Teaching is never merely a professional responsibility for me. Instead, it is an exhilarating journey, a self-enriching experience and an inalienable part of my intellectual life as an explorer and producer of knowledge on the ever-changing human world.

I arrived at the University of Hong Kong as an Assistant Professor in 2009. As a freshly minted intellectual about to start a career in education, I saw – and still see – teaching as the central crux of my intellectual life and one of the privileges of a university career. For academics working in higher education, teaching ought to be the most important commitment, as it is the intellectual expression of our shared belief in and commitment to the continuing development and betterment of the intelligentsia and society at large. In my view, teaching is a transformative and conversational process, which affords an opportunity to inspire and empower and to learn, both for ourselves and our students.

University teaching in the 21st century is a challenging yet rewarding enterprise. Witnessing the epic changes in the higher education sector, successful university teaching must be student-based and student-centred and must aim to provide students with the perspective, vision, motivation and critical-thinking skills necessary to remain at the frontier of human knowledge. University teachers need to be innovative in creating a learning environment that encourages the explorative, critical and experiential pursuit of knowledge. With the aid of advanced visualisation and communication information technologies, university teaching in the 21st century is also meant to be a journey of discovery in which students are guided in productive self-learning, peer-learning and problem-based learning.

Teaching is never a solo performance. In my five years of teaching at HKU, I have received an enormous amount of help from University management, Faculty and departmental colleagues, tutors, administrative staff, the Common Core Curriculum Office, the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and most importantly, my students. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to each and all of them.

Dr YAN Xiaojun

An undergraduate student would always expect their undergraduate studies would provide an all-rounded environment that allows them to pursue their desired future career paths. In a lot of cases, students do not fully understand what their studies encompass and the career set ahead of them. Landscape architecture is a relative new field of studies and industry in Hong Kong and having a studio teacher that is well-trained and experienced was especially valuable for a student’s development in this field of studies and thinking critically in design. Dorothy is definitely one of these teachers who are able to bring experiences and knowledge acquired from her education and work from the frontier of landscape architecture to students who know nothing about landscape. Her inspiring teaching methods catalysed our desire to experiment, to inquire and to pursue landscape architecture as our career.

Lance WONG Lok Wai
BA(LS) 2011

Dorothy works with students who may have had only basic college mathematics and physics to cover the durable world confronted through land measurement, surface, and manipulation. In courses she addresses the interrelated areas of site design, landscape technology, and engineering. She has devised a pedagogy that combines several ways to see topography: as a vessel that holds everyday life, as a medium that can be shaped and molded, and as a surface that can be measured and calibrated to the specifications of the human body, the moving vehicle, and rainwater. Combined with Dorothy’s contagious enthusiasm for topographic concepts and manipulation, students introduced to this pedagogy find reasons to overcome their apprehensions about technical content. In Dorothy’s classroom and studio work, her astonishing eye and lightness of design touch takes the students into direct contact with the medium of landscape and construction materials, and transforms their design work into lyrical and pragmatic forms.

Professor Niall G KIRKWOOD
Graduate School of Design, Harvard University