

PERSONAL STATEMENT

MY EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, STRATEGIES, ASSESSMENT METHODS, AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

I am a **practical** teacher and designer. My approach to teaching is similar to my approach toward my career working in the design industry: be **resourceful**, be **professional**, and have **fun**.

Practicality, resourcefulness, professionalism, and fun: these four principles are the tenets that have guided me through my career. I find them to be particularly relevant within the academic context of teaching interface design within Kapi'olani Community College's New Media Arts (NMA) program where students pursue a course of study that is scholarly, practical, and enjoyable at the same time. NMA students need to solve design problems accurately and effectively and communicate both visually and orally. Since this is their career that they are pursuing, they need to learn how to have fun doing it.

The term new media is often referred to as the point where art and technology converge. On the art side, there is a history of academic study consisting of theory and practice. On the technology side, there is a wide range of complex software applications and programming languages used in the industry. One of the greatest challenges as a teacher within the NMA program is to figure out how to effectively balance teaching design theory and design technology in a way that all students, regardless of skill level, background, or experience, will be prepared for a career in the field. One of my primary and most effective solutions to this problem is a practical one: teaching using the industry model.

Instead of lecturing from the front of the class, I often teach by acting as a creative director leading a design team of students as if we were all co-workers in a design company. Most assignments are designed to mimic real world projects found in the industry. This industry model allows for me to introduce the full creative design process and new technologies that students may see in the industry in a controlled academic setting. As a leader and co-worker, I am required to lead-by-example, and constructively support my students, encouraging them to create the best designs to represent our class as if we were bidding against other design agencies for a client contract. Students are asked to perform at a level expected by the industry, which often requires conducting research, solving complex design problems, and learning new technologies and techniques on their own. This model requires both a theoretical foundation in design and hands-on experience with technical applications and new technologies, enabling students to build confidence in themselves and synthesize their learning via the production of real world projects.

My teaching style is most closely aligned with the pragmatic educational philosophies of John Dewey. Dewey was a proponent of learning skills and knowledge via hands-on exercises that can be applied in real world situations. As a practicing designer, I enjoy taking the experiences that I learned while working in the industry and applying them in the classroom.

For assessment, I use formal studio art critiques, a popular practice in art education. Formal studio art critiques consist of a student presenter who defends a piece of his or her artwork in front of a panel of critics who analyze the work and comment on its strengths and weaknesses according to a set of guidelines developed for each project. My small twist on the traditional art critique is that I ask students to behave as if they are all in a corporate boardroom, pitching designs to a real client. The outcome of this method is that students learn how to critically defend

their design decisions by discussing their design process in a professional forum while witnessing the experiences of others. During each critique I am able to apply Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to measure whether students are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating what they have learned while creating their own artwork.

Finally, my aim is to make learning fun by motivating students to enjoy being designers. One method for generating interest is to begin each class with an anticipatory set. An anticipatory set is a brief activity at the beginning of a class or lesson that is designed to engage the students' attention and direct their focus on the learning objective for that particular lesson. I usually show examples of artwork and designs created by different artists and companies, and then discuss them. This practice helps to address the primacy-recency effect of student learning, where students often remember the first thing you do at the beginning of a class session. It also initiates dialogue in the classroom and demonstrates how we can learn by looking at existing art, listening to others, and becoming better public speakers with an expanded design vocabulary. By combining practical and traditional teaching techniques, my aim is to create a comfortable learning environment where students can study both design technology and design theory while having fun at the same time and preparing themselves for a career in the field. In this context, the role of the teacher is a leader-by-example and co-learner who shares his or her personal knowledge with students in the pursuit of collective community growth. The role of the student is to listen and learn with the goal of becoming a better human being through academic discourse and critical thinking. Ultimately, nothing makes me happier than to see my students make informed design decisions via a critical thought process, justify their decisions by speaking about them in a professional and articulate manner, and get excited about being a designer in today's world of new media.