subject. Essential elements in instruction include new methods of problem solving and concept development, improving students' technical skills and craftsmanship, developing their ability to think critically and verbalize the process, and guiding them to see with the eye—not the mind—while letting intuition guide the hand. I emphasize new methods of problem solving and concept development while providing students opportunities to improve craftsmanship and vary their techniques and use of materials. Finally, I attempt to teach students that art requires more than production; it also requires communication. Thus, we work on developing their ability to think critically and verbalize the process.

To accomplish these objectives, I use in-class exercises and structured critiques to stimulate the development of the student's conceptual and technical strengths. I work to help each individual develop a visual vocabulary by noting themes and motifs in their work. My curriculum is designed to get the students from point A to point B by using the strategy of each assignment building on the previous one. I give demonstrations in class while discussing the basic ideas in order to address the needs of visual, aural, and haptic learners. Students make maquettes when appropriate; this gives them the confidence to continue learning. In the book arts classes, I work to expand their definitions of a book. I recommend that students see as much art as possible and bring current/historical examples into the classroom. I show them ways to connect within their art community and encourage them to have fun while developing discipline. By pursuing my own work, I also share my experience and set an example, encouraging them to show their work and seek opportunities. An interdisciplinary approach, visiting artists, guest lecturers from other fields such as literature, and field trips are used to enhance the student's education.

There are concrete ways to assess student performance. The first and most evident is the work produced for the class. Students are taught critique skills to obtain constructive feedback from one another. I grade projects on concept, materials, and craftsmanship, with a short, written evaluation provided to give more detailed critique. I examine whether each assignment meets the stated goal and whether or not the work has improved over the course of the semester, giving the students an evaluative summary at the end of the semester. In turn, I provide an evaluation form that allows them to give me feedback on my teaching and the class structure; I believe students need to take responsibility for their education.

Nothing equals the thrill of seeing a student grow as a person and artist. It is rewarding to see each of them develop confidence, self-awareness, and an expanded imagination. I hope that my students leave class with a strong work ethic, improved skills, and a new enjoyment for creating art. I see them as prospective members of my community; like any good participant, they know the rules and when to break them.