

# Matt Omasta

## Philosophy of Teaching

My primary purpose as an educator is to support students' growth as artists, scholars, educators, and citizens. I teach through and about theatre because I believe that, by embodying others – on stage, in the classroom, and in our communities – we increase our capacity to empathize with unfamiliar people and perspectives and develop more nuanced understandings of the diversity of human experience.

As emerging theatre and education professionals, my students refine their aesthetic and pedagogical skills and learn to employ them effectively in a variety of contexts. Through their research, teaching, and creative work, they discover, create, decipher, and articulate new ideas and ways of seeing. Their efforts will change the world, and I am honored to serve them.

My practice is guided by the following core beliefs:

### **I am:**

#### **Knowledgeable**

Insatiably curious about the human condition, I avidly expand my expertise through research and practice. I model lifelong learning by conducting original inquiries, analyzing scholarly literature, and collaborating with researchers in fields ranging from performance to education to psychology.

#### **Invested**

I inspire students through my sincere interest in their individualized academic, artistic, and pedagogical journeys. I demonstrate my support by listening carefully to their histories and aspirations, advising them to set ambitious yet achievable goals, and engaging in collaborative research and creative projects to share my experience and help them prepare for their own professional journeys.

#### **Inclusive**

I value the diverse experiences of people from communities that have long been marginalized and strive to create a welcoming, safe, brave, anti-racist space for students to create and dialogue. I center equity and ensure that my courses explore stories by and about people from all backgrounds.

### **My students are:**

#### **Artists**

Theatre, drama, and education are art forms. As imaginative innovators, my students pursue unique and innovative approaches to creating original artistic works.

#### **Scholars**

As intellectually curious analytic thinkers and researchers, my students embrace the world's complexity, pursue deep, authentic understandings through multiple forms of inquiry, and consider questions and problems from myriad perspectives.

#### **Citizens**

My students understand how their actions affect their communities. As reflective critical thinkers, they consciously consider the implications of their choices for the world around them.

### **Learning is:**

#### **Heuristic**

I encourage active, participatory learning; applaud risk-taking and the pursuit of novel approaches; and savor the understandings that come from experimentation, failures, and successes.

#### **Collective**

I foster learning communities that promote collaboration, encouraging students to engage in shared experiential learning with their peers and members of their communities.

#### **Vital**

Learning inspires us to change the world. By expanding our horizons and exploring a plurality of perspectives we can challenge hegemony, improve lives, and advance toward social justice.