

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Within the classroom studio, there must be a passion for what is taking place. It is coupled with a curiosity about what might happen, and this passion for art, is inherently linked to a healthy respect for others and their work. That respect needs to extend from a strong self-respect and self confidence. Students need to develop a trust in their own work and how they create it.

With that trust, they are able to attempt what may seem to be too difficult to do. Taking risks means questioning our attitudes about our abilities and even about what we think success is. If we are to be successful, not matter its definition, the artwork must be born out of the concerns that the student has. Art must be understood to be vital to the creator's life, and not at all separate from it. Painting, or drawing, or any approach, is not a thing that we are making, but how we live our lives. We can then come to the understanding that education is not a commercial product, that can be purchased off the shelf, and acquired without effort. Rather that it is an opportunity that each of us is personally responsible for, both in its quality and its outcome.

Problem based learning shifts responsibility from the tutor to the student for what is learned. It helps to focus attention away from the end product and instead upon the process. As the need arises, technical skills and information are made available to the student in lecture, demonstration, and assigned research format. Equal with the development of technique, is conceptual growth. Critique sessions are opportunities for developing and introducing new ideas, because the ideas can be seen, at that moment, in direct relation to the work that is being discussed. Exposure to other students' work naturally leads to the introduction of a wide range of differing cultural expressions, which can bridge time, distance, and prejudicial barriers.

These other expressions are the examples that we learn from. We also learn from our mistakes and from those of others. By taking risks myself, in the classroom, by my willingness to be a learning participant and not the controlling factor, I can set an example of how art can be made, and of how life can be lived. Teaching is my opportunity to share my enthusiasm, my experience, and my knowledge without reserve. As a result, my life has been enriched and revitalized, as I have become the recipient of the gifts that each student brings, usually unknowingly, into the studio classroom.