

# JESSE DREIKOSEN

SCENIC DESIGNER

208-885-7213 – jedreikosen@yahoo.com – www.jessedreikosen.com

---

“It is time  
for us to  
teach  
young  
people  
early on  
that in  
diversity  
there is  
beauty  
and  
there is  
strength.”  
-Maya  
Angelou

## Diversity Statement

As I sat down to revise this diversity statement I looked back at the past thirteen years of my teaching experience and realized that I have been immersed in two completely different learning environments. Both The University of Idaho and Florida International University provided me with opportunities to work with students from all cultural backgrounds. I have also been honored to teach and mentor students from all over the world, places like Poland, Korea, the UK and every South American country there is. I believe that educational excellence that truly incorporates diversity can promote mutual respect and make possible the full, effective use of the talents and abilities of all and foster innovation while training future leadership.

Though public opinion on the educational “benefits” is mixed I view a diverse student body as an important educational resource that enhances the environment for learning. I find that each student brings his/her/their own perspective to the class, and that the group as a whole benefits from the diversity. If we all strive to respect one another and focus on what we can learn from each other, we will walk away from the experience with an increased knowledge of the world and its people. The study of theatre is all about collaboration so this idea of working with and learning from one another is at the core of what I do and what I teach.

Teaching offers an incredible opportunity to share my love and enthusiasm for theatre. I find it rewarding to guide students as they explore their individual interests. My teaching style facilitates this individual exploration of the nature of theatre, how it functions in our society and the opportunities it offers. Helping students follow their impulses and seeing them learn from both their mistakes and their successes gives me a sense of fulfillment that I have not found anywhere else. I find that while my students are learning from me I also am learning from them, which creates a stimulating working environment and encourages experiential learning. This, in turn, leads to collaboration and greater growth for everyone.

I do not believe in a “one size fits all” type of instructional method. Instead, I seek to engage each student as an individual. My purpose is to discover whatever it is that sparks a student’s passion to explore an idea further, as well as to know more about theatre in general. I encourage that hunger for learning by giving it direction, focus and opportunity, both in the classroom and in practical production work. I believe the most effective environment in which to achieve this type of learning is one which offers a broad professional landscape within a liberal arts setting.

Part of my responsibility as a teacher is to present methods and practices of innovators in theatrical design. With this in mind, I organized an international panel discussion on “The Hispanic Voice in Design” at the United States Institute for Theatre Technology’s National Conference in Long Beach, California. Though I am not Hispanic myself I found it extremely important to explore and present on this topic. Not only for my students but also for all across the U.S. that need to hear how people of Hispanic decent are making a huge impact on the theatrical world.

I continue to strive for opportunities to learn from and incorporate diversity in my teaching and in my professional life.