

## Teaching Philosophy

Teaching is about so much more than the subject we have typed at the top of our syllabus. I am always looking at the bigger picture that exists outside the classroom. I like to use my classes as a microcosm of the world in which we live, and cultivate skill development that can help the students in all facets of their lives. For example, I feel it is imperative that my students have weekly writing assignments in the Introduction to Theatre class I teach. It is important for the students to develop these skills, as they will most definitely need to write clearly and concisely for continued education, a job, or filling out paperwork for personal use. In class we write about theatrical subjects, but the practice of summarizing chapters or creating a thesis statement helps the students to think critically and to express their opinions. On that note, I encourage my students to have an opinion on the subjects we discuss. There is no right or wrong, and everyone is entitled to have his or her say. Sometimes it is difficult for the students to speak up, as they feel that their thoughts do not matter, or they are shy. I try to draw them out, and make them feel that their comments are important and that they are valued.

Collaboration and accountability are also life skills that I incorporate into my teaching style. There are group presentations on theatrical genres, in-class group work using the text, and a final scene that the students write and perform in groups. I like to shuffle the students so they have the opportunity to work with people that are not in their immediate circle. This creates community in the classroom and the students are usually surprised at how energizing it is to work with new cohorts. In addition, accountability comes into play as the students get to know each other and feel that they are part of an entity, and responsible to their partners. As we all know, these skills are necessary whether it is working in the theatre, an office, or at home.

As a professor, I have a responsibility to follow the same path I set forth for my students. I need to write cohesively, have valid opinions backed up by facts, be a collaborator, and be accountable. I feel that I am not only their teacher but a role model as well and must present my better self when I am with them. Students bring out the best in us, and I hope we do the same for them.