My teaching approach is rooted in formal practice and vocabulary. I believe that students should have a core understanding of historical ideology, industry terminology and fundamental principles related to the graphic design profession. Students should understand abstract and spatial arrangements as critical to formal presentation and as a conceptual framework to be redefined. Students should understand how these principles relate to typography, grid systems and content organization. Students should unite these principals through impeccable craft and take pride in all aspects of presentation.

I stress that formal arrangement is only a result of a rigorous design process. I place an emphasis on contextual research combined with social awareness. I want students to understand that being an effective communicator requires keen observation. To have reliable observations, students must maintain writing skills to document critical analysis; students must translate this analysis into formal directives that measure objectivity; and students must seek out feedback to understand the effectiveness of their solutions.

To reinforce these methods, I create assignments to push students beyond the classroom. I ask students to challenge their notion of what type, images and messages represent in a broad cultural context. I challenge students to expose the social systems that define collective understanding and present design solutions that reveal a shared human condition. I direct students to be resourceful and use any means necessary to craft appropriate responses. I teach students to engage their peers and see every person as a potential collaborator; to explore the means of production, both analog and digital; and to invite disciplines beyond graphic design into their study.

I prepare students to be curious; value their personal perspective; define problems; respond to cultural issues; think critically; possess a creative process; collaborate with people; and employ formal arrangement for positive change. I present to students that they have a responsibility in shaping a cultural dialogue. I ask them to respect their role as graphic designers and to be good stewards in their community. My role is to serve as their guide in discovering how graphic design can contribute to humanity as a whole.

I see this pedagogy as a segment of social design. This perspective sits at the root of my academic research, exploring how graphic design can reflect the human condition through assemblage, activism, storytelling and documentation.