



Case Study

California Institute of the Arts

Art and Graphic Design Departments

Overview

Client

California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) School of Art offers BFA for fine artists, graphic designers and photographers. It educates professional artists in a unique learning environment founded on the principles of artmaking excellence, experimentation, critical reflection and independent inquiry.

Goals and Objectives

To improve overall in-class experience for teachers and students during presentations and critiques. Improve classroom and studio communication between student artists and art teachers.

Challenges

Talking about pedagogy to artists. Creating a focus on the methods of teaching to transfer knowledge of the content from world renown artists.

Action

Pedagogical Strategies

Prior to the workshops I visited the school observing teachers and students in the classroom. My work with CalArts began with a workshop on teaching strategies and techniques for graduate students. This was followed by workshops for faculty in the Art departments on teaching strategies and techniques. As part of this consulting, I recommended and did demonstration lessons in an art class for faculty to observe the strategies and techniques in a real life situation. During the teacher workshops and in the demonstration lessons several specific strategies were focused upon to facilitate higher student involvement including:

- visual mapping to see our thinking and different perspectives
- structured inquiry
- collaborative thinking methods

Techniques

After observing a variety of classrooms I focused on several techniques in the workshops and demonstration lessons including:

- purposeful use and mobility with space for changing perspectives, opening points of view, and keeping active involvement
- group gathered in a fishbowl setting to create a collaborative environment
- community building exercises

Outcomes

Results

Faculty observed students who rarely participated in discussions were actively involved. The faculty noted it is possible to elicit involvement from students. The students visually mapping the components of a critique prior to us doing a critique created a discussion on the value of visually seeing the components helped them more deeply understand the methods of critiquing. Students better understood as a result of visual mapping.

Continuing Results

The faculty sharing ideas and successful methods on teaching methods to transfer ideas and information.

Lessons Learned

Working with the faculty on how to better transfer their important content to the students through facilitation, visual mapping, and communication.

