

## **KC'S TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

My teaching philosophy establishes a balance of presenting aesthetic, functional and technical information to encourage student to develop their personal vision in art and design. My teaching is improvisational; much of the creativity routine comes from designing the assignment and ongoing lively interaction with students.

What design education lacks in not necessarily more visual variety, but rather more intellectual problem-solving solutions. With the abundance of information, facilitated by the advent of informational technologies, I believe that I am no longer the source of all knowledge. By keeping an open communication channel with my students, exchanges and interaction of opinions between us serve to heighten my interests as well as sparking any intellectual curiosity. My contribution in the classroom is to make the environment attractive and thought-provoking, illuminate the concept of design, arrange materials so that they become accessible, diagnose learning activities and results, provide guidance, extend learning and finally, constantly seek activities that promote personal growth in the students and to bring out the best in them.

While students are responsible for their own education, I believe teachers must awaken their students' dormant imaginations. I encourage my students to explore and to formulate appropriate approaches to their own work which could be used to interrogate possible solutions. This "self-referential" technique is intended to train them to relate and evaluate their consciousness with communicative and functional purposes as well as aesthetical considerations. They cultivate a meta-cognitive aspect by reflecting and reviewing on their own intellectual approach, intuition, and perception. This approach allows for interpretation and creative flexibility in which I further stimulate with models drawn from real-life work. By keeping an open-ended approach to my teachings, students are able to gather information from a wide variety of sources. As a result, they demonstrate a better ability to produce design pieces that are professional, logical and creative while retaining their personal styles.

I believe our minds must be constantly stimulated to keep abreast with the ever-changing world and the understanding of art and design principals are important. I grade on creativity, class contribution, punctuality, and most importantly, conceptual thinking. I encourage brainstorming where students find themselves discussing their work openly without harsh criticism. Students are encouraged to uninhibitedly express their ideas. I expect mistakes from them solely because mistakes are rectifiable to provide an opportunity for experimentation, estimation, exploration and finally concrete creations. At all times, I strive to be fair, honest, and open with students. A crucial part of my principle is to be accessible to my students outside my classroom. They have the freedom to meet with me in more informal settings, whether during office hours, by appointment or in whatever open situation possible. In such meetings, many students learn and benefit from this personalized attention. With this approach, I have seen students gain more confidence and as a result, perform better in the classroom. It is important to recognize them as young adults and my classroom is a safe haven for them to discover their possibilities.

These are the chief principles of my philosophy of education and life. I am not concerned merely with satisfying my educational and employment goals, but with effective making qualitative changes in human life in general, particularly in the field of graphic design. This is why I choose to teach because the reward is "priceless."

## KC'S COMMUNICATION DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

According to Chinese tradition, man is only a small part of the universe and nature is seen as alternating positive and negative forces, which are vast and powerful. When a person is humble he/she fits comfortably within these universal forces. Besides humility, balance is one of the many aspects that govern my principles. My multicultural exposures provide abundant opportunities for developing insightful philosophies while attaining my traditions and values.

Originally from Malaysia, I am a proud naturalized American citizen. I have experienced and hold great respect for both Asian and American cultures and customs. Over the years, I have accumulated academic and professional understanding of diverse areas of communication design. Using art and design as tools to function in a pluralistic and a global economy is not enough as it needs to be balanced with the development of theoretical, historical and philosophical aspects. From my work and studies, I came to see design as an ever-evolving practice, continually redefining itself. These values are becoming increasingly important for people to adapt to a changing world where technology may render certain skills and knowledge obsolete. It is closely connected with the way I see design as an important process of understanding ourselves and the society in which we live. Hence, I promote flexibility and openness to see new ways of doing things where we are given the opportunity to explore and develop with the tools of today in order to envision and create new ideas for tomorrow.

My interdisciplinary studies are providing some basics to fill the void. Schooled and trained as a graphic designer since 1985, my academic and professional backgrounds have always been shaped by how well I can provide solutions to my clients. It is about striking a balance and finding an elusive solution to a shadowy problem is not easy. Personal experience, intuition and domain knowledge can provide the first line of defense to provide some kind of solutions but they are merely enough in a competitive world. I know an understanding of a broad-based curriculum must be emphasized. The graphic design process is often restricted by outside sources and logistical concerns but I still view it as a fluid process. By understanding how things work in reality, we learn to deal with the situation better. The curricula at the Academy of Art College where I earned my BFA in Graphic Design were taught by working professionals who conveyed a strong sense of the real world. As a result, in applications, art and design as tools that function in a pluralistic community and a global economy need more than just a deeper understanding of design application and implementation. My practical and scholastic combinations have formed the evolving basis for my design philosophies. I have stayed actively and will continue to be involved in the design community.

I see graphic design as a form of phenomenological explanation in an environment that engages an iterative process. My research in graphic design education stems from my years of professional practice, academic appreciation and observation of the field. All of my professional experience reflects and reinforces my belief that graphic design is a unique form of interpretation that combines elements of words, pictures, symbols, materials, techniques, and tools. We need to acquire knowledge not only of our technological and social organizations, but also of ourselves, of other people and the society in which we function.