

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

KOK CHEOW YEOH, Ph.D.

97 Athens Street, San Francisco CA 94112

dr.kc.yeoh@gmail.com

www.yeoh.com

yeoh.com/index2.php?section=downloads

From a practical standpoint, graphic design deals specifically with a variety of practical media which requires educational exposures in typography, graphics, still and moving images within a framework of cultural, critical, historical, ethical and logistical perspectives. Not just graphic designers are expected to work in multimedia platforms, ordinary citizens are actively involved in using visuals to communicate. Such an impact coupled with the rapid development of technologies which has led to the converging of media further pushes for mass communication schools to acknowledge and revisit the courses they offered.

Looking forward, I plan to continue to work on understanding how design challenges posed by existing and emerging technologies can positively contribute to learning and teaching environment. It is my observation that increasingly, the influence of technology has become more and more prevalent in our lives whether we like it or not. When schools embrace technology, we are imposing a whole lot of expectations on students, educator, administrators and taxpayers. Along with lifelong educational endeavor came expertise, efficiency, standardization, measurement, objectivity and progress. Although there are many ways technology can impact us, the ultimate concern of the graphic designer is to creatively harness technology into a productive device, aiding in the productivity of transforming ideas into reality. For that, my future research continues to be shaped by my interactivity with technology as a tool of expression.

I believe my skills, strength, values and aspirations can only from a broad-based form of learning which is also made possible from traveling. It is important that my research does not end when the courses or the semesters end. I see travel as a form of active and deep learning, especially the latter in which it is about understanding, not just memorizing. I connect by observing, reflecting and practicing.

I am especially interested in understanding how design as a communication tool can be used to further enhance our lives, particularly in design pedagogy. Catalysts for intellectual stimulation can come from a variety of sources and our daily experience is a valuable resource to tap into as a form of learning mechanism. Experience is a connection to all aspects of living as it simultaneously helps us to be in the moment.

A field that continually redefines itself, I believe that creativity, class contribution, punctuality, and most importantly, conceptual thinking, are important in instilling professionalism in my students. My students are regularly encouraged to test their abilities in the international arena whereby they enter design contest and present at academic conferences. Under my guidance, my students' assignments are timed to coincide with global graphics competition as a way to test their abilities with their peers.

By keeping an open communication channel with my students, the exchanges and interaction of opinions 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. I constantly change my syllabi to avoid redundancy and to incorporate new ideas and trends from the industry as well as from conferences attended. 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. I am 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 addition to student evaluations, I conduct post mortem discussions at the end of the semester to gather feedback.

Exploration is important. I cognitively challenge my students to explore and formulate appropriate approaches which could be used to interrogate for a possible solution. Many sketches are explored as they continue to create their own original work which is essentially about learning by doing. I believe in creating a learning environment where we can acquire knowledge, develop interpersonal relations, foster self-development, and experience our sense of individuality. In my experience, this broad-based approach has given "power" to my students "to do" their best. In preparing the visually-challenged and grade-driven students, cross-disciplinary learning is employed. Besides conceptualising, designing, writing, illustrating, producing and publishing skills, my students also learn how to cope with other factorial issues. In my classes, student-centered methods are used. Every decision is openly shared and discussed. When students have a stake in the decision, they are more likely to be actively involved, effectively turning them into decision-makers.

As I make connection and relationships with diverse elements, my classroom observation and professional experiences can act as depositories of "raw materials" that can contribute to my research in a meaningful and endearing way. Moreover, my students are regularly encouraged to test their abilities in the international arena whereby they enter design contest and present at academic conferences. Apart from that, I will also encourage my students to indulge in creative activities just to let their creative side run free and finally, to do something for each other because we as human beings tend to forget how selfish we can become.