PATHWAYS TO GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

Reflective Teaching Portfolio

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**Part 1**

**Teaching Philosophy**

What is life without learning and teaching?  As a designer, author, collector, and art historian, “the box” has never existed.  Having had a non traditional education myself, my teaching concepts are, let’s say, unconventional.  My operative word is “guide”, not teach.  I try to stay out of the student’s way as much as possible, encouraging their own unique voices to appear.  At FIT my students tend to be from the art and design school, where a stellar portfolio is the most important part of searching for an internship and/or job.  I push my students to embrace their creativity, often citing Robert Browning’s quote, “your reach should exceed your grasp”.  The most important thing, I tell everyone, is to keep your mind wide open.  (Never say you don’t like the color green, for example, because tomorrow you may change your mind.)  With all students, I stress the paramount importance of learning history and precedent in order to create truly new and innovative work.

**Benefits and Challenges of Having Diverse Students**

Last year, as an adjunct counselor in the Career and Internship Services department, I worked with 112 internship students, 35 of them here on an F-1 Visa.  My international students come from Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Nigeria, France, Spain, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Morocco and Israel.  Impossible to characterize, some of these people have rudimentary English comprehension and conversational skills.  Luckily, as design and art students, the sponsor companies are most interested in their portfolios, in which they excel.  Being involved in this NEA grant has opened my eyes and heart to better understand globally diverse students, in so doing, becoming less critical of the details of writing within a portfolio, specification sheets, as well as their cover letters and resumes.  The biggest problem remains getting some of these international students “in the door” of the company (due to verbal communication skills) for an interview and to get to the point of actually sharing their portfolios.

That said, the benefits of having such a culturally diverse student body has far more benefits than challenges.  It’s the reason we live in New York City, being exposed to so many different languages on a daily basis helps all of us understand living in a global world.  No longer an ivory tower, but more like real life.  It makes our world smaller and fosters knowledge and understanding of other value systems, customs, and traditions.  I have learned that the diversity of our students is a resource for all of our faculty.

The NEA workshops thus far has changed the words I use; i.e., from “english as a second language” to “multi-lingual” to “translingual”.  Probably the single biggest “takeaway” thus far has been about the myth regarding “Standard American English.”  Having grown up with a mother who was a stickler for spelling and grammar, it has been somewhat difficult to put that aside and ask the question, “What were your intentions?” when looking at written assignments.  Students must be made aware of the myriad of choices that exist for them.

**Part 2**

**MOVING THEORY INTO PRACTICE: DIVERSITY AS RESOURCE**

Being a non-classroom faculty member, the workshops will contribute greatly to my one-on-one sessions with students.  When going over their cover letters and resumes, I’ll be more sensitive about what the student is saying rather than strictly adhering to a template.  I need to be extra careful about finding out whether the student truly understands the next steps in the internship preparation process and simplify the directions given.  I’ll work towards being hyper conscious about listening to personal stories, encourage conversations and be more accessible.

I will develop more opportunities for mock interviews, spending more time on what employers are looking for and how to communicate the student’s talents and enthusiasm for the internship positions for which they are interviewing.

**Part 3**

**Teaching Goals Statement**

As educators and global citizens, the number one aspirational word that should be tattooed on our forehead:  OPEN.  Our minds, our interpretations, our opportunities.  Reflecting back on our “Pathways to Global Communication” sessions, my short and long term goals are to share, see and receive joy in all facets of my teaching practice.  To always be “student-centered” by acknowledging our cross cultural experiences with empathy and compassion and to assist every student reach their potential.   I feel blessed to call New York City home, where 800 languages are spoken.  And, especially, to be on the faculty of the incredibly diverse Fashion Institute of Technology.  In my position of Adjunct Counselor/Professor in the Career and Internship Center, I and my colleagues are developing our future workforce.  Language is not unlike technology;  never static, always changing.  My goal is to never limit my students, to encourage their imagination and dreams.