

**Tenets of Successful Teaching and Learning – Finding the Balance**

Throughout the journey as an instructor in higher education, I have witnessed an evolution in my method of educating students from an accentuation on my teaching, to the more essential emphasis on student understanding, and then ultimately to the discovery that both teaching and student understanding share an impregnable symbiosis. This is an organic concept of teaching and understanding, defined in its whole by both instructor and student. As a way to describe this concept, I regularly strive to proportion the following tenets: imparting knowledge and furthering comprehension, methodology and function, supporting and daring the student, tenacity while galvanizing innovation, and dignifying and promoting a broad diverseness of students and their needs while upholding equality.

**Imparting Knowledge and Furthering Comprehension:** Many students enter a theater program with a broad range of experiences. It is my goal to aid these students to utilize their current skill sets, judge it against what is taught in class, and ultimately use that knowledge as a foundation to acquire a greater comprehension of more complex theories and methods. A student that has had a great deal of coaching and stage experience has been an instructional challenge to me on more than one occasion. I feel that pairing their extant relevant knowledge with class or individual instruction is key in the success of student learning.

**Methodology and Application:** I agree with Goethe: “Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.” Learning mandates a deep comprehension that is only a result of students absorbing and then applying knowledge in inventive and purposeful ways. In any class or lesson that I teach, it is my challenge to the student to grapple the material, and apply their individual life experiences to achieve a further understanding. In a perfect setting, this methodology will capacitate students to express ideas and personally own theories.

**Supporting and Daring the Student:** It is important to note the obvious fact that the higher education experience for most students involves centering their life fully in the collegiate world. It is my belief that in my role as teacher, I have the challenge of supporting a student in this higher education culture, even beyond the walls of the classroom and studio. While active learning promotes a personalized education for the student, I recognize that I have personal expertise from which my students may benefit. I believe that a student will elevate himself or herself when dared with a demand for quality work if they are helped to foster the skills required to make it possible. Thus, I advocate rational, informed thinking and a demonstration of both oral and written skills.

**Tenacity while Galvanizing Innovation:** I believe that a student is served best by being tenacious and actively engaged in the learning process. Even when presented with the most exciting teacher, a student’s success can only be achieved through active engagement in the process. In my classroom and studio, a student achieves ownership of this process by my use of cooperative and hands-on learning strategies utilizing multimedia, both online and live performance opportunities, as well as lecture and group discussion. One of my most successful endeavors is the use of private Facebook forums and Blackboard for students to access course materials, post video performances, offer constructive criticisms of their peers, among other

interactions, Ideally, both creative and analytical thinking will be paired with these innovative applications.

**Dignifying and Promoting a Broad Diverseness of Students and their Needs while**

**Upholding Equity:** The study of musical theatre is inescapably practical – practiced and applied by both the teacher and student as a lifestyle. I often call upon fellow educators to acknowledge that both our actions and words are voluntary and often involuntarily imprinted on our students as lessons. Hence, I instruct by what I do and what I say in the classroom. By showing respect for clear communication, care and compassion for students, and a true zeal for the subject matter, I am teaching the value of our art. As an advocate for Interculturalism, I embrace the differing world perspectives that my students might bring to a classroom. Because of this, I attempt to create a space where all students will have a unique voice and be at ease when conveying their opinions and beliefs. In this process, everyone will benefit and learn.

These tenets are the cornerstone for my teaching philosophy, and I recognize that the equal preservation of each tenet is difficult to maintain at all times. Each learning institution (and each class for that matter), births new opportunities and challenges to my own growth as a scholar. As the institutions and students change, I embrace my own change and impart ways for my students to do the same! As the art of musical theatre progresses, I endeavor to evolve my methods to remain an effective and relevant instructor, while instilling a passion in my students to strive for vast knowledge coupled with greater creativity. . Moreover, I hope to dare my students to be part of the propagation of the ever-changing art of musical theatre.