



Sustained Excellence in Tertiary Teaching General Category

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“I am many things: lecturer and learner; curriculum developer and assessor; researcher and artist; mentor and collaborator, and facilitator and observer. These overlapping roles inform one another, enabling me to create a dynamic teaching framework that sustains a vibrant education culture.”

Hannah is a Senior Lecturer in the College of Creative Practice and Enterprise at Otago Polytechnic (OP). She initially taught across four bachelor programmes: Fashion, Communication Design, Product Design and Architectural Studies. From 2008, she concentrated on a Level 4 Creative Studies Certificate, later adding Art and Design, and Digital Media and Design. She has expertise in life drawing, landscape, portraiture, still-life, one-and two-point perspective, illustration, 3D and digital, as well as laser cutting, design fundamentals, painting and exhibition design.

Hannah encourages her students early on to share their best learning memories with her and their peers. She can then provide the best mix of support, challenge and appropriate learning strategies to help them achieve excellent learning outcomes. She uses stories as a powerful teaching and learning strategy. In Studio Project, a student-negotiated task based around the concept of personal identity, she gives students free rein to develop their interpretations. One student explored her Māori and Chinese ancestry by researching the history and cultural significance of Pounamu and Jade and, in consultation with OP's Kaitohutuhu, developed a design. With the technical support and expertise of the jewellery department, she produced her final exhibition piece.

Hannah's teaching strategies include fostering confidence through creating positive classroom/studio cultures, engaging in collaborative and two-way reflective conversations, incubating constructive peer support and feedback, and nurturing experimentation. She strives to meet every student's needs regardless of their abilities. Hannah describes learning in the art and design studio context as “often experimental, intuitive, spontaneous and messy”. Adapting Phil Race's Ripple Learning Model enabled her to produce fluid dynamics, where learning phases move, merge and melt together, hence the title Melted Ice Cream Model. Art and Design certificate graduates are usually not sufficiently experienced to work in the industry and require higher qualifications to do so. For the past six years an average of 73% of Hannah's level four graduates have enrolled in further education – 76% for a bachelor degree, 16% for the Certificate program, and 8% for Diplomas. This is a major indicator of success as many of these students had not thought they could achieve a tertiary qualification.

Hannah sees it as her responsibility to nurture a positive community arts culture and develop enduring professional relationships that extend beyond enrolment into the wider creative space. One of her highlights is taking certificate students to final exhibitions of MFA students. As exhibiting is important for any artist or designer, professional or otherwise, celebrating students' creative outputs through exhibition is a

vibrant aspect of the college. A large group exhibition requires students to be immersed in on-the-job learning, collaboration and project management in a limited time frame. To solve the individual versus group assessment dilemma with these large group exhibitions, Hannah and her co-facilitator divide the students into small groups and separate assessment into three parts: the success of the outcome specified in the submitted team plan, the quality of workbooks, and peer assessment of individual team members.

To encourage deep learning and help students to become robust designers with broad perspectives, Hannah deliberately engages students with learning experiences that sit beyond the screen. In her Symbol and Identity course, she encourages project-based learning, drawing as a way of thinking, learning through storytelling, and interacting with immersive local environments and landscapes. This involves field trips to local museums, exploration of the local landscape and workshops (alongside a Māori co-facilitator) on the use of Māori symbols, followed by laser cutting workshops in the computer lab. She believes that technical skills are best learned when contextualised within a project that has scope for personalisation. Thus, students are more likely to take ownership of the processes and become experts through direct hands-on experience in learner-led ways.

Hannah says it is imperative that students become confident to draw “whatever, whenever”, and believes drawing is a skill anyone can learn with practice, discipline and insightful guidance. When tasked with redesigning Drawing Journal, an initial project within the Certificate of Creative Studies, she consulted colleagues, students and stakeholders and agreed to provide opportunities for students to adopt a self-directed daily routine of drawing. Improvement and commitment became the assessment focus, and this approach enabled less gifted students to succeed, and those who sought perfection to push creative boundaries. When teaching life drawing, Hannah dispels students’ unease in discussion, then employs her ‘boot camp’ approach by introducing and demonstrating two opposing traditional techniques such as blind contour drawing and mass drawing, and where the class alternates between techniques in a series of rapid drawings. The physicality of standing at an easel ensures an intense focused environment in which to observe the body as an objective form and helps to train the students. She also uses a visualisation activity to help students view the human form objectively.

Hannah’s own creative practice ranges from solo visual art exhibitions to writing journal publications to collaborative community projects. She participates in the Dunedin School of Art public seminar programme and delivers public floor talks at galleries, locally, nationally and internationally. She has published five journal articles in the Scope Art and Design journal and delivered two conference papers at the 2019 ITP Whanaungatanga Research Symposium. Since 2018 she has represented OP in the NZQA Consistency Review and has advised other programmes on preparing for Consistency Reviews. Over 2014 to 2016, Hannah collaborated on a project to build Dunedin’s first Disc Golf Course and in 2020 she was invited to contribute a visual art component to Random Acts of Art (RAA), where she drew images of wading birds on CBD shop fronts. In an ongoing collaboration Small Measures, her initial experimentation of filming and performing live improvisations of music and drawing, developed into performance video artworks. The Tussock Butterfly Project is a design project working with Ahi Pepe|MothNet, a science project that involves teachers, students and whanau with moths and NZ Post. Success highlights include a solo exhibition at CICA Museum, Seoul South Korea (2020), a solo exhibition at Ashburton Public Art Gallery (2019) and The Buinho Artist Residency in Portugal (2019).

“I view teaching and learning as interchangeable. We learn to teach and teach to learn. In creative spaces we build a community of artists learning and working together.”