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Teaching Statement

In the arts we do very well teaching the factual: histories, movements, artist, theories, and techniques are easily presented and readily assessed. What I believe we sometimes overlook – and a facet which I emphasize quite early in my studio – is the development of a self-awareness within each student, an internal system of analysis that motivates inquiry, encouraging experimentation and risk-taking. I am working alongside my students to create a purposeful, critical practice.

As each student is an individual, I must come to understand them as individuals: ascertaining their preferences, questioning their habits, alleviating their fears. Developing the critical mind requires trust amongst students, instructors, and peers. Art is, after all, an internal discussion, a highly personalized way of seeing the world and one's place within it. I believe individuals feel safe in my studio and assured their unique perspectives are being heard and appreciated.

I am working to create a supportive atmosphere where technology is utilized as a tool for discovery, exploration, and self-expression. Though technology sometimes has other ideas, I am quick to point out that this wrestling with one's materials (the code, the electronics, the plug-ins) is an essential element of the creative process. We discover through struggle.

To assist students, I present materials clearly, provide concrete examples, and direct students to a variety of external sources to supplement their process. My pre-planning and organization affords students the time and space to create freely, and relatively painlessly. I offer projects which have a pedagogical purpose, yet are open-ended, such that students may pursue their interests within the context of an exercise.

In discussion, I promote a critique-positive method of inquiry in which we focus upon the work -- never the student, or even necessarily the subject of the work. There is one basic question, "How does this piece function?", which more informally is asking, "How does this work affect you and which elements contribute to that effect?" In discussion, students are invited to share their reactions, propose speculative theories, and formulate a personal analysis.

My task is to provide students with the analytical tools upon which to form and base their opinions, and further, to help hone their analysis into a logical and compelling critique. Such critical analysis is necessary to nourishing a well-rounded, socially-engaged individual.