Guidelines for Critique in Studio Courses
These guidelines are distilled from The Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning website: http://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/resources/teaching-in-specific-contexts/studios.

- Be open to a variety of ideas: Be versatile. The studio class is not like some classes where there is one right answer. Be prepared to see “many right answers.”
- Encourage experimentation: Instructors bring a different discourse to the studio class. It is a discourse designed to encourage experimentation, to allow students to learn from mistakes, and to apply what they learn in one session to the next.
- Have a wealth of knowledge: Not only do instructors teach, explain, and demonstrate, but they must also be able to critique, advise, and guide students so that their creativity can lead to success. Instructors need to see possible problems where students may not and be able to guide students to find their own solutions rather than giving them the solutions.
- Relate what you do in the classroom to society: Learning and creating is not done in a vacuum but relates directly to the world outside the classroom.
- Gain respect and trust: An indispensable feature of a studio class is student participation. One of the most successful ways to encourage and achieve participation is to create an environment of trust. Here are some proven ways to accomplish this:
  - Know your students: Go beyond knowing their names. Inquire about their interests. Try to get a handle on their personalities-who is shy, who is insecure, who is outgoing, etc.
  - Make conversation: Arrive early or stay late so you can engage your students in conversation.
  - Show you care: You do this with body language, eye contact, as well as by being available to answer questions.
  - Be consistent and fair
  - Admit when you are wrong
- Make critiquing a valuable and accepted part of the class: Another key aspect of most studio classes is the critique. Often projects are evaluated in group settings so students can learn from each other. There is an art to constructive feedback. The following factors are essential:
  - Provide a rubric and discuss with the students what the key areas of assessment are and what are acceptable levels of performance.
  - Be positive: Start with successful aspects of the project, and be careful to critique the project, not the student.
  - Give positive suggestions framed in the affirmative, not the negative.
  - Do not compare students
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- Do not be sarcastic, mean, or funny: Remember, students have to trust you. Be thoughtful, insightful, and kind with your suggestions.
- Guide your students to come up with solutions and/or changes on their own. You might prompt a student by asking, “If you were going to do it over, what would you change?” Listen to your student's response; continue to prompt with questions that make him/her think. Refrain from solving their problems yourself by encouraging your students to think along the right path.
- Teach students to provide thoughtful comments to their peers.

Other Resources

