

TEACHING STATEMENT

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Music is a fundamental aspect of the human condition; in each culture across the world and throughout history, music has had a significant role. In many cases, it is inseparable from other aspects of culture, ranging from other art forms to social and political movements. As a cathartic and expressive discipline, music has an unparalleled potential to educate students in an entirely unique way. The study of music provides students with the opportunity to learn both with and about others, exposing them to other perspectives in a way unlike any other discipline.

Learning most effectively occurs in students motivated to learn. To foster this motivation, my instruction will be tailored to the individual needs and lives of my students, drawing upon their interests, lived experiences, and prior knowledge. Additionally, by connecting to this prior knowledge, I will be able to effectively guide students from the familiar to new and unknown content, supporting students with relevant and specialized scaffolding along the way. It is critical that students learn actively, through constructivist principles. Rather than leaning on lecturing and rigid rote learning, I strive to guide students toward their own discovery of content, which facilitates meaningful connections to class material, improving students' retention of content.

I firmly believe that failure and mistakes are critical points in education; students can either become incredibly deterred and discouraged, or they can move toward substantial growth, learning from their initially negative experiences. In addition to this, it is crucial that students approach learning with an open mind, demonstrating a willingness to take risks, as well as support for their peers' risk-taking, without judgement. The universal nature of music leaves no room for prejudice; in music class, students will learn to understand the cultural differences of others, approaching this subject with empathy and respect. All of this culminates in the collaborative study of music – it is imperative that students learn to work together constructively.

In facilitating these goals and outcomes, I aim to create an environment free from judgement, where students support their peers in taking risks, while feeling safe themselves to take risks – and, at times, fail – learning from their mistakes. Additionally, there will be a zero-tolerance policy in my classroom for prejudice, judgement, or disrespect of any kind. This is a constant and non-negotiable principle; all students, teachers, cultures, etc. must be treated with empathy and respect. Culturally diverse repertoire will be selected for study in my classroom, allowing students to become familiar with unique perspectives. I will also strive to practice interdisciplinary teaching, guiding students to generate meaningful connections between musical content and external areas of study.

Regarding assessment, benchmarks will be used to gauge student growth. I strongly believe in the notion of a growth mindset – at no point is a single project or performance an endpoint. Rather, assessment shall serve as feedback for students, informing them on how they can continue to learn, while empirically measuring how much they've grown thus far. My primary tools of assessment are student self-reflection and cumulative projects, which provide candid and concrete measurements of student understandings and ability levels.

As stated throughout, my classroom will be inclusive, welcoming all perspectives, as well as presenting unique perspectives to broaden students' horizons. I also plan to provide virtual resources and instructional content, so students with special learning needs and exceptionalities have additional outlets for learning in my class. This philosophy will also be applied to my physical classroom, using projections and other technology as needed to meet all student needs.