

## AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

*You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him discover it in himself.* – Galileo Galilei, astronomer

**teach confidence** > To what degree a student benefits from a program of learning largely depends on attitude and energy. Communication design principles and practices are best learned through experience, by making things, solving problems, and discussing results. Methodical exploration enables a design student to develop marketable skills and steadfast confidence.

*Imitate. ... You'll never get all the way, and the separation might be truly remarkable.* – Bruce Mau, designer

**teach history** > Before students learn to trust their own abilities, they must absorb the lessons of those who came before — by attempting to duplicate, mimic and recreate published work. Know your history. It is a poorly educated student who graduates knowing less about themselves and their predecessors and peers than when they began a program of study.

*The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity.* – William Butler Yeats, poet

**teach inquiry** > Design is in the details. Context is everything. But what of vision? Passionate intensity inevitably produces something, but not necessarily something effective or useful. Ask big questions. Who makes the rules? Who do you work for? Why work at all? What are the implications of your work? Who benefits? Who suffers? Who cares? What endures?

*If you haven't got discernment, you simply repeat what you're used to.* – Matthew Carter, type designer

**teach awareness** > Design reflects individual taste, expresses personal style. However, without professional standards and a sense of consensus, design is adrift, uninformed, inadequate. Every student must learn to distinguish personal preferences, while continuing to develop an understanding of best practices. What is left to invent? To redefine? To sustain? To recontextualize?

*Limitations focus the mind like gravity.* – David Barringer, design critic

**teach discipline** > Designers need boundaries. Absolute freedom, akin to absolute power, is a vacuum. Students learn best when creative freedom is offset by practical constraints. Be consistent, practice what you preach. Deadlines produce results, rules prevent chaos, and structure provides strength. Learn to play by the rules, if ever you expect to break them effectively.

*To require perfection is to invite paralysis.* – David Bayles and Ted Orland, art critics

**teach productivity** > To err is human. Learn from mistakes. Students cannot receive feedback until they produce something. Passionate discourse is empty if not wedded to action. The more you make — multiple versions, unusual shapes, different sizes, other colors — the more opportunities you create: to grow, to adapt, to learn. Eliminate what doesn't work to arrive at what does.

*The artist is a superior craftsman. ... Therein lies the source of all creative work.* – Paul Klee, artist, educator

**teach craft** > No degree of novelty, flash or vigor will forever deflect criticism aimed at faulty craftsmanship. Aspiring communication designers who never learn to convincingly space a headline, color-correct an image, or prepare a file for final output, cannot expect to be of much benefit to clients or employers, much less earn the respect and support of their peers.

*You have to be interested in culture to design for it.* – Lorraine Wild, designer, writer, educator

**teach tolerance** > We are not alone. We live in a multicultural, interdisciplinary, hyper-connected global marketplace. Today's world is a myriad of shifting styles and choices, of strangers passing at hyperspeed. It's a lot to keep up with, but designers will. Different points of view will inform and enrich your own. Travel far, try odd foods, meet new people. And take notes.

*I think my imagination dictates the technologies I use.* – Michel Gondry, filmmaker

**teach different** > Don't be a slave to technology; ideas come first. Make a difference, before someone else does. Somewhere inside you is the mind of a child, waiting to be rediscovered. Play first, then work. Don't rely on old habits, make new ones. If you can dream it, you can create it. What if there weren't any rules? Think of something you can't do ... then surprise yourself!

*Never, never, never give up.* – Winston Churchill, statesman