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Teaching Philosophy

Each student is an individual with a unique personality, background, and way of thinking. Accordingly, every student has a unique voice to contribute to the world of music. I believe that my role as a teacher is to aid each student individually in the discernment of their passions, achievement of their aspirations, and discovery of their own distinctive voice. My studio provides a safe, supportive, and encouraging environment in which students are free to experiment with new ideas and grow both as musicians and as people. The skills I endeavor most to instill in my students are independent self-directed learning, critical thinking and self-reflection, and healthy musicianship.

The common misconception that accomplished musicians have a rare talent which enabled them to rise to their level of ability deters many young musicians from reaching their full potential. As is true in any other field, I believe that through diligent work, persistence, and commitment, any student who is passionate about music can reach their objectives. As an educator, I serve as a guide for my students, giving them the tools and skills they need to grow and reach these objectives.

In my teaching, I always endeavor engage students in their own learning process in order to help them become active participants in their personal learning and growth. By cultivating in my students a proficiency in critical thinking and reflection on their own playing, and by providing them with the knowledge and resources they need to identify issues and successfully overcome obstacles, I aim to give students a solid foundation on which to build and develop their unique individual sound. In my lessons, I have students explain and talk through their thinking processes when reflecting upon their own playing. Helping students understand and be able to explain what they are doing and why it may or may not be working gives them tools to solve these issues and others by critically reflecting upon their playing and developing concrete problem-solving strategies.

I mold my approach to each topic and concept to fit students' unique styles of learning. As an educator, I strive always to discover new methods of conveying concepts to students. Some students learn best through experimentation; others learn best by example; still others learn best through explanation. By having a variety of techniques by which I am able to explain various aspects of music and the clarinet to my students, I am able to successfully convey my ideas and thoughts, as well as help students discover the ways they learn best. This enables students to teach themselves efficiently in individual practice and study. By exposing students to various methods of conveying an idea, I also encourage them to think about the concept in new ways. Flexibility and open-mindedness to a diverse assortment of interpretations are critical skills for students in music.

All musicians are life-long learners, and I aim cultivate this concept in my students. By encouraging students to explore their own thought processes and investigate new ideas and opinions, my students and I are able to work together to discover and share a diversity of understandings. Validation of students' interpretations also helps to instill them with confidence that will further encourage self-directed learning. The concept of life-long learning is critical in empowering students to find their own manner of expressing themselves through their art and to discover what they are passionate about contributing to the world.

I encourage all my students to objectively observe their own practicing and to find the environment in which they are most productive. I stress the importance of diligently recording, scheduling, and journaling their practice sessions, urging students to begin each session with specific goals in mind. Encouraging healthy practice and performance drawing from Alexander Technique and body mapping and encouraging a healthy lifestyle outside of music are also fundamental issues I address.

In assigning repertoire, I begin by exposing students to the canon, then encourage building upon this foundation to include a wider array of musical styles and traditions. I believe that expansion of the repertoire and exposure to a more diverse range of genres will give my students a more thorough understanding of music and its relationship to society and culture.

I believe that the purpose of music education is to contribute to a fuller and deeper understanding of music and its impact on society and the world. As a private lesson instructor, I have the unique opportunity to work with students one-on-one. This format gives students individual attention that they do not otherwise receive. This individual guidance is necessary in addressing students' unique goals and concerns in order to help students discover their passions and develop their own voice. It also gives me a platform to instill in students a desire to pursue active learning throughout their lives in order to contribute and further the world of music. Overall, lessons aim to foster and build on students' love of music in order to help them discover ways to use their skills and knowledge of the subject to inspire others and improve the world around them.

As I support my students by nurturing their growth as musicians and life-long learners, I also aspire to serve as a mentor and role-model to my students. I hope that by sharing my own experiences in the field of music (including the struggles and successes I experienced throughout my career) and demonstrating my commitment to and enthusiasm for the art, I will be able to inspire students and help them grow in their journeys as young professionals. Even if students choose not to pursue music as a profession, I hope to instill in my students a deeper understanding and appreciation of music, along with crucial skills in critical thinking, diligence and commitment, discipline, independence and self-directed learning, problem solving, and self-reflection.