

Teaching Philosophy

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Well-known educator, Elliot Eisner, says that, “Two main purposes of public education are to instill wonder and awe and to teach others that they have a personal signature unlike any other.” Eisner advocates the study of music to this end. Music teaches children how to express themselves in a way unlike any other. Music is essential to educating and developing the whole person, including intellectual, emotional, creative, social and physical skills. Studying music is very simply healthy for the human being and human spirit. Music education is an integral part of the whole educational spectrum.

Through my classes, I strive to help my students become:

Independent Musicians:

- Including music literacy
- General musicianship skills
- Analysis and evaluative skills
- Listening skills

Knowledgeable of music as an art form and skill:

- Including knowledge of history and culture as it applies to music.
- Appreciation of music as an art form.
- Appreciation of music as a skill.
- Appreciation of music as an expressive form.
- Knowledge of music as it relates to other art forms.

Creative thinkers:

- Including writing skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Analytical skills
- Collaborative skills

People of character:

- Representing school and community well.
- Understanding and accepting those of different cultures and backgrounds
- Developing leadership skills.
- Finding dignity in the pursuit of excellence.
- Making the right decisions - doing the right thing at the right time.

My classes of choir, music theory, music appreciation, and piano seek to foster and develop these skills in students. Depending on the course and expectation level, my instruction focuses on the development of these skills in varying degrees. I consider my classes to be academic subjects requiring the same intellectual skills necessary in other subjects.

I employ very specific and proven tools and techniques in building my students' skills. In order to help young musicians develop musicianship skills, they must be given useful and understandable skills with which they can be successful. I utilize solfege and count singing as a means of teaching students to become musically literate. Sight reading and rhythmic exercises are an important part of my curriculum.

I am an avid technology user and believe that technology plays a key role in education. I utilize instructional tools such as Powerpoint, video, audio, internet, and other technologies to present material to students and communicate with parents. I also use various instructional, and tutorial software products useful for presenting material and assessing the progress of students.

My curriculum is designed with proper sequencing and goal setting in mind. Choosing the proper repertoire, and teaching materials is forefront in my thinking. I strive to employ effective best-practice rehearsal and teaching strategies. I use brain-compatible techniques in my teaching and rehearsing. I have a particular interest in the relatively new studies in how the brain works and learns best. I strive to include brain-compatible teaching strategies in my curriculum and instruction.

Assessment of student progress is a daily activity in music classes. The assessment of ensemble progress is evident in rehearsal and performance. I believe in student self-evaluation as well as teacher evaluation. I use student-self evaluation as a means for helping students build a vocabulary for speaking about and evaluating music. Student writing is also prominent in my curriculum. It is important for students to be able to express themselves in writing. Student accountability in ensembles is of utmost importance to progress. I give individual and small ensemble performance quizzes to help assess progress.

I teach music because I believe in the ethical power of music. In my estimation, nothing fosters understanding and acceptance better than music. Nothing challenges, and stimulates students emotionally and intellectually better than music. Nothing connects the physical, intellectual, emotional, and artistic sensibilities of students better than music. There is something quite ennobling and dignifying about the discipline required of reaching for artistic excellence. It is a valuable lesson for students to learn.

The Music Educators National conference states that, “every student in the nation should have an education in the arts.” The benefits of music education can be divided into four categories: success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life. Music is fundamental to a complete education and are vital to the health and welfare of the next generation.

Music Education has implications reaching further than the immediate benefits. The study of music serves to pass on our culture to our children. John Goodlad says that, “Schools are charged to introduce the young to the full range of human conversation.” Human beings cannot be fully human without learning to express emotions and understanding their history and culture. Music is essential to that end.

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