

AETE-627: College Teaching in Art and Design
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Diversity Statement

As a person who occupies the intersections of Indigeneity, gender, and age, my cultural competency is built on experiences with my family, neighbors, students, and instructors on and off the reservation. I live at the intersection between settler/Colonial culture and Indigenous culture. My father was a member of the Confederated Salish Kootenai Pend Oreille Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation. I grew up on that reservation. I also exist as a woman in a patriarchy dominated culture who is now navigating through that culture while being of a certain age.

Passing as white and having certainly benefited from the privilege that entails, I have also experienced the micro and macro aggressions that come with being perceived as a minority. My time on the reservation as a mixed blood person, living in and among poverty and entrenched racism, has contributed to my desire and determination to create a classroom that is welcoming of diversity and is structured to give students an experience of equality and inclusion where their identity can infuse their work without fear. As the second person in my family to earn a bachelor's degree and the first to earn a master's degree, I feel deeply that education and access to that education is very important. Especially for people who have historically lacked that access.

Having struggled with elements of "The Room of Silence" (a concept based on the video created by RISD alumni Eloise Sherrid addressing race and identity from RISD student perspectives) while in both undergraduate and graduate school, I facilitate my critique and the overall group critique to avoid that experience and give each student the feedback they need to grow and thrive as artists. As an instructor, I challenge the notion of the classic critique by using methods developed by Harvard professor Judith Leeman. These methods create an environment where student's identities are allowed to assert themselves while also ensuring that their identities are not what is being critiqued. I also create and teach curricula that challenge the ideas of what art is in the current dominant cultural understanding – I'm especially interested in encouraging students to tap into their own heritage and in encouraging the re-evaluation of craft as an art.

In my most recent teaching position, I have a wide range of diversity in ages, aesthetics, and cultural experiences among my students. Currently, I teach the basics of color theory in painting, and I encourage my students to explore that basic theory in ways that both interest them and make sense to them through their own cultural and generational lens. As an example, one of my students wanted to work through color theory based on her Korean heritage. After a brief discussion on how that theory intersected and

diverged from Euro-Western perspective, she continued to research the top on her own and brought it into her studio work. As an instructor, I often blend various cultural understandings of art, gleaned from global cultural sources, into my teaching to show students more than just the traditional Euro-Western art canon.

Above all, I want to ensure that my students become comfortable expressing themselves, know what their impetus is in their own practice, and that they become facile with any of the mediums I am teaching.

My personal practice lives at the juncture of my own intercultural aesthetics. I fuse both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of making and seeing into my work and look for the points of contact between those two aesthetic traditions. My thinking, both in and out of the studio, is steeped in humanist philosophy in which I constantly interrogate my cultural surroundings and my own actions through my intersectional lens.