TRAVIS CHANDLER

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I believe the most important thing I can teach a student is how to think creatively and independently. Technical skills are essential, particularly in a field like filmmaking, where technology is constantly evolving. But knowing how to operate an editing system is not the same as knowing how to tell a story. My goal as an educator is to help students develop both the practical skills and the creative confidence to make thoughtful artistic decisions, solve problems, and discover their own voices as filmmakers.

Throughout my teaching career, I've worked with students at different stages of their creative development, from high school students making their first films to university students preparing to enter the industry. I strive to create a classroom environment where experimentation is encouraged, mistakes are part of the creative process, and students feel comfortable sharing work and demonstrating skills that they are still developing. I want students to take their work seriously without becoming so afraid of failure that they stop taking risks.

Editing is a particularly rewarding discipline to teach because it sits at the intersection of technical skill, artistic expression, and critical thinking. Choices about pacing, structure, juxtaposition, and sound can fundamentally change how an audience experiences a story. My experience as a documentary filmmaker has reinforced the importance of remaining open to unexpected discoveries and allowing the material itself to suggest new possibilities. I encourage students to approach editing as a process of exploration rather than simply execution.

My courses emphasize hands-on learning, experimentation, and revision. In my editing classes at DePaul, I often challenge students to edit against the obvious stylistic choices and encouraging them to explore approaches they might otherwise dismiss. An unexpected cut, an unconventional rhythm, or a surprising juxtaposition can reveal possibilities that a more traditional approach might overlook. I want students to discover that there is never just one way to tell a story, and that some of the most interesting creative decisions emerge when we're willing to challenge our own assumptions. Constructive critique is central to this process, helping students articulate their choices and respond thoughtfully to feedback.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Maintaining an active career as a filmmaker has been an important part of my development as an educator. My documentary work continually presents new creative and technical challenges that find their way into my teaching. Likewise, my role as Visual Arts Department Chair at Francis W. Parker School has broadened my perspective on curriculum development, collaboration, and the importance of continually reassessing how we teach. Teaching has made me a better filmmaker, and filmmaking has made me a better teacher.

Looking ahead, I believe the tools of filmmaking and editing will change dramatically, particularly as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into the creative process. While these technologies will undoubtedly transform how films are made, the fundamental principles of creativity and storytelling will always endure. The ability to recognize a compelling narrative, understand human emotion, make meaningful artistic choices, and communicate ideas through images and sound will remain essential. If anything, these distinctly human skills may become more valuable as technology makes the mechanics of filmmaking increasingly accessible. I see my responsibility as preparing students not just for the tools they'll use today, but for a creative profession that will continue to evolve throughout their careers.

After more than 15 years of teaching at DePaul, I continue to find tremendous satisfaction in watching students develop their abilities and discover what they are capable of creating. Ultimately, I want my students to leave my classroom with more than proficiency in a particular editing application; I want them to leave with the confidence to make creative decisions, the discipline to refine their work, the curiosity to explore unfamiliar ideas, and the ability to tell stories that matter to them.