

Charles Dugan

Teaching Statement

“There isn’t any solution to this problem of education other than to realize that the best teaching can be done only when there is a direct individual relationship between a student and a good teacher.”

— Richard Feynman, Nobel Prize Winning Physicist

Statement:

It is my duty as a teacher to introduce students to the opportunities that knowledge affords. In the truest sense of the liberal arts, the purpose of an undergraduate education is to teach a student how to *think*. This cannot be done without a critical examination of both the self, the wisdom of others, and the role which the student hopes to play in the larger world. These three pillars support my teaching philosophy.

Putting Singing at the Center of Instruction

Parker J. Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach*, identifies that the most successful model of instruction positions the subject—in this instance *singing* and *music*—as the ultimate focus of attention and instruction. ***Setting egos and rank aside, the student and the teacher must work together to explore the vastness of singing and musicianship.*** This model admits that it is impossible for a teacher to know everything about a subject but must always remain curious. The model also proves that the teacher does not work to service the needs of the student, but as a guide to their own curiosity.

Drawing Forth Meaning from the Individual

Eric Booth, in the book *The Music Teaching Artist’s Bible*, describes the etymology of the word educate as meaning *to lead out or draw forth from the individual*. ***The teacher must act as a conduit for the student and lead them in connecting to their internal desires and motivations.*** It is insufficient to merely show the student the “notes” and the “techniques” if they are not tapped into and grounded in their identity and ready to tell the personal story that they alone can uniquely express.

Working to Create Beauty

Plato gave us the idea of the divine braid: whatever is good is also beautiful and true. As an artist and musician, it is my duty to create beauty for a world that sorely needs it. In creating beauty through music, I act as an advocate for the good and for the true. ***As a teaching artist, it is my duty to guide a student to the highest revelation of their talents, so that they may in turn make a greater impact on the world.*** This cannot be done without inspecting the tradition and influence of several millennia of artists, teachers, and philosophers alongside with the diverse and inspired works of modern voices.