Teaching Statement

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1. Teaching Philosophy

With background in such a variety of areas -- graphics, web design, media art, human computer interaction, media arts and technology -- one of my greatest goals has been to fully integrate these fields in my teaching and research. What has shaped this goal, moreover, and guided my progress towards it, has been a vision of advanced technologies as simply another type of artistic, expressive tool. For this purpose, it has been my attempt to teach and use new technology not for the sake of technology, but rather as a means towards designing better and more effective modes of expression. In my own work, these new expressive models have been found in the convergence of art and technology for the design of data in a variety of areas including interactive data visualization, interactive multimedia design, user experience design, graphic design and web development. It is my belief that such multivalent research and openness to collaboration between fields can dramatically change the way we communicate, and it is precisely this interest in communication itself that I try to convey in my classes. My approach to teaching is to offer students a blend of on-demand, job-applicable skills, an awareness of their impact on society and culture, and experimentation and exploration of new ideas, techniques, and methods to further their fields of interest. My experience as a media artist, interaction designer, and instructor has taught me the value and benefit of bringing together diverse backgrounds and disciplines to form creative approaches to projects. In mentoring my students to develop their own creativity, my dual approach is to model the mental habits of exploration and collaboration and to bring to my students the new techniques, methods, and means towards finding their own voices and visions in design.

I see teaching as a form of interaction that necessarily involves giving and sharing between myself and my students. The form this interaction takes is affected by what the instructor knows and where students' needs and interests lie. In order to discern these needs, the most important quality an instructor can have is a deep, practical knowledge of her field, and of the foundational points of knowledge that students will need in order to enter it themselves. In this sense, as an instructor and mentor, my job is to understand what students need in advance. This anticipated need, moreover, depends not only on the course requirements but also on the students and their own level of experience, whether they have the necessary background knowledge or not, or need to review their background knowledge. My assessment of need looks for what new concepts my students need to learn, and the best order in which to learn them, as well as considering situational factors -- whether it is a small or a large class, how many and what other classes students are taking, what their future goals are. In this way, the foundational knowledge I bring to and guarantee for my students must meet a willingness on my own part to watch, listen, and remain flexible in my preparation of course material, determining the speed of class, what topics to stress, and how best to design projects, homework, and exams.

Conversation and critique sessions are by far the most important part of my courses. Artists and designers should have their own critical point of view and voice, confident to judge creative artworks. In my class, it is essential that students learn how to evaluate and critically think about their own projects and how to their ideas with other students. In critique sessions, my strategy towards cultivating students' confidence in their voices and judgment necessarily means withholding my own direct answers, rather allowing students to find their own critical perspectives. Active participation in these group discussions is crucial not only to the learning process of a course, but to giving students the critical confidence to become artists and designers who can raise their own voices in their professional fields. This has been the most crucial point of feedback in my student evaluations, that I always encourage students to raise their voices. All of my students have different goals while taking a class, and different professional trajectories, but the ability to effectively and confidently engage in critique is pre-requisite in all design industries, particularly in those predominated by group projects. The classroom is where students can practice their future role critically, creatively, and collaboratively, becoming confident not only in their skills, but in their vision and voices before moving to real world.

The constant evolution of tools for generating and interacting with new media provides me with an opportunity to also learn from my students, enabling me to pass on knowledge from one year's class to the next. To this end, I am encouraging students to be producers of knowledge, themselves, and foster this through my own genuine interest in new tools and approaches. The fear some students have of technology is one of the most common obstacles in teaching media art. Because of this, it is crucial to help students overcome this fear by engaging them and allowing them to explore their own interests through the medium. To do this, I have created many demonstrations and class examples for students to improve and update the class materials and contents every quarter, which helps students to see and be inspired by the constant evolution of the field. According to evaluations, my students have been satisfied with these examples and demonstrations, especially when they related to learning programming languages or software. Some students who do not have any previous experience in coding or software are afraid of jumping into making artworks by typing programming languages on the computer screen instead of directly drawing graphical elements. My class examples have step-by-step demonstration and contain all different levels of implementation of basic artworks for beginner, moderate and expert level of students. This allows students to not only easily follow a step-by-step learning process but also encourages them to create more advanced and expanded works based on my class examples. My students' final outcomes was always better than my class examples in terms of artistic quality and technical improvement, which is exactly the effect my examples and demonstrations are modeled to produce. It is a great satisfaction to learn new things from my students' final projects, and even to see them surpass me. I have come to find this the ideal interaction not only between instructor and students, but also between artists and designers.

Although my past teaching has focused on graphic and web design, visual arts, multimedia, interactive environments, digital media programming, and data visualization, my interdisciplinary teaching experience in combination with my span of scholarly interests would enable me to teach a wide range of classes in areas such as typography, history of media art and graphic design, 2D/3D animation, HCI, basic computer science, and audio engineering. Obviously not every student wants to be an electronic media artist, or even an artist at all. My previous professional experience in media industry offers different perspectives from a production, art practice and academic point of view. Born and raised in dynamic Seoul, Korea, I have traveled around the world for international exhibitions, conferences and art events. I intend to expand my students' horizons not only artistically but also culturally, inspiring them to think independently and elaborate their roles as art practitioners in society.

2. Teaching Experience

As a graduate student, I was a teaching assistant (TA) for seven quarters over a span of four years, and an instructor during a summer session at the UCLA Design | Media Arts. During the five quarters in UCLA Design | Media Arts, I was a TA for a junior and senior level course (DMA 161A, DMA 161B, DMA24, and DMA 22) that teaches forms, motion graphics, web design and programming using various software and programming languages: Adobe creative suites, HTML, CSS, PHP and Flash actionscript. As a TA, I supported instructors' lectures and helped students in my lab session and TA office hour session to solve their problems in their projects. The size of my classes ranged from 30-50 students per quarter. My responsibilities were to teach during lab hours, to answer students' questions and critique their works during TA office hours. Under the guidance of the instructor, I offered brief introductions to how to use graphic software (Photoshop, Illustrator and After effect) and web programming language (HTML, CSS), and organized back-up classes for those students who lacked experience in this software. Throughout the experience of teaching beginner level students, I discovered effective teaching methods for delivering basic ideas and knowledge about the purpose and effective functions of the tools for artists and designers. These fundamentals have become increasingly clear to me as I explain them to students, helping me to reorganize the teaching materials for next quarter. I have also developed confidence in my methods and skills in giving feedback and critique to students' projects during the class., finding the best means to give opinions and ideas to students to improve their works. I offer students many references to and examples of other prominent artists' works, readings, and related technical skills, and frequently follow-up on class discussion with further information and resources by email. Critique session is the most significant part of achieving the

class' goals and of providing students with a good foundation for entering to professional fields. Throughout my experience as TA, I always included critique and discussion time in my classes when students submit their projects.

As an instructor, I taught my own web design class in summer institute in UCLA Design | Media Arts. It was a two week session, and every week about 10 students attended to learn web design and programming. Theese were high school students intending to enter art and design department in universities or art school. The goal of the class was to teach the basic understanding on web media and how to create a portfolio website. Everyday from 9am to 5pm, I taught not only web programming, knowledge and history, but also typography, graphic layout, and color. Most crucial was to teach how to organize the visual contents in web screen effectively. I asked students to successively modify their websites, save each different version of their design, and at last compare it to see how it got improved further. The comparison was very effective for seeing how the iteration in design process is crucial strategy for the highly detailed outcome. Also, I asked student to do Pecha kucha presentation, which presents 20 slides in 6 min 40 sec. Each student picked each different topic related to web design, and shared their ideas and information with others in a concise format and time limit. It was a fun methodology for students to practice presentation techniques, and more deep discussion was followed up afterwards based on the presentation. Their final outcome was exhibited at the last day in open house, and they shared it with parents and friends. After the class, I kept in touch with them to help with the finalizing of their websites, and luckily most of them got admissions from top school in the states

Recently, during the two quarters in UCSB Media Arts and Technology, I was a TA for two graduate level courses (MAT 256, MAT 259). These classes met twice a week, and every Thursday I led a lab session for two hours to teach students about data mining, MySQL, Javascript, and Processing. Most students were Masters level or PhD students from a wide range of departments: computer science, media arts and technology, statistics, and art history. My responsibilities were to teach and lead Lab session every Thursday, present my class examples and demonstration, and archive and design the class website. The most impactful part of these classes for me was in seeing how effective the class examples and documentation could work for students. Since some of students did not have any background in computer science or engineering, I created very basic examples for them, and very advanced levels of examples for expert-level students. I conducted extra lab sessions in my office hours, and helped beginner students solve their technical problems. Through creating and delivering the code demonstration, I could learn more details on the programming, and even caught unexpected issues in implementing small details when students asked the details in my code. My examples are now much concrete and work better in a more stable and expedient state. Furthermore, since these students had a deep knowledge in media art, engineering and computer science, the discussion level of the class also taught me how to lead discussion at the higher level of graduate student learning.

In my previous classes, some students who came from overseas had difficulty with communicating well in the class. Since I have also been through the experience, I truly understand how they feel. To resolve it, I continuously confirm whether or not they follow and understand the course well, and whether they have found any troubles with homework, class syllabus or materials and encourage them to improve their language as much as possible. I also try to as accommodating as possible for students with disabilities. At UCLA, for example, I had a student who had trouble with grabbing and adjusting the computer mouse at the right speed. I discussed this with the instructor, and assigned special homework for him that was different from others and required less restriction on creating detailed visuals, which more focused on conceptual approaches and idea development. The evaluation for his work was also different considering his ability to create final design work. Thus, assessing students' differing levels of learning knowledge, background and disabilities is one of the main factors that I care significantly when I prepare my class syllabus. The fast-paced development in new media technologies can pose many restrictions for those with disabilities in particular. Instead pushing them to create detailed final outcome on their own, creating deep development of context and philosophy as artists and designers can be more emphasized in helping students to build confidence and move toward professional fields.

3. Class references and links

More details on classes for which I taught may be found through the links below:

TA for class **"Algorithmic Visualization"** in UCSB Media arts and Technology,
(taught Processing, Data Visualization, Data mining, MySQL)
Instructor: George Legrady
http://vislab.mat.ucsb.edu/courses.html

TA for class **"Visual Communication"** in UCSB Media arts and Technology,
(taught Processing, Data Visualization, Data mining, MySQL)
Instructor: George Legrady
http://vislab.mat.ucsb.edu/courses.html

Instructor for class **"Web design"** in UCLA Design | Media arts Summer Institute 2010.
(taught Web Design, HTML, CSS)
http://dma.ucla.edu/SummerInstitute/2010/gallery/webdesign.html

TA for class **"Motion"** in UCLA Design | Media arts, *(taught After Effect)*
Instructor: Gareth Walsh
http://classes.dma.ucla.edu/Spring10/24/

TA for class **"Dynamic Internet"** in UCLA Design | Media arts, *(taught Web Design, HTML, CSS, PHP)*
Instructor: Chandler McWilliams.
http://classes.dma.ucla.edu/Winter10/161B/

TA for class **"Creative Internet"** in UCLA Design | Media arts, *(taught Web Design, HTML, CSS)*
Instructor: Chandler McWilliams.
http://classes.dma.ucla.edu/Fall09/161A/

TA for class **"Creative Internet"** in UCLA Design | Media arts, *(taught Web Design, HTML, CSS)*
Instructor: Casey Reas
http://classes.dma.ucla.edu/Spring09/161A/

TA for class **"Form"** in UCLA Design | Media arts, *(taught Design Composition, Two Dimensional Design, Materials and Form)*
Instructor: Silvia Regon
http://classes.dma.ucla.edu/Winter09/22/