

Anat Pollack

Teaching Philosophy

I teach my students the same principles that I apply to my own art practice. As artists, we must think critically about ourselves and our community; we must have a clear sense of who we are and why we express ourselves using the modes that we do. I focus on teaching students to think like artists, so that they may learn to communicate their ideas both intuitively and intelligently.

Art has the power to reveal the inner self. Each person has a unique vision, and the job of the teacher is to help students translate their visions into works of art. I give students the room to develop their sensibility, and find their unique voice so that they may realize their potential. I teach the value of asking questions and critical thought, looking beyond the surface for answers, and exhibiting the rewards of creative problem solving through the art-making process.

Art-making is both a subjective and an objective process. It is an extremely personal experience. Self-reflexivity is derived from an investigation of the self and the self in relation to the community. Reinforcing personal truths and encouraging students to move beyond social conditioning helps students identify the roots of their beliefs, and enables the student to arrive at a place where he or she can generate ideas and evaluate ideas/information posed by others. Teaching students the value of actively producing ideas and opinions also encourages confidence in one's own internal resources thereby encouraging autonomy.

Making a work of art relevant to others requires that the student learn to think objectively. Effective communication requires a careful investigation of language, and a sense of the universal in the personal. To help students locate themselves within a larger social framework, I encourage investigation of ideas and relationships between ideas, and I encourage discussion and critique to highlight differences in people's interpretation of information.

Creating a successful work of art requires both well-developed ideas and technical mastery of a given medium. Teaching students to apply their ideas to a particular medium requires both linear/concrete and abstract/conceptual thought. Use of metaphor inspires abstract thought, and allows the students to find answers through their imagination and intuition. Concrete/linear thought is essential to the technical realization of an art-work. Where the magic lies however is in creative problem solving, for it is the merging of abstract and concrete thought where one can begin to learn from the materials, to see and translate how objects and representations best reflect and communicate one's visions.

Advancements in science, technology, and research methodologies offer new modes of expression and an expansive potential for dynamic learning environments. I highlight the importance of mixing media, crossing academic disciplines, and having a skill set that enables one to communicate diverse concepts. I am an engineer/scientist/artist. I am always asking questions, and responding to the mysteries everywhere around us. I use art to facilitate an understanding of who I am within this rapidly changing landscape and to discuss the way technology impacts our lives.

I am passionate about teaching. The classroom is a space for me to grow along with my students. I bring to the classroom a myriad of personal experiences and academic successes that I hope to share with my students. As a woman and a technologist, I am thrilled that I could become a role model in the field of technology. By providing expertise, compassion and a clear focus for each new skill and goal, I empower students to actualize their ideas through art. I hope that my students can leave school secure in the knowledge that their ideas and solutions can be rich and relevant, and confident in their ability to realize their potential. Learning is a lifelong process; my goal as a teacher is to whet the appetite of students so that they will be motivated to find inspiration in the world, and go beyond the classroom experience.