

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Andrew Quitmeyer, and I am an enthusiastic engineer, artist, and educator with diverse interests.

I have worked in large industries and small non-profits, areas of extreme wealth and poverty, and various fields of study. I conducted research in labs, jungles, and farms; taught students from Pre-K to the graduate level; and trained myself in an array of software tools and programming languages. I enjoy such a wide assortment of activities that it is hard for me to determine exactly what it is I "do." Nevertheless, it appears that my desires primarily involve collecting and distributing information.

My eagerness to gather data forged my character as a student and researcher. Throughout my education, I pushed myself to take heavy course loads, not to graduate early, but to maximize the variety of subjects I could encounter. I began with standard curricula in the arts and sciences, but I soon became attracted to studies that featured particularly high-bandwidth data streams with many interconnected parameters. For instance, computer vision piqued my interest because it attempts to reveal relationships between torrents of linked temporal, spatial, and color data. Similar reasons spurred my work in spatial design and physical environments. Locative media, augmented-reality performances, and empirical naturalism, such as digital biological surveys in the rainforest, interested me due to the deluge of environmental information that must be considered and analyzed. To understand these systems, I took up engineering because it offered methods of problem solving and inquiry that could be applied to complex structures, regardless of subject matter. I also link together my disparate knowledge bases whenever advantageous. My past entomology courses, for example, influence the methodologies of my current research in computer vision bio-tracking.

Although I am driven to collect data, sharing knowledge gives me joy. Whenever I encounter fresh experiences, stories, or ideas, it burdens me to keep this new information to myself. This feeling, I now realize, is what forged my roles as filmmaker, artist and educator. Video allowed me to communicate abstruse concepts to others in a fast, accessible format. Whether the subject matter pertained to scientific findings, like the grammar behind the honey bee's dance language, or more bizarre matters, such as first-hand studies of hobo rail-riding culture, I simply wanted to disseminate information as effectively as possible. When I learned programming and the world of computational media opened up to me, I was thrilled to create and experiment with novel data-dispersal mechanisms that would have been impossible just years before.

However, I became troubled by the fact that the arcane knowledge inherent to film making and digital media created a one-way flow of information. It seemed dangerous that the target consumers of these new media forms tended to be illiterate in creating film and digital media themselves. To stem this imbalance of power, I launched a campaign to teach underprivileged children how to harness these new modes of communication. *The Storytelling Studio* is an all-encompassing, media literacy workshop which teaches children, teens, and families to share their personal stories and ideas through a spectrum of media. Since its inception, my system has enabled individuals across three continents to communicate in new, powerful ways, and it has been used to tackle pressing societal topics such as child labor in Ecuador. The work I did for *The Storytelling Studio*, and its documentary, [Behind the Screen](#), led to my selection as the documentary production instructor for a mixed graduate/undergraduate art history course, "Collecting East Asia." I now seek to employ my computational design skills to simplify the learning process in media literacy with my master's thesis, *Documatic*. The project consists of an Android app that uses mobile phones to form a collaborative film production and editing environment, which then

automatically generates pre-edited “rough cuts” to Adobe Premiere and Final Cut Pro.

These two passions, information’s collection and dissemination, have guided me in the realm of academia. This gratifying process of striving to educate and, in turn, become better educated, carries me to my goal of teaching professionally. The chance to teach others to explore information’s flow at these new intersections of design and technology only excites me further.

Teaching Philosophy

The joy I receive from expressing personal ideas is only topped by unlocking those of my students. By teaching new forms of communication, I help multiply the ideas spreading in the world. The methods of my teaching have been synthesized from my multifaceted experiences as a student. My exposure to the divided spheres of engineering, design, and science presented me with diverse teaching styles. As both student and teacher, I persistently scrutinize these methods, determining best-fit approaches for specific environments, students, or subject matters. I also endeavor to maintain an open mind to all pedagogical techniques; perhaps the aspects which lead to the downfall of one class may be more advantageous to a different subject, situation, or target group. My goal is to incorporate the beneficial aspects of these educational formats into my own curricula while also understanding the shortcomings of less effective approaches. This procedure results in an inherently multi-disciplinary curriculum both in style and subject.

Apart from the specific situations or techniques used, I believe in creating open learning environments. No topic should be out of bounds and no aspect of the curriculum should be impervious to criticism from the students. Unfortunately, I have personally borne witness to many overly permissive pedagogical styles which suffocated under the burden of their own uncontrolled expansiveness. To be truly effective, while continuing to foster creativity and mental freedom, the teacher must bear responsibility for crafting intricate, adaptable structures to guide the students. The course should be structured like a nature trail which encourages detours and exploration of the rich environment without leaving the travelers lost in the woods. In this way, instructors must also be concerned with education's fractal nature. Powerful teachers present panoramic pictures of the overarching concepts while focusing on precise details. The proper map can guide any student to his or her goal.

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Sincerely,

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