

## TREVOR TUBELLE

111 Tiffany Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110  
415-816-3506, trevor@tubelle.com  
www.tubelle.com

### Teaching Statement

My experience has helped me to identify five qualities that illuminate the role of an effective art teacher, which I list below. While striving to put these qualities into practice, I also attempt to instill in my students at least eight key modes (also below) they can employ in order to become highly skilled, thoughtful, and innovative artists that expand the limits of art and culture.

The role of an art teacher is fivefold:

- 1) To create a warm, supportive environment where students feel safe and emboldened to push the boundaries of art-making and to take chances.
- 2) To meet students at their own level and support them in achieving their personal creative goals.
- 3) To introduce and demonstrate the widest possible range of tools, materials, techniques and ideas that an artist might use.
- 4) To help students understand and articulate the cultural, historical, and conceptual context for their art-making.
- 5) To push students into new and exciting creative territory and to help them hold themselves accountable to the highest standards of artistic excellence.

I start a course by promoting a sense of camaraderie between students through community-building exercises (e.g., “spend 10 minutes talking to your partner about your definition of drawing”) and peer critiques, so that they can become comfortable and supportive of each other. I also give students a handout called “Guide for Discussing Art” that sets clear guidelines for effective and helpful discussions. In group critiques, I emphasize cultivating a respectful atmosphere that couples positive support with constructive critical feedback.

My teaching methods focus on fostering learning through self-discovery, experimentation, and practice. A typical class usually begins with warm-ups, such as a “Free Draw” (drawing continuously without stopping or editing) or something specifically geared to the project we’ll be working on that day. This both gets a creative flow going and gives students the opportunity to practice and prepare themselves. After warm-ups I might demo how to use a particular tool or method or explain the conceptual underpinning of a project. If we’re exploring a particular style, genre or technique I might do a slide talk or bring books with examples to show students what other artists have done. I send out frequent emails that let students know ahead of time what materials to prepare and what projects we’ll be working on. These projects tend to have themes (e.g., “De-stilled Life” or “Figurative Gestures”) that give students a degree of structure while also being somewhat flexible. For instance, if students are doing a self-portrait, I might specify the size and materials to use, but I would leave the kind of self-portrait they do (e.g., realistic, abstract, narrative, etc.) up to them. I find this balance between creating structure and allowing for

independence and flexibility to be a crucial mix in both supporting students and giving them the opportunity to make their own creative discoveries.

Below are eight key modes that I attempt to engender in my students:

- 1) Critical Thinking: The ability to employ a critical and introspective thought process that can see personal work and the work of others within a larger cultural and historical context. Also, to question preconceived notions (both personal and societal) about art and culture.
- 2) Communication: To be able to communicate artistic ideas and methods both verbally and in writing.
- 3) Skill: The mastery of technical and material aspects of art-making through intensive practice and by exploring the full range of potential within tools and materials.
- 4) Discipline: Be able to follow a regular and consistent art-making practice. Discipline coupled with perseverance will help in weathering the challenges of a life in the arts.
- 5) Risk-Taking: Have the propensity for devising experiments and taking chances, thereby entering unknown and possibly uncomfortable—yet fertile—territory.
- 6) Flexibility: To be in the habit of maintaining and nurturing a “malleable mind” (openness to exploring and switching between a multiplicity of ideas, materials, and techniques).
- 7) Vision: Have the wherewithal to rise beyond the “normal” and “usual” ways of seeing and working through imagination, intuition, creative problem-solving and non-traditional thinking in order to push the boundaries of art-making.
- 8) Joyfulness: Although art-making can sometimes be difficult, challenging, and even discouraging, strive to be primarily motivated by joy and enthusiasm.

Lastly, I encourage students to fully embrace the notion of being beginners (when everything is new and fresh) and to maintain a sense of openness to all possibilities, even as they become experts. It’s this amazing process, of guiding and nurturing the personal and artistic developments and discoveries of budding artists, that makes teaching a truly enjoyable and meaningful experience for me.