

Art plays an essential role in a liberal arts education. Art provides a unique opportunity for developing communication skills, technical discipline, and critical thinking. At the undergraduate level, students are still learning the techniques needed to be accomplished artists, and need guidance from their instructor. This is a time to introduce questions about the role of art, authorship, and where the student fits in contemporary trends and historical context, while building a strong foundation for technical exploration.

Art can draw knowledge and research from other academic subjects together to formulate a bigger picture of human life and history. I am a believer in the importance of context: art does not exist in a vacuum, and it is important to understand the context in which we create art, as well as its connections to other subjects. The art instructor should emphasize this connectedness. Art is so flexible; it provides opportunities for students to learn about every discipline, and with collaboration among teachers, this can be a truly comprehensive experience.

I consider the job of an art instructor to be the role of a guide. She/he must encourage students and create a safe environment for honest dialogue, as well as opportunities for students to push themselves technically and theoretically. Students should be aware of contemporary theories and examine their own methodology before they can see how their own art is functioning in the world. At the same time, the instructor should provide students with examples of practices for achieving real-world success.

Studio art classes provide opportunities both for abstract thinking, and for learning finite skills. As a printmaker, I find that teaching printing techniques forces students to think critically about process. It is necessary to have the foresight to plan each layer of a print, and have the discipline to follow each technique's steps skillfully. At the same time, printmaking provides vast potential for experimentation, variation, and innovation in the field.

As an instructor, I must provide a written examples and assignments for research and expression. It is important for students to be able to write and speak comprehensively about artwork. Writing about artwork is essential for formulating concepts and concretizing the artist's intention. Artists must be able to write and speak clearly about their work, whether it is a statement for entering a show, curating, research, or critiquing the work of others. Finally, the instructor must provide assessment that allows the student to see his/her growth throughout the course of the semester. This, and opportunities for meaningful participation in critique is essential to the college experience. This is crucial for encouraging the student's future study and continuation in the arts.

My goal as an educator is to help students to build their repertoire of skills, terms and concepts, as well as to provide access to resources that will allow them to feel confident operating as a contemporary artist. It is important for me to stay current with new materials, methods and techniques in the field, and to adapt to the needs of each individual student. Redefining my own practice is also an important part of this; by staying curious and clear about my artistic direction, I can provide students with a fresh and positive outlook.