

**Paul Schuette**

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As a teacher of creative students, I attempt to be a steadfast mirror in which they can see their own ideas reflected. By that I mean, that I feel as if my own views on a brand new work which I present to a class, for example, must be stated in an honest, clear and subtle manner. But then, and most importantly, students must understand that my insights and opinions are purely subjective. I find that elaborating on why I find the form of a specific piece interesting is much more effective than pontificating on the importance of form in the abstract. In this way, as an instructor, I am alerting students to the practical and aesthetic issues that are important to any given work, yet I am also encouraging them to think critically about what their own stance is regarding these issues. Some students might agree with me and others assuredly will not, yet they have arrived at these conclusions for themselves. Moreover, I have found that this approach fosters a robust classroom environment in which discussions are dynamic and meaningful.

When teaching the nuts and bolt of a new technology to a group of students, my approach is much more pragmatic and practical, yet my underlying philosophy is much the same. Any good piece of software, for example, is extremely malleable and can conform to it's users intentions. Instead of impressing upon students the infinite possibilities of a given technology, I will have them complete a specific project which utilizes the unique aspects of a given tool. The adept and creative student will then be able to understand how the unique capabilities of that tool can relate to their own practice. Having worked with a technology and seen a project through to the final stages of completion provides the student with a complete understanding of the process necessary to implement a given technology. Even though my assignment may not pertain explicitly to a students personal creative work, having a concrete experience with a new tool provides the student with a tangible experience to reflect upon and draw from.