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Teaching Philosophy

Seeing, hearing, and doing are a few of the popularized methods in which people learn. As a student I personally have had the most success seeing and doing, eschewing the traditional lecture for tangible examples and projects. As an instructor, the creative projects that follow the examples covered in class have proven to be the most successful manner in which students learn. Creating something that is relevant prompts independent thinking and thought processes that go beyond regurgitating a professor's views or simply memorizing key concepts and theories. Thinking independently helps students retain and apply these key concepts while possibly adding new theories, which leads to innovation.

To accomplish this, in addition to discussing course concepts, students need to be charged with creating deliverables that mirror "real world" projects. Sometimes this can be taken a step further by having students help solve actual problems for actual projects. This helps students take more responsibility and pride in their work, knowing that their project has deeper implications than just affecting their final grade. It is up to the student to apply the concepts taught in class as they see fit. This monitored environment will teach the student how to apply the concepts learned outside of the classroom.

The proof that independent thinking and excitement are a result of this philosophy can be found in the number of students I have had that wished to continue their projects after the course was completed. Students should leave a course excited and anxious to utilize their newfound skills. They should exit a program with quality projects that they are more than proud to place in a portfolio or present to a future employer.

Going forward I would like to spark collaboration with related disciplines on an academic level. Most of my professional design experiences have been in collaborative environments. Rarely does a visual communicator work alone on a project anymore. We work with programmers, business professionals, photographers, and editors among others to solve complex problems. Working relationships and collaborative efforts within a learning environment can prepare our students for their professional futures.

Giving students the opportunity to think independently about projects they can be proud and excited about will create powerful visual communicators that are more than prepared to be successful after graduation.

