Teaching Philosophy
Su Hyun Nam

My classrooms are invigorated by the complex nature of art and technology, trans-disciplinary collaboration, and potentials for a creative intervention. My research to grasp digital media with an experiential and meditative approach is continued in my classroom, and it encourages students to draw what they are interested in and would be enthusiastic for. Instead of giving them a sequential instruction, I motivate my students to find a way to adroitly navigate the digital environment, tailoring digital media to their own interests and perspectives. As a teacher, my role is to facilitate a playground where those distinctive ideas can be intermingled and create a synergy together.

In such a mutual learning environment, they obtain a chance to draw upon, value, and ultimately integrate their multiple perspectives and skills, while simultaneously enriching their artistic discernment. Artists are responsible for experimenting with new media, pushing the boundaries and discovering an unorthodox way of investigating new technologies, and I incorporate the philosophy of a media artist into my classrooms. For beginning students, all experiences from such an experimental practice - failure, frustration, discovery and fulfillment - guide them to establish their own artistic/technical method as well as a philosophical perspective through a reflection on the process. Experienced students take this step further by planning to present their work at various venues and sharing it within an artist/creative technologist community and further.

In a course that I carefully designed for a specific topic, what students learn is not limited to the focused subject, but they naturally expand skills and theoretical knowledge in diverse subjects through the process of actively developing their own project. Understanding a broader context around art and technology through an extensive discussion, my students not only critically design their project but also utilize the method to explore other fields of study such as science, philosophy and cultural/political studies. Having taught for three successive years at each institution, I have been able to observe how students grow as an artist and that my pedagogy influences their artistic development even after the semester with me ends. Rather than learning merely skills and theories, students establish their own manner as an artist being adept at managing interdisciplinary research and experimentation in my class.

As an educator, practicing artist and researcher, I become an exemplary role model to my students that demystifies how the skill set and knowledge they learn in class is applied to an artwork in the real world and provide an example of studio art practice as a foundation for theoretical research. To this end, I actively create new projects and participate in exhibitions, festivals and conferences. Along with course materials, students observe and discuss together my process of making from a prototype, redesigning, and installation to reflecting on feedback. By obtaining a
chance to observe my process of making closely together, students not only overcome the fear to present their work outside of the classroom but also establish their own methods, which can be exploited outside class sessions, and even beyond the finite period of the semester.

I have benefitted from an opportunity to interact with talented colleagues and students in a dynamic and cooperative higher education environment and cultivate my teaching skills being both a learner and teacher. By developing courses, I critically contemplate digital media and keep up with the current media culture. My consistent reflection and feedback from students has broadened my outlook, sharpened my critical skills, and strengthened my teaching abilities. Each new semester contributes to my experience and growth as a teacher. This ongoing process of growth is one of the highest and most cherished values in my life.