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Statement of Teaching Philosophy & Pedagogy

By Edward Locke

I believe that education should be student-centered. When I taught engineering graphics at Santa Ana College (2000-2007), I did my best to make students' learning experience both challenging and enjoyable. I focused on making it easy for students to learn the essentials of course content, while inspiring them to engage in real-world like product design projects. In order to accomplish my goals, I prepared detailed classroom lecture notes, step-by-step instructions for completing a particular task, so that, students could listen attentively to my talking while figuring out what challenging questions to ask, instead of focusing on writing notes. Occasionally, I went further beyond what was covered in the textbook or in the lecture notes, then I would tell my students to take notes and I would stop for a minute or two. The lecture notes also help students to review course content at my absence, and to master the basics of each topic in the textbook more efficiently. I used weekly quizzes (multiple-choices plus some fill-ins and hands-on sketches) and homework assignment to check student progress as a reference for the review of previously covered course content; I allowed make-ups for quizzes to give those falling behind a second chance to learn and to catch up; and I gave extra-credit project for advanced students to go ahead. In the last four weeks of the semester, students would be divided into groups to engage in real world like product design projects, using standard procedures of product design and engineering. Thus, I combined traditional essentialist pedagogy with project-based learning. To sum up, my teaching style is like selling a product to buyers with a detailed user manual and high quality after-purchase maintenance service. When I taught creative activities to technology teacher at the University of Georgia (2007-2009), I subscribed to the same teaching philosophy, although,

due to the nature of the course as a hands-on, project-based one, the number of quizzes was reduced substantially, while all homework assignments were projects to be completed in a team-work environment (2-3 students per group). For teaching traditional arts, digital photography, 3D modeling and animation, I will focus on teaching the essential skills, preparing a lot of reference materials (i.e., my own hard copies of artworks, projects published online by professionals and studios working in the fields) for students to draw inspiration and reference from, and I will combine standard homework assignments using instructor-supplied digital materials with creative projects for which students prepare their own materials. In other words, my student-centered teaching philosophy and the basic strategy for its implementation will stay unchanged but the particular tactics for implementation will be refined or even altered from course to course, based on the nature of the particular course and its connection to the real world practice of graphic design.

My former students came from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, including White, Latinos, Asians and African-Americans, from middle-class as well as economically disadvantaged first generation immigrants from Viet Nam and Latin America. I tried my best to accommodate different learning styles while making sure that the essentials of the course content were mastered. I implemented strict grading rules for the mastery of basic skills while allowing some reasonable accommodations (make-ups and extra-credits) to give all students an opportunity to succeed in my courses. This is a reflection of my belief in student-centered education too.

Dedicated to education of new generations of American technologists, product designers and digital artists, I have published many of my previously written learning tips, hints, instructional manuals with knowledge and skills not covered in standard textbooks, including an online textbook on engineering descriptive geometry, one research paper on logo and signage design and production, one instructional manual on how to use Adobe Photoshop skills to convert a normal picture into a funny caricature, a research paper on artistic expressions in public spaces, and I am in the process of publishing an online textbook on industrial product design in the age of digital revolution and globalization. I have recently mastered the essentially skills for creating instructional websites and producing educational videos and Flash animations for publication on YouTube website; this will substantially enhance my abilities to serve students.