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Teaching Philosophy

My main objective is to challenge students to understand the unique possibilities embedded within their physical instrument in teaching dance technique. This involves sculpting the physical, mental, and ultimately developing the artist. In the studio, I value the importance of facilitating an environment in which technique class is used as an opportunity to experiment and take risks. The students play a vital role in cultivating this environment throughout their movement explorations. I find it important to reinforce citizenship, accountability, trust, and support within their learning experiences. Fostering such qualities has proven to provide a safe studio atmosphere in which students are uninhibited, confident, and fully present. It is through this constant investigation and risk taking that students begin to understand the power of possibility. The current limitation then has the ability to flourish when inspired to push for increase. Since the physical body is the vessel by which we share our art, I incorporate a basic understanding of biomechanics in the studio experience. This often incorporates an analysis of the interactions of our muscular-skeletal systems as our bodies carry out the physical feats that dance movement demands. I place emphasis on the awareness of alignment and breath connectivity as it fuels movement to promote efficiency. This creates opportunities for mental and physical embodiment, and increased technical ability. Such concepts reflect research of exercise physiological training adaptations, concepts of conditioning, as well as influences by somatic experiences with yoga, pilates, and gyrokinesis/ gyrotonic training methods.

As a dance artist and educator, I value the ability to experience and express the intricate details of life through movement. In terms of compositional design elements, I am intrigued by human interaction, psychological concepts, possibility and chance, and constant evolution as individuals. I am specifically interested in the ways in which movement quality, musical partnership, full-embodied movement, rhythmic play, and improvisation spark choreographic development. My technique and composition courses are structured to empower students to define their artistic voices supported by intellectual inquiry.

Dance is a direct reflection of culture, socio-political landscape, and history manifested through the body as a medium for communication. From a historical focus, I seek to facilitate discussions to aid students in defining characteristics and movement descriptions in identifying concert and social dances, while also painting a vivid picture of the historical landscape occurring simultaneously. This requires students to develop their ability to communicate about dance. Communicating about dance in verbal and written format is a skill that students sharpen from regular engagement. I seek to provide the skills necessary for students to formulate their own aesthetic preferences, with the necessary communication tools for evidentiary support of their opinions and ideas. My lecture coursework incorporates imagery and video to not only appeal to the multitude of learning styles, but to also bring life to dance as a performing art. Students will learn how to research, formulate original scholarly conclusions, and support their interpretations of dances experienced.

I challenge students to utilize their unique life experiences, as a way to contextualize their learning. The study of movement and dance requires a broad appreciation for cultural diversity within the artform. As a woman of color, concepts of feminism, womanism, spirituality, and the significance of African Diasporic dances in history have enriched my identity as an artist. It is through this contextualized perspective that I have defined my unique contribution to the field of dance. I envision cultivating an environment where diverse student experience and identity is critical and welcomed in the facilitation of learning.