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Teaching Philosophy

My overall passion for teaching is equal and will at time surpass my passion for the work I develop as a professional designer. Working with clients demand a certain set of skills that compliment my teaching methods. Teaching demands a degree of execution that amplifies those design skills. Both of course have design as a common denominator yet can be placed on a different spectrum of design. I have always felt for me to be a successful teacher, my methods as a professional designer must work themselves into my lessons and projects I have developed throughout the years. While completely understanding the importance of a 'bubble' placed around the education and handling of a student and their work, it is vital to understand what they will face once outside the confines of the classroom. I work to carefully create this space where a student is exposed to real world environment problems while still giving a certain amount of leeway that allows for a student's ambitious solution to work well beyond what may be allowed under stricter guidelines and limitations of a client.

Goal

As a teacher, my main primary objective is to create an environment where my students are given the opportunity to immediately apply a newly learned skill and develop their own solution for a design problem. By allowing a student the freedom to think about the issue while utilizing the skill set they have and currently building upon, the end result is just as important as the journey to get to the finished design. I will do everything in my power to make certain each student leaves feeling they have learned as much as they wished to take away from each of my courses. Never will a question go unanswered nor will a student be neglected looking for extra help during or outside of class time.

Overall Approach

Throughout the semester, projects will focus on specific skills that will help a student progress as a designer and build on the knowledge learned. Limitations will be enforced that give a student the opportunity to solve real life design problems. However, allowing a student to think outside the box and run with an idea that may be impractical to real world client may be encouraged. As the student has solved the problem at hand, they offer a potential employer how far their creative abilities and overall handling of the task can be taken. With this in mind, certain aspects of design must never be ignored which will help foster the overall growth and build on their knowledge from project to project. While parameters may often become blurred to provide the strongest end portfolio piece, some aspects of the course are never negotiable. Missing of crits and deadlines are not acceptable regardless of reason. Class critiques are seen as critical milestones in a student progression as it is important to verbally asses another person's design. Why something is or is not working and what recommendations one can offer is just as important as learning to solve your own work.

Process

My courses are focused on the journey and a student's ability to rationalize their solutions. Taking notes and recording the process is important for any designer but crucial for a student in order to reference during later projects. Throughout the course there will be class how-to overviews, then a problem is offered and individual feedback provided to each and every student. Going from work station to work station, each of my students have my undivided attention and offer them direction and feedback according to their own findings and thought processes. Never will a student receive, move this here, change this to this and add this like so, but rather encourage the student to work at their own pace to reach a solution of their own findings and receive feedback to make *their own ideas* the strongest they can be. Questions are asked of students throughout a project that force him/her to think and rethink their decisions and executions. I prefer the idea of implementation of ideas through work driven projects rather simply memorizing certain rules and methods. Making a poor judgment in design is welcomed as to allow a student to see why it failed as a design. How it could be reworked and strengthened by heading in a different direction, rather than simply explain what works best and never see these ideas take form in their own work.

Problem Solving

Design is woven into the fabric our lives whether subconsciously or completely aware of its usefulness. The importance is not ignored and has the ability to move and motivate people that can capture and define moments. History helps to validate decisions a designer makes with his/her pieces and should never be taken lightly. I try and bring this ideal into the class setting where their decisions are important and serve a greater purpose than their own rationale. The solution and direction of their design will be seen by others with no explanation given as to why a design has been implemented in the manner they are currently viewing the finished piece. Creating an engaging design is important but the message it delivers must fit the narrative.

Purpose

Understanding the why is possibly the most important aspect taught during the entire semester. Simply hammering away at a computer until a balanced design falls into place is not the goal of this class nor should it ever be in design. The how is of course important and understanding the tools to build on your knowledge is in the forefront of each project. However understanding why something works as well as why something doesn't work allows you to build your understanding of design within the context of the world it will reside in. With this bit of information, a student can learn from each project and develop stronger solutions that are solving problems within a greater sense of purpose.