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## Teaching Philosophy and Practices

My role as an art teacher is to assist each student in the discovery of their own unique voice. I assign goal-oriented, problem solving curriculum in an attempt to stimulate a student's creative urge through critical thinking exercises. By involving students in demonstrations, I promote interaction rather than casual observation, triggering inquiry from the class. I have found my best days teaching are the days where the students guide me through my own prepared material.

I first became seriously interested in teaching during my time as a Jewelry and Metalsmithing major at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. I was a regular fixture in the studio for four years (especially late nights), and each year it seemed I was helping more and more of my fellow students solve problems and finish their assignments on time. Word got back to my professors that I was lending a hand, and since I was keeping up with my own coursework, they suggested that I look into going to graduate school to get teaching experience. Naturally I began down the path toward a career in education.

Teaching comes naturally to me. It buttresses my skills as a craftsperson and expedites the development of my leadership abilities. I run my classes as true democracies. Each student has the right to challenge, question, or argue anything I present to the class. I welcome open debate and critique in the classroom, as it stimulates the distinctive nature of one's personality, in turn inspiring unique artwork and thought.

I encourage my students to have fun making mistakes, and savor their satisfaction when they learn to avoid them. I believe that effort should be considered above talent, especially when assessing introductory level students. While talent can be taught and refined, effort is ingrained and is the principle ingredient in the acquisition of a skill set. The skill set, in turn, guides a student toward their natural talents and away from areas which might not suit their personality or physical ability. I do not force anything on my students. Instead, I allow them the opportunity to discover their own unique path through the series of problems I present them with throughout the duration of a course.