

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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A reflective and pragmatic approach to teaching and learning has provided me with a foundation for evolving and adapting as a music teacher educator. I have embraced a philosophy of education as a practice of freedom, as described by scholars such as bell hooks (1994) and Paulo Freire (1970), in which teachers facilitate opportunities for students to find successful pathways toward a more liberated existence. I also believe that learning takes place on a continuum (Dewey, 1934), where experience and reflection of experiences meet to shape the ways in which students understand themselves and the world. As such, I aim to facilitate learning opportunities which invite students to tap into their musical and cultural assets—the qualities, skills, dispositions, and contextual knowledge they possess which inform how they see and understand musical encounters. My role as a music teacher educator is to provide curricular experiences for any student with a strong desire to nurture and care for children in and through music, and to facilitate their understanding of how they might carry this out with their future students.

My commitment to inclusion and equity is inseparable from my philosophies and pedagogies toward music teaching and learning. It informs my choices of curricular materials to reflect and inspire my students and guides the decisions I make toward specific pedagogical approaches. Acknowledging my privilege as a white woman engaging in anti-racist work (Kendi, 2019), I humbly aim to provide curricular pathways through which preservice teachers of all backgrounds are seen and heard, so they can become the music educators they and their students deserve them to be. In both General Music and Choral Practicum courses, students and I begin

from a place of identifying principles as well as musical and cultural assets which they use as springboards for designing curriculum to be carried out with school aged children. We co-design a responsive curriculum that aims to validate the children's unique ways of being musical. Musical play and creative problem solving through movement, listening, instrumental and vocal exploration, are all integral components of these musical encounters. The students deepen and expand musical skills and understandings based on what they observe about the children's previous knowledge or experiences. In choral practicum, I encourage culturally sustaining approaches to vocal development and singing. I incorporate singing to and with students of all ages from early childhood through adulthood. A focus on the role of choral directors as vocal technicians is central as we assess and support the development of young voices to maximize their creative potential through efficient and effective vocal production and group singing.

Process oriented approaches to music making are at the core of my aims with musicians of all ages and experiences. I aim to dismount from the podium, both literally and figuratively, to invite musicians into the construction of meaning, and the expression of that meaning, through musical devices. Individuality and unification of ensemble expressions are equally important in my work with musical ensembles.

My approach to grading and assessment further reflects a prioritization of process over product. Assessment focuses on students' personal learning processes, is formative, and qualitatively driven. It takes several forms, including in-class active learning, verbal and written feedback, personal interactions with peers and instructors, and self-reflections. I guide students through a self-assessment process, applying feedback toward future learning experiences and building their skills toward continuous, professional development. Grades serve as a summative

reflection of the quality of students' work in meeting the criteria associated with specific learning projects and activities.

Finally, a critical awareness of the practices and policies that shape music programs can help one identify and dismantle barriers that prevent access to PK-16 music curricula. Music education programs must make space for, and invite in, a diverse body of students so that all children might see (and hear) themselves in music classrooms and as future music teachers. Understanding that we often teach as we have been taught, I acknowledge my obligation to model flexible and versatile musicianship and enact culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. As a music teacher educator, it is imperative that I provide opportunities for my students to self-actualize a principled approach to music teaching and learning, identifying, and analyzing their own core values, beliefs, and sense of well-being. As they realize these principles they may in turn, empower their students to do the same.

References

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