

Stephen Hawks: Teaching Philosophy
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Teaching Philosophy: With the exponential increase in readily accessible information, obscuring intellectual authority, and creating an atmosphere of relativism, I see the cultivation of mutual respect and trust between student and teacher as integrally important to personal and cultural development and a meaningful existence. What is needed is a reverential attitude towards learning, for the privilege of gaining and imparting knowledge both for the teacher as mentor, and the student.

While assignments progress through specific skills they also give the student more personal and aesthetic choices, involving students in design problem solving, critical analysis, proper and safe use of tools and materials, and general studio practice.

I believe in a balance between discipline and freedom, giving students access to knowledge and skills, development of critical thinking and investigative practice. Experimentation is encouraged without stifling creativity and intuition. My role is to facilitate this process. I see the cultivation of mutual respect and trust between student and teacher as integrally important to personal and cultural development and a more meaningful existence.

Introductory Courses- I start with a group introduction to tools, materials, safety, studio practice, and aesthetics. The class moves through a series of assignments that become progressively more complex introducing a wide range of tools and techniques. I demonstrate regularly giving direct instruction and imparting skills that come from long experience both for the entire class, related to the assignments, and individual or smaller group demonstrations according to the needs and requests of the students, giving plenty of time and space to find one's own way. If a student needs another approach then I steer them to other sources for instruction, also encouraging, students to interpret skills and ideas for one another.

While the assignments progress through specific skills they also give the student more personal and aesthetic choices. Throughout the class there is an appropriate amount of academic and out of class work. There may also be slide presentations to introduce contemporary and traditional work related to the assignments. All technical aspects may be introduced in similar manner, involving students in art making and application ideas, as well as disciplined studio practice.

Intermediate to Advanced Courses- As the student progresses, project assignments become more complex both technically and aesthetically and the student is encouraged to be more independent in their own development through scientific and creative work. Throughout this process, constructive critique from both instructor and peers plays a vital role in artistic development. As I assess each students needs, I try to direct them towards appropriate goals and refinement of their own work. I am open to their challenges and responsive to their needs as scholars and artists.. There may also be slide presentations to advance the student's awareness of contemporary and traditional practice. All technical aspects may be introduced in similar manner. The Advanced student should begin to take more responsibility for their artistic development and general studio practice.

Graduate- Expectations are made clear from the start. Work is generally done independently or in groups. I provide resource materials and appropriate feed-back. There are group and individual discussions, brainstorming, and/or critiques throughout.