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## Teaching Philosophy

In order to have a well-functioning system, I believe that reciprocated trust, responsibility, and expectation are the foundation. Having a set expectation through authenticity and sincerity is ideal and engaging. I also find it important for me to be open to change, ways to improve and always be on my toes to progress in any category of my profession. I do not think it is productive to stay stagnant as far as progress and professional development in the field. I believe it is good for me to continuously be malleable and open to change. I have found with teaching that I find myself going into my cocoon of comfortable teaching or comfortable expectations for myself. But ultimately, I have learned to be comfortable being uncomfortable. This is how I would stay open to change throughout teaching and allow there to continue to be personal and individual progression as a teacher. Going off of that further, I think that facilitating and fostering a growth mindset for the students by providing feedback that they can take action on in the moment can help, rather than giving general feedback. I believe that what cultivates my teaching philosophy includes music being for everyone and I would like to defend music for music's sake, rather than for everyone's sake. I also believe that teaching should be authentic, sincere, and engaging, and lastly, I think that teachers should maintain a growth mindset.

This is a rewritten philosophy paper after the experience and knowledge I have gained fresh out of my student internship. I have completed 5 weeks in an elementary school and 9 weeks at the secondary level with high school. This paper summarizes how I should approach teaching throughout my own personal trial and error. That being said, I am not a seasoned teacher. This has been knowledge accumulated through me learning through my flaws and errors with teaching. I think the fact that I have had such incredible mentor teachers and guidance has facilitated great progression for me as I learn the

ropes of this profession and the role of the teacher in the classroom. I am firsthand an instrumentalist, a flutist. The reason this internship was really valuable to me and one of the biggest takeaways and areas of improvement I had involves learning how to navigate public speaking and how to grab the attention of a crowd effectively. I learned how to manage large amounts of time and manage time while teaching. Time is very valuable. I learned that a teacher's goal is not making everyone in the classroom like you but rather making sure everyone is learning and grasping a valuable experience. As a people pleaser, this was a significant hurdle to overcome. With those additional points of further improvement I have experienced, learning those things allowed a valuable baseline for the teaching philosophy I have developed. I first wrote this philosophy paper in my Intro to Music Education course, which was a freshman-year course of my degree plan, when I was beginning my music education degree requirements. I held so much ambition and optimism for how I envisioned my future classroom would look, and that ambition and philosophy has morphed into a more rich reasoning that time facilitated and nurtured. Looking back, I think that the principles I included such as inclusivity, effective communication, and how I wanted to avoid students having to relearn a concept because it wasn't introduced correctly the first time were strong points to include. Yes, these concepts are valuable, but now I see them more as a necessity rather than a philosophy. The overarching point of this is now I have learned the basics of teaching since I have had experience in the classroom. Now I can confidently articulate what my teaching philosophy includes due to trial and error in the classroom. I learned these skills are not only valuable, but a necessary part of a functioning classroom and a fruitful career.

### Music Education is for Everyone

I want to defend music education for music's sake, rather than the academic and standardized testing route of the conversation. My argument is that music should be valued intrinsically, not just for outcomes like testing or performance metrics. I like the idea of music education being important because of its core purpose of music making and learning music. Music also has no perfect teaching system, so flexibility is necessary. Jorgensen's article, "The Aims of Music Education: A Preliminary Excursion,"

implies that there is no easy or clear path to teaching, specifically with how to approach music education, “The complexity of music education resists simple, universal solutions.” (Jorgensen). The resistance implies that there can be many bridges to life and learning that music can tie into. I think this is very powerful for overall opportunities of student expression, exploration, and learning in different ways.

Additionally, I think that important qualities that music education facilitates are responsibility, honesty, discipline and respect. Fahmi and Hidayah’s paper titled, “Designing a Character Education Development Based on Atomic Habits by James Clear”, emphasizes the action of students practicing daily are the habits that creates success, “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” (Fahmi and Hidayah). Students are a direct reflection of your teaching. This goes with short term and long term goals and action you have your students participate in and do. One of the core concepts of Atomic Habits by James Clear emphasizes, “Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement.” (Clear). This essentially says that little bits of action every day are what make the long term success and consistency create bigger long-term success and more of a rewarding outcome. This is important because of the concept that teachers have to show up and give that same effort and pinch in every single day for the student’s success and what they will take away from my classroom. This includes rehearsal habits, participation, and smaller habits that will ultimately influence long-term goals and outcomes.

### Authenticity and Engagement

Teaching should be authentic and facilitate engagement for better student involvement. I think that this can look like being theatrical and animated, but this is not a primary way of teaching because that sounds exhausting to me! I think if students know that you will not settle for mediocrity will help with the sense of purpose students will hold in the classroom. Poulouse’s article titled, “Theatrical Pedagogy: Fostering Learning through Acting in the English Classroom” directly comments on this approach in teaching, “Ideas take on deeper meaning because students have experienced them with their own bodies and senses.” (Poulouse). This is particularly inspiring to me because of the effect that student engagement

can have on learning patterns. The students can experience learning strategies with their own bodies and all five senses. That is powerful and speaks louder to me than sitting stationary in a classroom for long periods of time. Specifically with music, it is an action as well, creating music. So this description of teaching's impact is a direct reflection of how important I think engaging students in the classroom is to me. Poulouse also goes on about the particular ways of impact with interactive theatre,

“Interactive theatre is a great way... to confront sensitive issues in a non-threatening atmosphere’ . . . ‘Using theatre techniques... engages the senses, emotions, and imagination as well as the intellect.’” (Poulouse).

This perspective of how theatrical skills can be applied into your teaching toolbelt has been an excellent perspective and outlook for me. Within Davis (et al.)’s article, “How to be a GREAT Mentor”, In the G.R.E.A.T. mentoring framework, “A” represents the role of the mentor as an advocate for mentees, emphasizing the importance of using professional influence to support their advancement. This includes recommending mentees for opportunities, facilitating access to professional networks, and actively promoting their academic and career development (Davis et al., 2023). Additionally, Davis (et al.) emphasizes that mentors should “give opportunities and open doors,” which highlights the heavy importance of mentoring and mentorship (Davis et al., 2023). This involves the teacher using their professional position to recommend mentees for opportunities and connect them with networks that support their advancement as a student and with their interests.

### Maintaining a Growth Mindset

An area of importance I learned in my internship is to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I can always do more and broaden my exposure in places I do not normally do. I believe that staying on my toes and trying new things has been valuable to me. I am a perfectionist by nature. At first perfectionism sounds like it wouldn't be problematic, and it can be very productive for some of my goals, but when it comes to newer or uncomfortable experiences for me, I have a hard time being okay with being mediocre. I have to bring confidence into the classroom as if I am a seasoned teacher. This was an immensely

valuable concept as a learning intern teacher. If I bring the confidence of a seasoned teacher, what I spend hours preparing for will eventually click with time. That being said, uncomfortable experiences did get easier because I chose to make it easier and attack my areas of improvement head first. Not turning my head to change and betterment opened lots of doors for me. I learned a lot of valuable lessons with moments like that in my internship. This is how real life is, and if you do not show up and do your part you can not progress successfully. This is expanding on my growth mindset.

In addition to individual growth mindset, what is most important with these topics is how I apply my growth mindset into the classroom. According to Ong and Siau's article, "Value of a Growth Mindset: Improving Endoscopy Coaching and Mentoring.", having eyes on a newer teacher for guidance and further understanding of their impact is very helpful. They state, "Mentoring is aimed at supporting the professional development of novice teachers through continuous reflection and improvement." (Ong and Siau). Analyzing my teaching before, during, and after are all different eyes and stages of keeping myself accountable and in the know of my effectiveness as a teacher. Analyzing and reflecting after teaching is just as important for a teacher with a growth mindset, as it helps ensure the intention of improving for students and remaining student-centered.

Additionally, Jeffs, Cheryl, (et al.)'s article, "Feedback for Teaching Development: Moving from a Fixed to Growth Mindset," mentions that having guidance turned into action will help the success and trajectory for your students, "A growth mindset facilitates motivation and engagement with feedback for development." (Jeffs et al). Giving students a point of action with the feedback is another way of applying knowledge learned in the classroom. It gives the students reflection, effort, and immediate actionable feedback for further ways to grasp new knowledge.

## Conclusion

Through my student internship experiences at both the elementary and secondary levels, my teaching philosophy has shifted from idealized expectations to a more grounded, practical understanding. I have learned that effective teaching depends on trust, responsibility, and clear expectations, along with

the ability to adapt and continuously grow as an educator. My experiences have shown me that teaching is not about being universally liked, but about ensuring meaningful learning for every student in the room. As a teacher early in my career, I have developed in areas such as public speaking, classroom management, and time management, all of which have strengthened my confidence and ability to effectively apply my teaching practices. Reflecting on the “why” behind my philosophy has, in itself, been beneficial to my growth as an educator. I strive to remain adaptable and avoid becoming complacent, continually seeking ways to improve. This mindset has made me more aware of the challenges I may face, how to navigate them, and how to thoughtfully reflect on my practice. While my earlier philosophy emphasized inclusivity and communication, I now recognize these as essential foundations rather than abstract ideals. Ultimately, my teaching philosophy is shaped by reflection, experience, and growth, and I am committed to continually refining my practice as I move forward in the profession, for the music’s sake.

## Works Cited

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