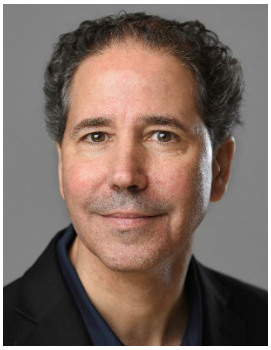

Faculty Teaching Recognition Award

Personal Statement: Paul C. King, RA Department of Architectural Technology

Considering this nomination for the Faculty Teacher Recognition Award, provides me with an opportunity to reflect upon my career as a teacher. While I have been a member of the full time teaching faculty here at CityTech since 2007, my career began over 35 years ago in September of 1988, when I began as an adjunct.

Shortly after I began my time here as a full time faculty member, I took the teaching portfolio workshop guided by Janet Liou-Mark. This was the first time I had put my methods to paper or had thought about the teaching philosophy that guided my actions in the classroom, but the knowledge was within me and I quickly filled the pages. The next year, I was invited to participate as a co-leader of the same workshop along with Janet and Gwen Cohen-Brown, a role I continue in today. Over the years this workshop has given me an opportunity to share my experiences, but more importantly it has given me the chance to listen to my fellow faculty and enrich my own understanding of what it takes to be an effective and valued educator.

This experience has provided many opportunities to share and demonstrate my methods and I look forward to the opportunity this award would give me, to enhance this experience by running faculty development workshops. I would like to focus on several of the methods highlighted in my teaching portfolio, including *leading with an activity*, the *white elephant assignment*, and the *design feedback loop*. While details of these methods can be referenced (in my teaching portfolio), I would like to briefly highlight the importance of these three choice. While these were originally developed to teach the visual subject of architecture, they can all with some modification be applied to teaching any subject.

"Leading with an activity" became paramount when I was asked in 2008, to develop curriculum for the new City Poly High School. Challenged with an audience of high school students who were not ready to sit quietly and listen to a lecture, it became critical to quickly focus their attention by engaging in an activity. In simple terms by handing the students a prop, like a spoon they can hold or engage them in an activity that requires them to stand and interact with each other, the stage is set for learning. As a teacher, observing the activity instantly communicates the level of understanding of the participants, allows you to guide the lesson and more importantly teaches the entire group.

While the details of the mechanism of the "*white elephant assignment*" are not important to this discussion, when used in a large classroom it allows the students to engage productively with each other and move the lesson forward, when they are not directly engaged with the professor. This method sets up a three-way client-architect relationship, where each student serves in both roles – with two other students. Relating this to other subjects, the "architect" can be seen as the person serving the role of "problem solver"

while “client” defines the problem to be solved. The lesson is enriched by each student concurrently serving in both roles – able to see problems from multiple perspectives. As an instructor this allows students to be actively engages in learning, when the instructor is otherwise engaged and also teaches the student the inherent value of working as a team, formed through the relationship of “client-architect”.

The third method, the “*design feedback look*” is a form of iterative investigation. When this skill is mastered by the student, they will be able to apply it to solve any problem, but at the same time learning that there is never just one answer to any problem.

I would look to introduce these innovative methods through workshops run in a collaborative form. Groups of faculty would first be introduced to each concept and then would work together to look and develop a lesson plan that tailors these method to their own discipline. By open presentation and discussion, the experience of all the participants would be enriched.

Today my research focuses on the development of the modern suspension bridge in the 19th century, and most notably the work of John A. Roebling, engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge. As such I have the opportunity to share my passion for the subject by engaging in “*place based learning*” by combining lecture materials with a walking tour of the Brooklyn Bridge. Recently had an opportunity to provide a two day learning experience, for our faculty and students with a lecture and walking tour for the architecture club and I am currently working with a student to further my research through the colleges Emerging Scholars Program. The funds provided by this award would be used to support completion of my book manuscript on the subject, “*Roebling before the Brooklyn Bridge.*”

I believe that a good teacher is always aware of the limits of their own knowledge, an awareness that drives us to seek answers, to remain curious about the world around us and to be a “lifelong learner”. Phrases like lifelong learner, when used too often can lose their meaning. These are not just words but a true belief that must be practiced every day, not just in the classroom but every day – in everything we do. I believe that being an effective teacher requires passion. While passion cannot be taught, it can be demonstrated every day in my actions and in the classroom with my students and hopefully with my fellow faculty by offering these workshops.

I look forward to the opportunity to continue to contribute to CityTech.

Professor Paul C. King, R.A, Department of Architectural Technology