

-ABIGAIL ROSE HEDLEY-

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy emphasizes on creating a welcoming environment that prioritizes safety, inclusivity, and creative freedom. Through my experience of instructing at both my undergrad in Iowa and graduate institutions here in Knoxville TN, I have worked with a variety of students who come from a wide range of differing cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Through this experience I have learned to adapt to my students' needs, ensuring I can properly aid in their creative career. As a first generation student I know how challenging it can be to navigate your college career without proper academic support. As a result I strive to utilize the various resources available throughout campus to ensure student success in and outside of the classroom.

By recalling my own experience of coming into a shop setting, I try to ease the varying fears that arise in the students knowing that some are more comfortable than others within this environment. Through providing thorough hands-on instruction of tools and equipment they will be working with, I aim to extinguish the intimidation that may arise, while maintaining a healthy respect for the tools they are working with. If a student requires further instruction or repeated demonstrations, they are welcome and encouraged to communicate that need with me knowing that this will aid in overall student safety and success.

Within the studio I work towards breaking down social barriers amongst students, while respect being the focus. Regardless of age, gender, race, identity, religion, or ability all students are welcomed within the classroom and deserve the same level of respect from both myself and their peers. By creating an environment that allows open communication amongst students I also encourage my students to skill share amongst themselves, knowing that this creates artistic networks and opens the avenue of creative collaboration. Although I aim to create an environment that allows all students to speak and express themselves equally, I also can address when a student requires additional needs or adapted learning techniques. Through my critiques, I offer students equal platforms of discussing their work either verbally or through written communication. Recognizing that one technique may work for most but not everyone. By offering select vocabulary with concise definitions, I encourage all of my students to have deeper conversations about their own work and the work of their peers.

Through my teaching experiences I have become aware that most of the artwork coming from our students is deeply connected to their identity, lived experiences, and or their cultural history. By encouraging a space where students can share the history and intentions behind their work with peers that will show them the respect that they deserve, we can collectively begin to give a platform for varying identities to shine through. Through one on one and group discussions, we can create an environment in which students feel comfortable in creating work that is expressive. Through these conversations it also encourages me to learn more about my students' work in order to facilitate helpful and engaging conversations while maintaining a level of respect between instructor and student.