

Teaching Philosophy

The foundation of my artistic philosophy is that all art is storytelling, and my objective in my teaching is to foster a love for storytelling while strengthening a students' ability to do so in their chosen medium. My training has centered on theatrical art, being able to tell stories through spoken word, dialogue, movement, dance, music, or direction. I now take those experiences and share that knowledge with my students while collaborating with them to further artistic storytelling in the industry. As a teaching artist, it is my responsibility to embody and emulate the practices I want my students to exhibit, in order to create a better artistic world community. I have found the best way to cultivate artistic storytelling in my teaching is through these practices: Effective communication, individualized expression, positive and passionate instruction, and working through the lens of humanity.

In all aspects of my professional work, I have clear, effective, and consistent communication practices. I believe communication is key to accomplishing goals when working with others, and is the best way to create a positive and efficient work environment. I will work to communicate clearly in my classes, telling of due dates and performances ahead of time, emailing the class consistently so they feel prepared when walking into class and know what I expect of them, and remaining detail-oriented in my given assignments and resources. That communication not only extends into clarity of assigned and expected work, but proper communication can help nurture students into creating their best work. I believe class discussion should be a place for open communication for all, where differing perspectives and interpretations are explored without judgment. I expect my students to communicate clearly as well. If they have questions, are struggling with assignments, or need additional assistance, I cannot know how to aid them unless they communicate those problems. As artists, we all must learn to be effective communicators, as that is how we communicate stories; being able to communicate ideas, meaningful messages, and stories to audiences through a chosen medium is crucial. By practicing those skills in class situations, we can learn to be better storytellers through clear communication.

However, communication cannot be clear without a clear idea of what is trying to be said, and that stems from the actors' individualized interpretation and expression. Every student has different life experiences, perspectives, training, and voices they bring to their artistry, and as a teacher, I believe in exploring and empowering those voices. As artists, it is important for students to cultivate their own style through their chosen mediums, and that style is displayed through individualized expression. As their teacher, I hope to give them tools, tactics, and performance opportunities to strengthen and express that style. To foster individualized expression, in my classroom, we will practice constant reflection and feedback of one's work to see how that style is being represented, and to examine how effectively a student's individual interpretation is being expressed.

Individual expression and style can be hard to pinpoint as a young and growing artist. By communicating, clearly crafting, and examining the details of the story they are working to convey, students will be able to learn how to more effectively express their individual interpretation. Their interpretation should be found in the details of the story, their personal thoughts and opinions on the story, and their own excitement or connection to the story. Once students have practice with pinpointing their individual expression and finding what works for them, that can blossom and grow, expressing ideas throughout many artistic mediums and

connecting mediums. I hope to foster that growth through individualized feedback, in-class discussions, assignment grading, and being available to my students to talk about their journey and style. I will create an encouraging and supportive environment through positive language, safety protocols, and inclusivity practices that will allow them the safety and freedom to express their individual voice. I don't believe in creating cookie-cutter artists, but instead, empowering and supporting all voices. For those that wish to explore further, I am open to mentorship and advisement of my students, willing to meet one-on-one, share potential opportunities, and aid them in their academic and professional endeavors. Cultivating individual expression and interpretation will give a personalized voice to each student's artistry, that will make them unique, and be able to express stories that convey an individual's voice— that is the art that the new generation will be creating.

I cannot expect a student to convey stories effectively and authentically if they are not passionate about storytelling. It is my job as a teacher to inspire that passion, fuel that passion, and emulate that passion for storytelling through my instruction. I am passionate about the art that I create through my theatre-making, dance, music, and direction, and I hope to exude that passion in an outward excitement for my craft. My passion can be seen in my continuous research of the industry, my work as a professional in the field, even outside of my teaching, and up-keep of my training. I continue to train in the arts so that I may continue to learn and grow. I am able to do this through a renewed certification in intimacy training, diversity training, and annual theatre conferences that inspire my work and allow me to teach students with an awareness of the professional world as it is today. Most importantly, I hope that my passion for my work can be seen in the soul of my work. I want to share that passion for artistic storytelling with my students because if I can inspire that passion in them, they can overcome any obstacle in the industry; people want to work with people that have a passion for what they do, and that will take them far. As storytellers, it is important to exude a passion for the craft because storytelling without passion lacks purpose.

Passion is important, but that passion will not prevail in a negative or toxic learning space. I believe in passionate and positive instruction. I hope to uplift my students with a positive environment, and I believe that can be accomplished even in small ways: checking in on students, saying 'good morning', having empathy, and being excited to teach even when I'm feeling drained. My attitude will affect the rest of the class, so I want it to be one of positivity and care. I believe all instruction should be meant to lift up and not tear down, never saying a critique without something positive as well. Every student presenting their work has put time and care into it, and that deserves to be rewarded with a positive appreciation for their performance. I expect that standard of feedback for students in class discussions, in that all constructive criticism should be meant to lift up. I believe creating an environment of positivity and passion will best serve my students' artistry, in that, the classroom will allow them to freely express their individual style and openly communicate without fear of ridicule. All students will feel passionate energy when storytelling that will inspire them to work hard. I believe imparting the traits of being passionate and positive storytellers will best prepare my students as individuals entering the industry because people with those traits are hired consistently, regardless of ability.

Finally, the last fundamental practice of my storytelling-based artistic philosophy is that my teaching is done through the lens of humanity. I understand, and I ask that my students understand, that times are tough. The world is not always at peace and there are outside environmental factors that shake our everyday lives. As teachers, we need to have an awareness

and consciousness of that when setting expectations. I work consistently to be patient, kind, and understanding when creating class expectations, and then try to be adaptable throughout the class to see where those expectations need to shift, based on outside factors. I will adapt lessons to fit student needs, as well as keep up with practices that are respectful to differing voices and identities; this includes racial sensitivity training, training in respect and understanding of multiple gender identities, abuse conduct, etc. I expect my students to be kind, patient, and understanding with me and with each other so that we all contribute to a caring, positive, and safe classroom space. By working with these traits and practices, we are working through the lens of humanity, caring for each other as equal human beings of the world community.

That lens not only exists in classroom conduct, but should be explored and present in the students' performances and artistry. All stories are based on human experience or imagination, and their work should always reflect that humanity no matter the medium or the story being told. I hope to encourage that by uplifting voices, empowering each students' individual expression and interpretation, and examining the details of each story to clearly communicate the humanity of the piece. All of my foundational practices work together to create an artistic product, and that's why they exist in my teaching philosophy. They are present in my teaching so I may inspire and give knowledge to my students of these practices so their art is authentically expressed. In order to do so, humanity should be present in the process and the product.

All art is storytelling, and as a teacher, I hope to pass down that practice to my students through fundamental practices in my teaching: effective communication, individualized expression, positive and passionate instruction, and working through the lens of humanity. All of these practices are what I hope to embody in my teaching, and cultivate in my classroom environment, while also expecting these practices in my students' behavior and artistic products. Communication, individualized expression, positive and passionate instruction, and humanity-based art all contribute to truthful, authentic storytelling that can be explored through many mediums. I am excited to see the stories my students tell.