

## INTEGRATING STUDIO STRUCTURES WITH THE STUDIO HABITS OF MIND

Imagine walking into a studio classroom. Students are standing behind easels, using vine and compressed charcoal and black oil pastels on newsprint to draw a human model who sits hunched against a wall. Cool jazz plays softly, and bright lights cast shadows on and around the figure. The teacher is standing behind one student, silently observing him at work. After awhile, she speaks to him briefly, points to the model, and lays a piece of tracing paper over the drawing. She quickly redraws several lines, says a few more words, and moves along to other students. She continues her rounds, stopping, looking, talking, and modeling processes and possibilities in short conversations with individuals.

A knowledgeable observer might surmise that the lesson's focus is value—students seem meant to learn to represent the variations of light and shadow on the figure. The spotlights are set up deliberately to emphasize the natural shadows that fall from the figure's contours; charcoal and oil pastels, black, without the confusion of color, are media that readily convey variations in light and shadow. But as we listen in more closely to the conversations between the teacher and her students, we only sometimes hear her emphasizing this element of developing craft. Yes, she talks to her students about value, but she frequently mentions other elements of drawing—line, edge, composition. She also talks about the "feel" or "directness" of various marks and areas of a drawing, as well as accuracy in representation. She engages in a discussion about "how to take that further," and another discussion about the similarity of one student's approach to a particular contemporary artist, Philip Pearlstein.

She's talking about everything! In these brief personal conversations, teachers may focus on a single idea or process or Studio Habit of Mind, but, often, they address as many as five or six, or even all eight of the Studio Habits of Mind in a single, short consultation.

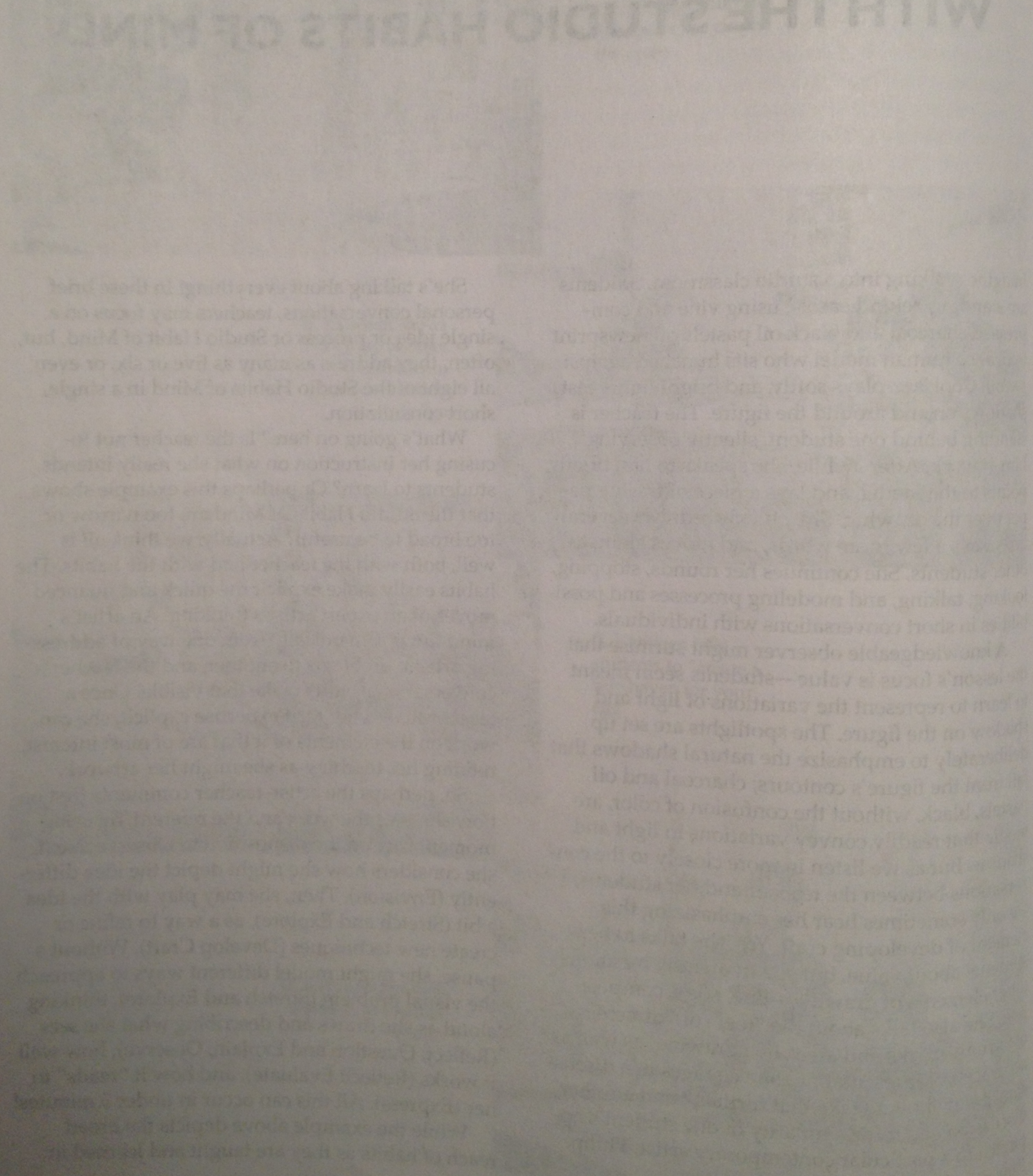
What's going on here? Is the teacher not focusing her instruction on what she really intends students to learn? Or perhaps this example shows that the Studio Habits of Mind are too narrow or too broad to be useful? Actually, we think all is well, both with the teacher and with the habits. The habits easily make explicit the quick and nuanced moves of an expert artist's thinking. An artist's mind flows dynamically from one way of addressing artistic problems to another, and the teacher's conversational shifts make that visible. Once a teacher makes her tacit expertise explicit, she can work on the elements of it that are of most interest, refining her teaching as she might her artwork.

So, perhaps the artist-teacher comments first on how she sees the work and the referent, focusing momentarily on the disposition to Observe. Next, she considers how she might depict the idea differently (Envision). Then, she may play with the idea a bit (Stretch and Explore), as a way to refine or create new techniques (Develop Craft). Without a pause, she might model different ways to approach the visual problem (Stretch and Explore), thinking aloud as she draws and describing what she sees (Reflect: Question and Explain; Observe), how well it works (Reflect: Evaluate), and how it "reads" to her (Express). All this can occur in under 3 minutes!

While the example above depicts the broad reach of habits as they are taught and learned in

a Students-at-Work session, the Studio Habits of Mind were embedded throughout all three Studio Structures in the classes that we observed. Teachers addressed each of the habits of mind, individually and in many combinations or "clusters," not only in Students-at-Work sessions, but also in Demon-

stration-Lectures and Critiques. The next three chapters illustrate examples of how teachers emphasize each individual Studio Habit of Mind and how they interweave the Studio Habits of Mind within all three of the structures by which studio instruction is organized.



## Demonstration–Lecture and the Studio Habits of Mind

The Demonstration–Lecture structure is used to introduce ideas, assignments, and the particular Studio Habits of Mind that will be developed in the Students-at-Work and Critique structures to follow (see Chapter 4). As the teacher deliberately models working, seeing, and thinking as an artist, all the Studio Habits of Mind occur naturally. By slowing down the processes of making, perceiving, and reflecting about art and art-making for students in Demonstration–Lectures, teachers foster students' mindful attention to nuances that might otherwise pass by unnoticed.

### FOSTERING PARTICULAR STUDIO HABITS OF MIND THROUGH DEMONSTRATION–LECTURES

In what follows, we illustrate how Demonstration–Lectures can promote the development of particular Studio Habits of Mind.

#### Develop Craft

Often, an assignment either requires or guides students to experiment with specific materials, tools, or procedures. Demonstration–Lectures, therefore, introduce students to particular features that are most likely to come up as opportunities and challenges as they work on Developing Craft.

For example, when Beth Balliro introduced clay to her 9th-grade students in her Sketching in Clay class, she showed them the practical realities of working with clay in their studio classroom at the Boston Arts Academy. She showed them where tools and materials were kept, what was available, when they could use them, how they needed to care for them, and even how to clean clay off tables and prewash their hands in a bucket so the sink would not clog with clay. Later in this same

class, Beth assigned students the task of making a “chop,” a traditional name-stamp used by potters. That provided further opportunities to clarify practical issues, such as the need to mark work for easy identification, to put work in progress and finished work on different shelves, and to treat unfired work delicately. She used the chop assignment as an opportunity to demonstrate the slab-roller, a large tool for flattening clay into slabs for a variety of hand-building and sculptural projects. Such practical, grounded demonstrations greatly ease the inconveniences and minimize the dangers of working in the environments of studio classrooms, with messy materials and sharp tools. Through the demonstrations, students develop clear images of what they need to do and how they need to do it.

#### Engage and Persist

Watching a skilled craftsperson at work is mesmerizing, and teachers often use Demonstration–Lectures to interest students in the potential of techniques, materials, or tools that they can learn to use at high levels of expertise. For instance, when Jason threw spouts “off the hump” (i.e., he stuck a large mound of clay to the wheel, then centered and formed only a small chunk of the top, a technique that facilitates creating many small pieces quickly), the students' focus was palpable as they watched in silent amazement.

In addition to engaging students' interests, teachers use Demonstration–Lectures to model ways to Persist as they demonstrate some of the variety of techniques, tools, and materials that students might employ to address artistic challenges. For instance, Jason also demonstrated how to create spouts by “extruding” (i.e., using a wall-mounted metal pipe with a plunger, called an extruder, that can be fitted with different internal and external shapes, called dies, to make variously shaped tubes of clay), how to

make spouts from slabs pressed in the slab-roller by wrapping them around cone-shaped wooden forms, and how to “pull” spouts off wooden dowels (i.e., a technique of repeatedly grasping and sliding a wet hand down a piece of clay to shape it). While no one student would use all of these techniques to create the pouring vessel required by the Ceramic Sets Project (see Examples 12.3 and 13.2 for a more complete description of this assignment), seeing such a broad range of possibilities encouraged persistence in finding and developing techniques that would serve students’ particular creative intentions.

### Envision

Demonstration-Lectures are a way for teachers to model a range of possibilities inherent in their assignments and help students open their imaginations to what could and might be done within the assignments’ constraints. Recall Jason’s spring Tile Project (see Examples 6.1 and 7.2), in which students were assigned to create low-relief sculptures of nine mold-pressed tiles. During the Demonstration-Lecture at the beginning of this class, Jason not only demonstrated techniques, but also showed students a wide range of images of tiles from different cultures. Kathleen did a similar “tour” of possibilities with a slide show of drawn self-portraits to introduce a self-portrait assignment to her seniors (in which students drew themselves wearing hats and vests they created themselves; see Example 14.4). By showing a wide range of examples that satisfy the challenges of an assignment in different ways, students are less likely to hold onto a mistaken belief that there is one “right” way to solve the problem.

In addition to helping students imagine possibilities for pattern, form, and color through multiple examples, teachers also help them envision the *process* of the assigned work. For example, Jason helped them envision making tiles by demonstrating step-by-step how to use tools and materials. He showed students how to build a mold box, how to press clay into it and how to get it out, how to arrange wooden shapes and other objects in the mold to create patterns, and how to consider common problems like direction of forms (e.g., letters come out backwards when they are pressed in this way).

### Express

Teachers often gather a range of samples—of works, techniques, materials, tools, or ideas—to guide students’ thinking about how to express per-

sonal meanings, feelings, or ideas in their work. Similar to the way Critiques let students see many possible solutions and hear many possible responses from their classmates, Demonstration-Lectures offer a chance to gain a wider view of the field of art, both from the present and the past. Such a broad and varied perspective encourages students to consider reasons for the variations that they observe, to think about what these variations “say,” and what they themselves might “say” with a particular material, tool, or technique. For example, Jason often brought in artworks that he owned which were made by professionals (as well as a mud-wasp’s nest that he had found in the clay studio and fired). Beth often copied packets of pictures for her students to achieve a similar objective. In Jim’s opening class on contour drawing (see Example 15.1), he gathered descriptive words from the students onto a written list to describe the still life they’d been drawing.

Just take a look at these words. Take a look at them and think about how this might relate to the way you’re drawing. . . . What we do in drawing, we express things by the way that we put lines down, by the way that we draw. These objects don’t mean anything. It’s just some old junk I piled up here. OK? But, you’re already making psychological, making emotional connections, making connections to other things by looking at this. We do this with everything. OK? So, [that’s] what makes drawing interesting.

In Demonstration-Lectures, teachers point out characteristics of the works or processes of interest to students because of similarity to something they recently made (e.g., drawings of a still life, handles, spouts, glazes), or something they were about to use in a new assignment (e.g., expressive marks and lines, lips of a pouring vessel, coils, the mood or idea conveyed by a form or glaze, or the way a group of objects interrelates).

### Observe

Demonstration-Lectures help students “see more” by exploiting their already developed interest in observation. Visual arts students are usually adept at learning from looking, and developing the disposition to do so is critical to their continued growth as thinking artists. For example, Mickey opens his 9th-grade design class session by introducing students to the Viewfinder Project (see Example 9.1). He asked students to use a viewfinder

to “see the world in a new way” so that they could begin to stand back from what they *knew* and start to see the world as design.

Often, the processes involved in using and caring for materials and tools, and working with particular techniques, are complex, multistep operations. Showing these steps in the context of preparing to make something is an effective way of giving students a great deal of information in a sort of visual-temporal “outline” form, which they can then call back up when they need to refine their understanding. In an early drawing class on perspective, for example, Jim followed up on a Students-at-Work session (when students drew still lifes of boxes) and a Critique of those drawings (when students identified and discussed what “bugged” them about their work), with a quick, efficient demonstration of one- and two-point perspective drawing (see Example 9.2). By showing how to create a horizon line and a vanishing point or points, he could model how to draw boxes from any angle—a task they had just completed without that insight and which they would revisit immediately after the demonstration. Jim could then take the lesson one step further, by showing, through removing the rectangular case of an old film projector, how nongeometric objects could be “seen” through their geometry, so that objects of any shape could be understood through these simple perspective rules. His demonstration simplified to its essence a technique that can be very complex.

### Reflect

**Question and Explain.** Because Demonstration–Lectures are generally brief, teachers do not usually dwell on developing students’ disposition to Question and Explain work. However, the Question and Explain Studio Habit of Mind is sometimes fostered in Demonstration–Lectures. For example, as the teachers showed works of art, they often modeled the internal conversations that the creators of these works might have had while creating them. And as students become attuned to different features of particular types of work, they have a chance to practice raising questions and suggesting possible explanations for the forms, styles, appearances, or methods that they have noticed in their recent art-making efforts. For example, when examining a collection of vessels for the Ceramic Sets assignment (see Examples 12.3 and 13.2), Jason’s students asked about techniques for making different vessel “feet,” probably motivated by their efforts to trim the bottoms of vessels just before the Demonstration–Lec-

ture. They also focused on variations in handles and lips, which had been their recent concern in throwing cups, and on glazes, since they had just gotten their first glazed pieces out of the kiln. Both teachers’ “thinking aloud” and students’ practicing raising and answering questions help develop the Question and Explain disposition.

**Evaluate.** Similarly, Evaluation is a more peripheral focus in Demonstration–Lectures, but it is there. This Studio Habit of Mind shows up as teachers point out common challenges and solutions that arise from techniques, as when Jason pointed out how he was using his arm on his leg to build a solid foundation to support his throwing hands while working on the wheel (see Examples 5.4 and 14.1). He sets his own performance as a standard against which students can evaluate their own wheel-throwing. In addition, examining a wide spectrum of examples related to a particular assignment offers chances for appreciation of what works, what individuals like, and what is possible. All contribute to students’ understanding of quality and help them develop their habits of evaluation.

### Stretch and Explore

Just as the variety of forms, techniques, and materials that teachers use in Demonstration–Lectures allows students to envision more and to consider possibilities for expression, that range of possibilities also reinforces the habit of deliberately stretching beyond a current level of ability and responding to “errors” as opportunities—because that is what is modeled in the objects and processes the teacher shows. For example, in Jason’s Repeating Units Project (see Example 11.2), his Demonstration–Lecture kept raising new possibilities for what might count as a unit (a bottle, a brick, a plug of clay, a cell in a wasp’s nest), and kept raising “what if” questions about techniques (what if you ripped it with your fingers, cut it with a needle tool or with knotted string, or pressed it with burlap or the bottom of a cup). All of these possibilities helped set students up to explore, push beyond the known, and observe accidents as opportunities and options for creation.

### Understand the Art World

**Domain.** Demonstration–Lectures are a prime opportunity for teachers to inform students about the context of the culture of art in which they are working as artists. Jim showed students historical works that drew on the processes he was asking

them to try. Mickey encouraged browsing through numerous journals and magazines to find examples of design techniques students were exploring, such as fonts, layouts, and color schemes. Beth worked to expand students' attitudes about what counted as "art" by showing students the objects from African and Japanese cultures that they might otherwise see as "only utilitarian." Jason showed students books of tiles from contemporary and ancient Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. In each case, work by other artists (past and present) is used as a way to expand students' thinking about what is possible, what has been done, and what they might try. The learning of *domain* in the art studio occurs in the context of work that students are currently doing, and not as an isolated "style" that they should simply learn "because it's important in art history."

**Communities.** The teaching in studio classes of art history and contemporary artistic practice sometimes happens through Demonstration–Lectures that focus on grounding students' own work in the contexts of the work of others. When teachers model processes, focus attention on the work of professional artists, or show students characteristics of particular art materials, these methods all emphasize the ways in which artists have worked in their own historical context, which includes the relationships to other artists as well as the relationship to their audience. While we only rarely saw teachers introduce assignments that required students to work in teams (Kathleen's Egg Drop Project is a notable exception; see Example 12.7), we frequently saw teachers remind students in explicit and implicit ways in Demonstration–Lectures that they were artists, and that artists were individuals who worked within various communities.

These communities include the student–teacher pair, peers in a class, visual art students within a school of students, student artists within a local community of artists, and student artists operating within a community of past and contemporary artists whose works form a context for the students' work. For example, when the Boston Arts Academy seniors prepared for their senior show, Kathleen used a Demonstration–Lecture to focus on community by establishing a volunteer group to plan the invitations with a visiting designer. She also set up another group to decide how to allocate space equitably to feature each student's work. We also saw teachers set up assignments that required sharing tools or materials. Recall that Jason's students created a library of molds that they shared in creating textured "skins" for the Coil Sculpture Project (see Examples 4.2, 10.2, and 12.6).

## INTEGRATING STUDIO HABITS OF MIND IN THE DEMONSTRATION–LECTURE

The next two examples show how a Demonstration–Lecture integrates several Studio Habits of Mind.

### TEACHING THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COLOR: INVENTING COLORS PROJECT (EXAMPLE 13.1)

In Beth Balliro's Inventing Colors Project (see Examples 5.1, 7.1, and 13.1), which is taught near the midpoint of her second-semester 9th-grade course at the Boston Arts Academy, she uses a 20-minute Demonstration–Lecture to introduce three purposes for the painting unit that students are about to undertake:

- Developing a theoretical appreciation for color (Understand the Art World: Domain)
- Understanding how to work (Develop Craft: Technique and Studio Practice)
- Helping students develop the disposition to experiment with materials and take risks in low-stakes "sketch" paintings (Stretch and Explore).

As Beth outlines the basics of color theory with the color wheel she has drawn on the board, the focus is on Understand the Art World: Domain. She asks students to copy the wheel into their notebooks and refers to it throughout her short Demonstration–Lecture, which now changes focus to emphasize Develop Craft: Technique. "This is a magical wheel, . . . because you can invent any color you want, if you understand how this wheel works." She explains that color is difficult to mix with acrylic paints, which they will be using (Develop Craft: Technique). When they begin to work, the focus will shift again to Stretch and Explore as students start to create a couple of "sketch" paintings. But, for now, the Demonstration–Lecture focuses on Develop Craft: Technique and Understand the Art World: Domain.

Beth uses the wheel to introduce primary colors. "You can't really make them. . . . If you were a cook, that's the first ingredients of your recipe, those colors." As is typical for Demonstration–Lectures, she introduces the information that students will use right away: "So the paints I'm going to have you use today. . . . Can you guess?" [*gesturing toward the board*]. The students respond: "Red, yellow, and blue. Plus white."

Next, Beth introduces secondary colors, again referring to the board so students see their relationship to the primaries—those colors mixed by

combining the two primaries on either side (Understand the Art World: Domain). She suggests that the hue varies by the ratio of the primaries to each other in the mix and suggests that they experiment with that when they're working. "I want you to play today. You're really playing with mixing" (Stretch and Explore). Then she introduces the complementary colors, with reference to how they stand opposite the primaries on the color wheel and how they contrast with each other, and she closes with the neutrals: "A neutral color happens when you mix a color with its opposite" (Understand the Art World: Domain).

As the time to paint approaches, Beth sets the students up to paint experimentally by telling them that the color wheel doesn't work perfectly.

My teacher said, "If you mix red plus blue, you'll get purple." So I took red, like the color of his shirt red [*pointing to a student's shirt*], and I took blue, sort of the color of his shirt blue, and what did I get? Brown. And I thought, "I thought you said . . . ?" What would be the problem there? Well, this red has a little bit of orange in it. So it's not completely true, but it's something to guide you. That's why I'm going to give you two shades of blue, because sometimes blue acts differently [*holding up two cans of blue paint*] (Stretch and Explore).

With the theory taken care of, Beth concludes the Demonstration–Lecture by showing students the materials they need to do the assignment, where to get them, and how to set them up (Develop Craft: Studio Practice). She shows students their palettes (new white Frisbees), paints (fresh tubes of acrylic), and new brushes, which she reminds them to use and clean carefully. She shows them how to set up their palettes with the colors in the order of the color wheel, shows them "gloss medium," to "make colors clearer" or "see-through," and shows them the paper they'll use. The students transition quickly to a Students-at-Work session in which they create two paintings of imaginary settings, one using complementary colors and one using neutral colors.

#### DESIGN INSPIRED BY OBJECTS:

#### CERAMIC SETS PROJECT

#### (EXAMPLE 13.2)

The Demonstration–Lecture with which Jason introduces his Ceramic Set Project (see Examples 12.3 and 13.2), taught in the middle of the first semester of his year-long ceramics course, emphasizes the relationships among four goals:

- Looking carefully at objects to see how they were made (Observe).
- Planning ceramic design in a variety of ways (Envision).
- Making choices to convey ideas or feelings (Express).
- Synthesizing technical skills learned over the term (Develop Craft: Technique).

During this portion of his Demonstration–Lecture (which occupies 40 minutes), Jason shows students a range of tools, techniques, and processes that they might employ to express meaning in the design and creation of their "sets."

#### Goal 1: Observe

In this Demonstration–Lecture, Jason shows students several tools and techniques to add to their repertoire of choices for this final assignment of the first term. He shows them new tools (e.g., the clay extruder for pressing spouts, dowels for pulling spouts) and new techniques (e.g., throwing small cups off a hump that, when cut in half vertically, become pitcher spouts). He also shows them new uses for old tools and techniques if they are combined with new ones (e.g., using slabs to roll spouts around dowels).

You saw the spouts over on those other teapots, which are made in a way very similar to this (Observe, Develop Craft: Technique). We can pull spouts on dowels [*beginning to form clay*]. Very similar to pulling handles (Observe, Develop Craft: Technique). You want to put this through the middle as close as you can get to the middle [*pushing dowel through the clay*] and you want to get water on this [*removing the clay and dampening the dowel*] so it slides and just like you're pulling a handle, you can pull a spout [*beginning to form the spout over the dowel*] (Observe, Develop Craft: Technique).

#### Goal 2: Envision

As Jason demonstrates the various tools and techniques, he emphasizes how students might think creatively about their use. The interplay between techniques and ideas, therefore, is modeled as seamless. He teaches his students how to make the leap between the concrete materials and tools and the aesthetic purposes to which they aspire.

You can pretty dramatically change the form of something by cutting in . . . and adjusting (Envision). Now all these connections I would score—slip and score—so they would stay together (Develop Craft: Technique) [*beginning to form and shape a spout and attaching the spout to the tube*]. But just to give you the idea, there's the spout (Envision). And ahh, something like this [*using the tube made in the extractor*], you could use [*beginning to cut the form*] and alter . . . in some way to make some weird spout (Develop Craft: Technique, Stretch and Explore, Envision).

### Goal 3: Express

In his initial interview, Jason was skeptical about the importance of teaching expression. On probing, it became clear that he worried that art was often trivialized by emphasizing its therapeutic uses as a way of "merely expressing feelings." However, using our expanded definition of Express, which includes the expression of concepts, personal meanings, and feelings, we observed Jason including Expression as a goal in many classes that might appear on the surface to focus exclusively on skills. Jason shows that craft is necessary in order to express meaning.

As Jason begins to form the spout over the dowel (Observe, Develop Craft: Technique), he explains:

But as you pull, this will get tighter and tighter, so you have to keep adding water on this and making sure that it's loose and sliding. And then you may also put some sort of lines in [*forming lines in the clay*] (Express, Develop Craft: Technique). And you might do something like spin it [*spinning the clay, making a spiral shape*] (Stretch and Explore, Develop Craft: Technique). Then you can slide it off [*removing the clay from the dowel*]. Then if you really want to . . . give it some shape, you might have to turn it on its side and let that get leather-hard and then come back and cut it, the exact shape that you want it (Develop Craft: Technique, Express).

It may be difficult to understand why we label some of these examples as Express. Jason emphasized to us in interviews and to students in class that how artists touch clay leaves impressions that convey different meanings. A glaze applied with splashing "feels" more casual, so the object may feel more informal or convey a reference to the idea of

movement, as Zen ceramics often do. A smooth surface feels more worked, so the object may convey more formality. For these reasons, we see Jason's references to different ways to touch or mark the clay as emphasizing "Express."

### Goal 4: Develop Craft: Technique

When Jason shows his students how to use a tool or technique, he almost always encourages them to think about the many possible ways they could use it in their own work. Thus, he uses a "cluster" of Observe–Express–Envision–Develop Craft: Technique to make sure that students are not only learning skills, but also understanding the artistic purpose and potential of artistic tools and techniques.

So, now we need to score this with our scoring tool before we put it together (Develop Craft: Technique). I'll score this side [*scoring the clay*] (Observe, Develop Craft: Technique). And we can press this together [*pressing the seam*] (Develop Craft: Technique). And I'm using this part of my hand [*pointing to the part of his hand he is using*] to try not to get too many fingerprints all over it (Observe, Express). And you might leave the seam (Express). If you don't want the seam to show (Express), you can also roll this [*rolling the tube on the table*] and later when it gets a bit harder you can come back with a rubber rib and go over that (Develop Craft: Technique).

With this ceramic sets assignment, Jason has helped his students develop a variety of Studio Habits of Mind. They learn to observe as they look carefully at ceramics; they learn to envision as they plan their designs; they learn to express as they think about conveying some kind of idea or feeling in their set; and all the while they are learning to acquire technical skills required for expertise in ceramics.

This chapter has illustrated the complexities and richness of Demonstration–Lectures and the role that they play in fostering Studio Habits of Mind. In the next chapter, we focus on the Students-at-Work structure, in which the assignments, concepts, processes, approaches, and attitudes introduced and modeled in Demonstration–Lectures are practiced by students as they create artworks under the personalized guidance of their artist–teachers.